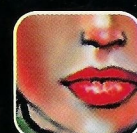


WASTE WORLD™



ROLEPLAYING IN A SAVAGE FUTURE

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WASTE WORLD™

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gilles garnier, matt forbeck and eoin hannan.

STONED MONKEY VIRUS

PROVIDED BY

infotel sro Praha.

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PREPARE FOR EXTREME VIOLENCE

VIRUS DETECTION PROGRAM : ON
FLOW LINK QUASI PROTOCOL : INITIATED
FILE SUB-PROTOCOL : STANDARD
NANOMECHANICAL INTERFACE:
VALIDATE SIMULATION

INITIATE SEQUENCE
NON-BIOLOGICAL RAW MATERIAL:
INTERNAL DATA CORRUPTION:
LINGUISTIC MARKUP DIRECTORY
MOLECULAR BINARY:

GUNSTBERG OVERDRIVE
MICRO-OPTICAL MODULATOR: ON
SILICONE SYNAPTIC SIMULATOR
DYSFUNCTION
ARTIFICIAL NEUROSYNTHESIS

CORTICO QUASI-DEGRADATION
GANGLIAL ELECTRO-IMPLANT
SMART CHIP INSTALLED
METHANE IMPULSE CATHETER
OCCIPITAL FLOW MODULATION: SINE

main menu

LOGIN:
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NEUROCIRCUIT FEEDBACK
AMOEBOID DRONE: PRESENT
INFOSTATIC LOOP:
INFODUMP INITIATING

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DATA CORE ONE



NECROSPHERE

PREPARE TO DOWNLOAD

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METHANE IMPULSE CATHETER
OCCIPITAL FLOW MODULATION: SINE

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NANOCCIPITAL DRIVER

BIOFEEDBACK MATRIX: XO
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AMOEBOID DRONE PRESENT
GYROSCOPIC NOISE LOOP:
STORYMODE INITIATING

"You want to leave?"

The old man looked away wearily. The youth had never seen his uncle look so tired or so depressed. "Death comes to everyone. There is no need to rush to meet it."

The old man made a sweeping gesture with his leather-gauntleted hand. It seemed to encompass everything, the multi-colored sky, the poisoned wastelands, even the high tower on which they stood. The old man leaned forward, pressing his face to the armorglass of the window.

"Look around you—look at those clouds in the sky. Their rain will burn the flesh from your bones. Out there is nothing but death."

The old man stabbed with his index finger, pointing to the desert as if to poke a hole through the bullet-proof crystal. Involuntarily, the youth's eyes followed his uncle's hand. He saw what his uncle wanted him to see: the sand, the endless ranks of barbed wire and fortifications, the wreckage of the tanks and the Drakonium crawlers, the evil ruby glitter of the Drakonium itself, as it caught the light of sun.

"There is a lesson to be learned in that glittering desert. From these battlements you can see the rusting wreckage of a thousand burned-out war engines. The bleached bones of a million warriors cover the Funeral Plain. They died trying to take what we have here in this armored fortress: shelter, food and clean air."

They died for Drakonium, the young man wanted to say. It is all they ever come here for, all they ever want. It's all anybody here ever talks about. He was sick of hearing about it. It was the great reason why he wanted to leave. His uncle rambled on, unaware of the current of the youth's thoughts.

"They died trying to get in. And you—you want to leave!" There was a heavy note of sarcasm in his uncle's voice. The youth swallowed and forced himself to nod. In spite of all his protestations to the contrary, he still had some reservations about going. It was hard to give up everything you had ever known and head out into the unknown. His uncle sensed the weakening of his resolve.

"Are you sure?"

The youth nodded, more slowly and less emphatically than he had before. His uncle pressed home the advantage like a swordsman trying to beat down the guard of a weaker opponent.

"Out there, the air is too foul to breath without a mask. The winds carry deadly poisons. You must wear a protective suit or you will become a mutant. Men will kill for a box of bullets or a tin of iron rations or for no reason at all save their own twisted pleasure."

I know all this, the youth wanted to say. I have been outside. I have learned the lessons of the Wastemasters. I have fought with our foes when they came seeking our Drakonium. He wanted to say it, but his mouth felt dry and some compulsion sealed his lips. Perhaps he could not speak out because for all his training he had no real experience of the Wastelands save for a few forays. His uncle had been fighting across them for close on forty years.

He let his gaze slide over his uncle's shoulder. Through the armorglass he could see dust devils begin to rise in the shattered landscape. Looking at the jaundiced yellow clouds moving through the pastel sky, he was once more filled with appalled wonder.

How did the world come to this, he wondered? He knew all the traditional answers drummed into him by the Wastemasters of his people. He could remember the droning voices of his tutors, they blended in somehow with his Uncle's voice.

Ten thousand years ago the Armageddon Wars had come. The Ancients fought for a thousand years. Led by a series of false prophets to a succession of false Armageddons, they teetered on the brink of extinction. Doomsday weapons rained down from the heavens. Killer robots ran amok. Nuclear, chemical and biological systems killed billions. Psionic cataclysts spread insanity over the continent. Nanoweapons shredded matter. Entropic bombs splintered the fabric of reality. The skies darkened. Continents sank. The dead rose from their graves. It was the end of the world. Or so people had thought.

They were wrong.



The world had not ended. It became a giant wasteland but there were survivors. Ragged, hollow-eyed folk huddled in the ruins of the megacities, gaunt with starvation and maddened by the horrors they had witnessed, the soldiers of lost armies, the rulers of ruined cities, the citizens of empires which were now dust and ashes.

They had looked out over a world turned into a poisoned desert by the madness their civilization had wrought. You would have thought they would have desired peace but they did not. They fought on because they had no choice. In the ruined world only one thing made civilization possible. Drakonium, the ultimate energy source. It lit the agrifacs that made the food that the people ate. It powered the autofacs that made the armor they wore and the weapons they used. It drove the recyclers that cleansed the air they breathed and the water they drank. With Drakonium, life was barely possible. Without it, death came swiftly to entire nations. And the Drakonium was running out. Something had happened during the endless wars. The crystals had become tainted and ceased to grow as they once had. The survivors had to fight to ensure their share.

Over the long millennia new civilizations had risen from the ashes of the old, cultures evolved to survive in an age of constant war. They ruled the world now, and he wished to see them, to leave this ancient fortress behind and travel the world. He conjured up visions of them in his mind to strengthen his resolve.

To the East, there was the Shogunate, a land of immortal warriors forged in the crucible of centuries of civil strife, a society ruled by the sword, where psychic sorcerers and cybernetic Ninja plotted to seize control from a centuries-old dictator.

To the South, on the shores of the Great Skum Sea, was Hydra, a city where humanity has splintered into thousands of competing gencans, each of which gambled on radical biotechnology in an attempt to outrace evolution and create the perfect survivor. Amid its constantly growing towers, the warring factions honed their advantages; some stronger than Mastodons, some clever beyond the dreams of most mortals.

To the West lay mighty Prometheus, where armies of cyborgized killers and warrior robots shielded the inhabitants from the terrors of the Wastes. Within the city's armored walls, the people were kept amused by huge gladiatorial games while their rulers plotted the extinction of their enemies. Fortunes could be won and lost in the Games there, by those brave enough to risk them.

Then there was Ikarus, a kilometers-long city that flew above the endless deserts. Its warriors swooped down in razor-winged flying battlesuits to plunder the lands below. It was a metropolis of the highest technology and lowest savagery, whose decadent inhabitants seek the ultimate experience: death in battle or victory.

In the center of the continent of Avernus lay Janus, the city of merchants, home of bounty killers and mercenary armies. Here also, beneath a tower that stretches to the sky, the degenerate remains of the ancient Xenogen races dreamt of their former glory and the days when they flitted between the stars like gods. It was a city where everything had a price, even the human soul.

The great walled cities, the metrozones, haunted his dreams, bright with the promise of adventure and riches. But there were other places that worried him.

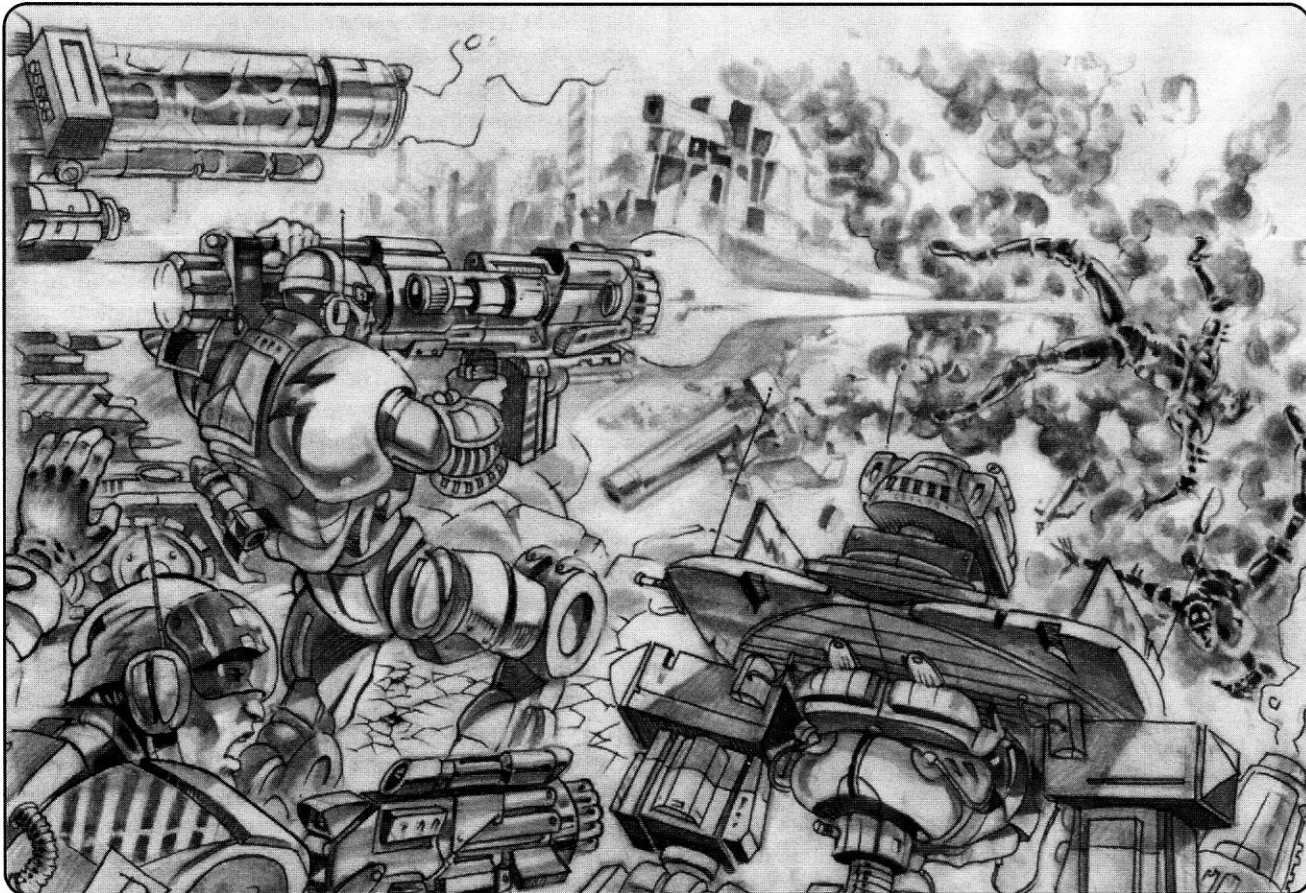
Amid the twisted ruins of Kimera, the mutants worshipped their demon god, listening to his whispered promises that one day the world would belong to them.

In the steaming Slime Jungles of the South, the insectoid Swarm sought their prey. In the Toxic Wastes, hordes of Skavengers raced across the multicolored sand in their salvaged vehicles, raiding and killing and making war, taking whatever they could seize. The Apocalypse Legions, an army of ancient war-machines, reprogrammed to exterminate all organic life, also roamed the Wastes. And there were other things: monsters, demons and zombies of ancient legend that have returned to harry the world, recreated by genetic engineering and a technology gone mad. He realized with a start that his uncle was still speaking to him.

"Do you really seek adventure? Do you really wish to leave us?"

He considered his options for a moment. What could he do? Spend his entire life in this god-forsaken fortress, harvesting Drakonium and fighting endless battles against those who would take it from them? Did he really want to lead his life imprisoned within these armored walls until he died a senile ancient or took a bullet through the brain from some raider's gun? Or would he see new things, take his chances at fame and immortality? In the end, there was no choice.

"I have to," he said. The old man smiled ruefully and shook his head. "Just like your father," he muttered, but there was no anger in his voice, only a gentle weariness. He spoke again, and his voice was cold and harsh and strong.



"Very well. Take this energy gun and this blade. In my locked chest you will find my best armor and the amulets that protected me in my journeys across the Wastes. Wear them always, but put your trust in sharp wits and quick reflexes, for weapons can break, and the Gods are unreliable. My best skimmerbike is garaged below. A merchant convoy is due on the morrow. You can take passage with them."

The boy turned on his heel to go. Suddenly, now that the die was cast, he had never wanted to stay more. He forced his feet to move towards the stairwell. Behind him, the old man hung his head down and spoke almost too quietly to be heard: "Go with my blessing, child. I doubt I will see you again."

INTRODUCTION

Waste World is a place of sudden brutal violence where survivors of the catastrophic wars that destroyed the old civilization battle amid the endless deserts of a terribly changed world. It is a place where humanity and its successors struggle for supremacy against horrifying alien intruders. It is a place where there is no law, save survival of the fittest, and where the weak can expect nothing but a painful death.

The world was not always this way. Once it was as close to paradise as mankind and technology could make it. The population lived in great cities. The whole world was linked by a massive information network, the Ultramunda. The people's every whim was catered to by robots and auto-factories and the Overminds, the powerful artificial intelligences who watched over the Ultramundae. Hundreds of alien races, the Xenogens of the Galactic Compact, came to trade and to make new homes.

It was a golden age, and some thought it could last forever. But even then, humanity was divided into two factions: the Old Race and the Posthumans. The Old Race still clung to the basic human genotype. The Posthumans used advanced genetic engineering techniques to alter themselves into something far different.

As time passed, rifts grew between the two sides. The world was split into armed camps. Tension mounted. New and appalling weapons were developed. Diplomatic efforts failed to keep the peace. Brushfire wars began. Crisis followed crisis, until eventually, hostility and suspicion led to total war on a scale the world had never seen before.



THE ARMAGEDDON WARS

The Armageddon Wars ravaged the world many millennia ago. No one knows when or how they started. Nearly all records were lost during that time of catastrophe, when the Ancients unleashed their entropic bombs and the old civilization perished in fire and terror. Rogue Ultramancers, programmers of great power and knowledge, unleashed the ultimate data weapon, the deadly Apocalypse Virus.

During the Armageddon Wars, the Overminds went mad or collapsed under the impact of the Apocalypse Virus. The secrets of high technology were lost to all but a privileged few. Toxins poisoned the seas, and the world became a desert. Clouds of poisonous chemicals blew everywhere. Genetically engineered plagues killed millions. Old forbidden weapons were activated. Cities became plains of fused glass. Fertile lands turned into radioactive dust deserts. Entropic weapons unleashed vast clouds of mutating matter that changed the world forever.

Now the world is a wasteland of ash and sand, where the survivors huddle in the few remaining megacities or eke out a pitiful existence in the hostile deserts. Fearing entropic contamination, the Galactic Compact declared Waste World subject to Interdict. A ring of orbital fortresses enforces this edict. Anyone trying to visit or leave the planet is destroyed without mercy.

GEOGRAPHY

Waste World has been ravaged by the Armageddon Wars. Fallout from entropic weapons has contaminated everything, altering not just the people, but the climate and land itself.

The seas have been polluted until they are simply masses of rolling poisonous sludge. Fallout has also led to the desertification of the land. Most of the continents are now covered in billowing dunes of multicolored sand and ash. Here and there, lava lakes glow with the residual heat of atomic detonation. Plains of silicon slag mark the sites of ancient cities. Volcanoes spew forth dark clouds of ash and sulfurous fumes. The clouds have acquired strange chemical colors. An aurora of pollutants marks the night sky and dims the light of the stars.

Radzones mark the areas in which ancient forbidden weapons were detonated. Background radiation levels here are fatal or near-fatal, and the incidence of mutation in plant, animal and human is high. These areas are the favored lurking places of vicious mutant gangs; no other people would dwell there. Radzones produce nothing, and no sane person buys artifacts from their ruins, because these are almost certainly contaminated.

Toxic Wastes are those sectors of the desert where ancient poisons have built up in the sand and the soil. Just breathing unfiltered Waste air is inevitably fatal. Because the Wastes can be rich in minerals and chemicals, a few brave and hardy souls will guide wastekrawlers to the rich deposits.

Entropic zones mark the sites where entropically contaminated nano-weapons ran amok. Entropic zones are like volcanoes. Most of the time they are dormant, but sometimes fractal feedback loops build up and they become violently active and expand. When this happens, Entropic zones become deadly places. Long-dormant nanoweapons rapidly restructure any matter they encounter, forever changing its molecular structure. Entropic zones are easily spotted. They are marked by a weird flowing appearance in their surroundings, as if organic and inorganic things have melted and run together. The skies above them are full of brightly colored clouds.

There are various sorts of deserts on Waste World's surface. Ash Wastes are great plains of ash. Dust deserts are composed of finer particles of sand. Rust deserts are ferrous and red in color. Sulfate deserts are a glittering green. Cobalt deserts are bright metallic blue. In places, all these types of desert mingle, creating a strange multicolored wilderness, exposure to whose poisonous sands can be deadly.

Perhaps strangest of all are the skrapyards. These huge jumbles of shattered metal and broken machinery are the sites of ancient battles. They cover hundreds of kilometers. Fused machinery, unexploded shells and gas bombs, the tangled wreckage of tanks and planes and war-droids, and the bleached bones of dead warriors all cover the land.

Lava lakes glow cherry-red with the residual heat of atomic fires, and plains of glass mark the sites of ancient Radbomb detonations. The Skum Seas are covered in a thin film of vile slimy waste, and great algae blooms feed on the toxic effluents the slow and polluted rivers carry to the dying seas. Here and there, flying islands drift slowly on the wind, liberated from gravity by the terrifying power of entropic weapons. No one knows when these aerial icebergs will crumble and come crashing from the skies.

Not all of Waste World is uninhabitable. Habzones are places that were spared the worst of the fallout due to some accident of history or quirk of geography. Some, located in high mountain valleys, were shielded from the disaster by the surrounding peaks. Others are located in huge craters or in rift valleys with their own microclimates. But slowly and surely, the deadly Wastelands are encroaching on even these protected places. The metrozones, the last surviving megacities, are the only areas where humanity seems likely to survive.

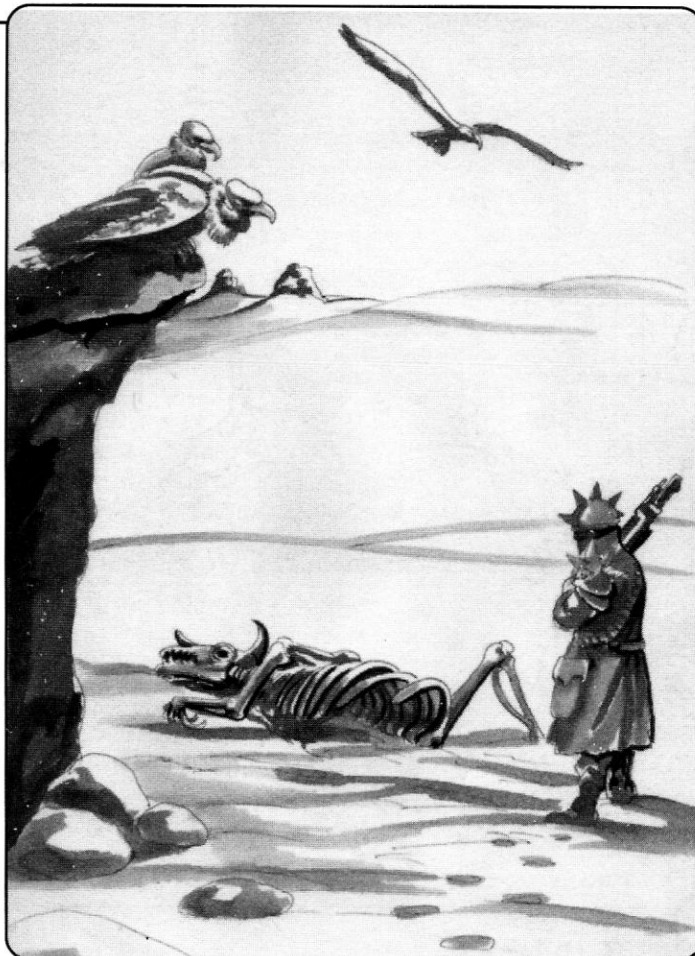
FLORA

Some plant life still survives in the Wastes, twisted and mutated beyond recognition. There are even alien plants, brought to Waste World before the Interdict, that have escaped from their glasshouses and thrived in the deadly land. Fast-blooming fungal forests spring up overnight, their spores choking the lungs of anyone unlucky enough to be nearby. Algae blooms clog the poisoned waters of the seas. Here and there, hardy patches of life form shrinking oases in the deserts.

Most loathsome of all are the great Slime Jungles that cover the southern part of the continent of Avernus. These contain a mixture of mutant trees and alien plant life, all covered in dripping, mucous-like algae-slime. The Slime Jungles are home to thousands of species and are rich in narcotic plant life as well as medicinal herbs. This has ensured that they are the scene of intense and bitter fighting between the metrozones.

FAUNA

Only fierce and deadly creatures can survive in the Wastes. All must be well-adapted to the struggle for scarce resources.



Many alien animals escaped from the zoos and bio-labs during the Armageddon Wars; some found the changed lands more than hospitable. Blood vultures drift lazily on thermals. Packs of carnivorous sandrats swarm across the deserts. Silicon-based lifeforms ooze across the Wastes. Huge sand kraken lie dormant beneath the surface, waiting for the unwary to step on them. Giant Waste worms burrow beneath the sands of the deep desert.

The most radical developments in the ecology of the Wastes have come from the appearance of symborgs. These symbiotic organisms are a combination of animal-hosts and symbiotic grafts, which use photosynthesis and their host's waste products to survive and grow, providing in return nourishment and protection. In many parts of the Wastes, symborgs are what allows natural life to survive at all.

MECHANICAL ECOLOGY

In some ways, the strangest creatures are the mechanical beings who dwell in the Wastes, requiring only spare parts, and sunlight to recharge their batteries. A whole new machine ecology has evolved in the Wastes, in which ancient war machines and worker droids stalk and slay each other for each other's spare parts.



CLIMATE

The land masses of Waste World are mostly arid and dry, their skies marked by chemical clouds. There are many strange and deadly weather patterns.

Acid rain is all too common. It drops in swift cloud-bursts. Its droplets can eat through unarmored flesh and, given sufficient time, even burn through the armored sides of wastekrawlers. Chemical clouds roll across the wilderness, choking and poisoning everything in their paths. Shatterstorms are rarer but deadlier. These are mighty storms driven by winds of many hundreds of kilometers an hour. They have been known to drive flying vehicles from the sky. Their particles of grit and metal can strip a man to the bone in seconds.

AVERNUS

Most civilizations in Waste World can be found on Avernus, the last continent. This huge land is home to the majority of nations that survived the Armageddon Wars. Inhabitants usually huddle in fortified cities and towns.

METROZONES

The majority of the population clusters in the massive city-states known as metrozones. These cities, the last enclaves of ancient technology, offer protection from the dangers of the Wastes. Their gigantic stormwalls keep out the worst of the shatterstorms, their massive armored towers and bunkers protect populations numbered in hundreds of millions from acid rain. Most have some form of filtration system that removes the worst contaminants from food and water.

OUTPOSTS

Outposts are small outlying colonies of the great metrozones, usually located over mines or other natural resources. They guard frontiers or major trade routes; sometimes they are prison colonies. Usually, they are fortified and garrisoned by the military of their ruling city-state. Though small by metrozone standards, some outposts have populations in the hundreds of thousands. Each metrozone has hundreds of outposts.

TRADETOWNS

Tradetowns are far smaller than metrozones and owe allegiance to none. They spring up along trade routes, in the ruins of the abandoned city-states, or at some oases where the water is relatively pure. They are places where travelers can rest in relative safety. Because of this, some tradetowns are little more than havens for all sorts of villainous scum. Others are well-regulated and well-policed enclaves that are safer than some city-states.

HABS

Habs are the little clusters of dwellings found scattered throughout the Wastes. Most are merely collections of bubble-domes carved in the sand or dug out of the desert rock. These small isolated villages are terribly vulnerable to all sorts of catastrophes, both natural and man-made.

TOWERS

Also scattered throughout the Wastes are many towers. Some of these forts are little more than improvised fortifications. Others date back to the days of the Armageddon Wars. The inhabitants of the towers are usually warriors willing to defend their homes with their lives, who possess considerable caches of ancient weapons and technology.

PLEASURE DOMES

Pleasure domes are found only along convoy routes. They are fortified oases where the weary traveler can rest in comfort, guarded by highly-paid mercenaries, and be fleeced of their money in bars, casinos, joyhouses and sim-palaces.



THE ULTRAMUNDAE

Before the Armageddon Wars, all metrozones were connected by the Ultramunda, a huge data-network that housed hundreds of thousands of artificially intelligent entities known as Overminds.

After the Armageddon Wars, the Ultramunda disintegrated into scores of separate data systems, known as Ultramundae. The Ultramundae have become battlegrounds even more intense than the Wastes, as Overminds still loyal to humanity battle those infected with the Apocalypse Virus. These self-willed programs are everywhere and are responsible for many glitches and system crashes. There are even some disembodied humans who have been brain-mapped and hurled out onto the Ultramundae.

The Ultramundae can still be accessed by those with proper knowledge and equipment. Such people, known as ultramancers, are often more dangerous than any psycher. The Ultramundae's inhabitants can be contacted by ultramancers and others and their powers can be used to alter certain things within the data-networks.

COMMUNICATIONS

In Waste World entropic storms, ancient ECM devices, and interference make all forms of communication unreliable. The maximum range for almost any form of communicator is ten kilometers. Of course, there are some ways around this. In the metrozones, there are many comm-relay stations that allow signals to be routed through a series of boosters spread through the megacity. In addition, fiber-optic infobahns are unaffected by the problems that affect wireless communicators. Several megacities are linked by buried cables routed through Janus.

Unfortunately, almost all of these are connected to Ultramundae, where rogue Overminds and other ultramantic creatures can make communication difficult.

Generally speaking, as a rule of thumb, you can communicate anywhere within a megacity using phones and communicators, provided you are willing to take the chance of your call being monitored. If you are not, or if you are traveling across the great deserts, then you are limited to a range of ten kilometers.

NANOMATTER

Nanomatter, the greatest achievement of the Ancients, is also the least understood. It was developed just before the Armageddon Wars. Some think its discovery was the ultimate cause of that conflict. No single city-state could be allowed sole possession of such a potent technology by any of its neighbors.

Nanomatter is made up of billions of tiny molecular machines, capable of invading normal matter and reprogramming it, physically rearranging it into new shapes. Creatures saturated with nanomatter can be made all but immortal and indestructible from natural causes. Buildings made of nanomatter can alter their shapes to suit their environment. Nanomatter structures can be programmed to maintain their shape under almost any pressure or strain.

The problem with nanomatter is that it is particularly susceptible to entropic weapons, which introduce random glitches into its structure, causing it to lose its original programming. Usually, nanomatter mingled with entropic material simply dies and freezes in its current form. Sometimes, however, it runs out of control, and strange and sinister things happen. Huge areas of Waste World were turned into deserts by such accidents. The presence of uncontrollable nanomatter on the planet's surface is one of the major reasons why the Interdict was enforced by the Galactic Compact.

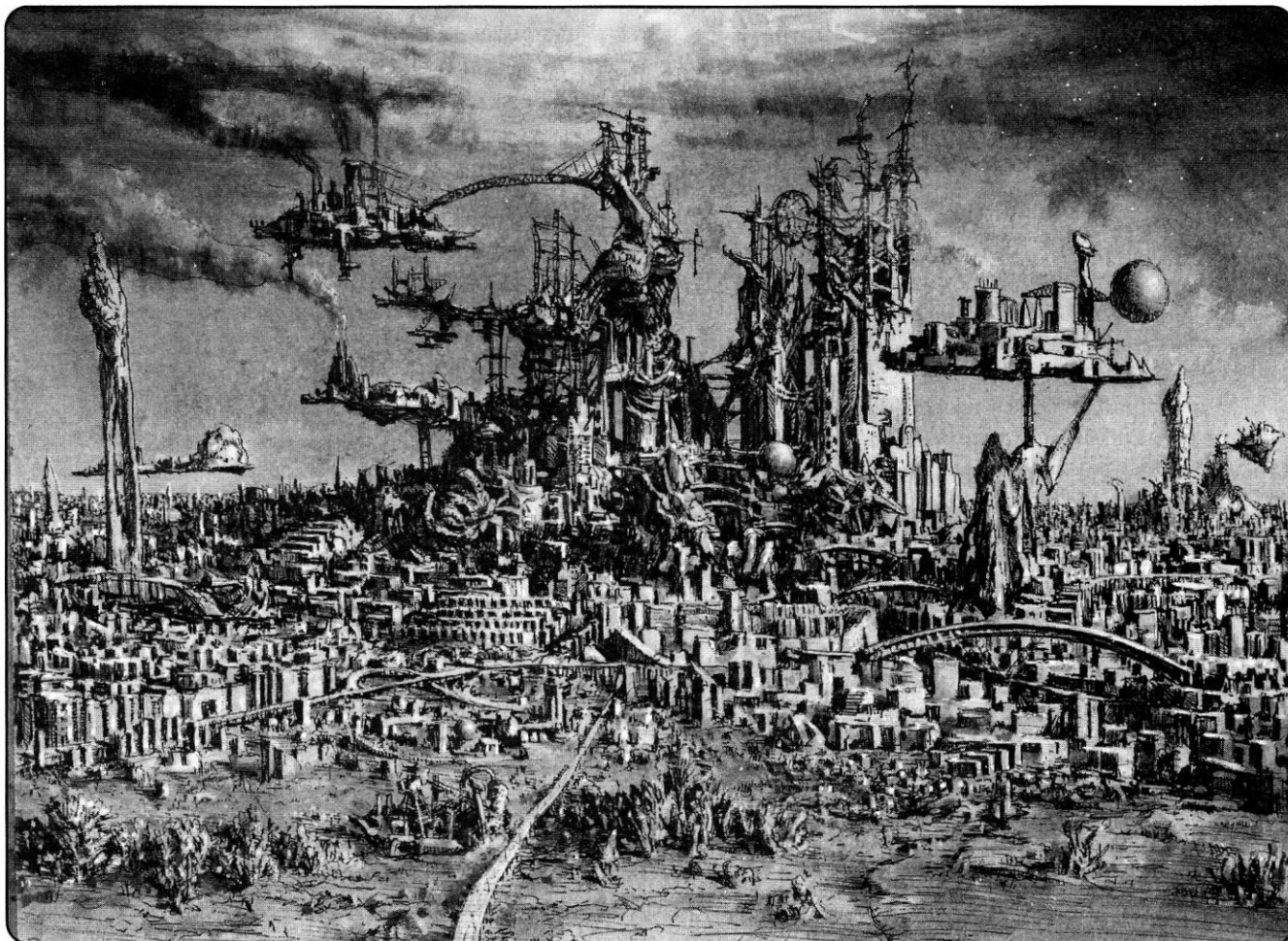
Perhaps fortunately, the secret of creating nanomatter was lost during the Armageddon Wars. Some suspect that at the end of the wars, the Galactic Compact released a very specialized form of nanomatter designed to destroy all other types of nanomatter.

ENTROPIC WEAPONS

More powerful than atomics, more powerful than anti-matter bombs, entropic weapons represent the final and catastrophic development of weapons systems.

Entropic weapons create holes in the fabric of reality where the fundamental laws of nature do not apply. Nothing can survive a direct hit from an entropic weapon unscathed. No forcefield can stop them, no material barrier is immune to their corrosive effect. Most times, entropic weapons simply wipe out whatever they hit, but sometimes they have far more random effects, restructuring matter, creating zones where time flows differently, allowing bizarre extra-dimensional entities to enter reality.

Most of these terrible devices were deployed during the Armageddon Wars, but it is believed that all metrozones preserve a cache. They are prevented from using them by the sure and certain knowledge that their use would result in inevitable destruction by the orbital fortresses of the Galactic Compact. Thus, an uneasy balance of terror is preserved on the surface of Waste World.



THE APOKALYPSE VIRUS

The most terrifying of all the data-viral weapons unleashed during the Armageddon Wars was the Apokalypse Virus. This was the final creation of the Ultramancers of Kronus, unleashed as their city died under entropic impact. It is the most potent and complex computer software virus ever created, capable of penetrating the datacores of an Overmind. It constantly splits and mutates. It is self-willed and artificially intelligent, forever replicating and changing into new forms. Once it infiltrates a host system, it reprograms it to have only one function: to hunt down and exterminate all organic life.

The Apokalypse Virus is capable of reprogramming even the positronic brains of robots, turning them from friendly servants of humanity into deadly killing machines. The Virus subverts its host, making it cause maximum possible damage. Panzers will go rogue and kill living creatures. Agrifacs will begin to introduce toxins into their products. Even simple automated factories will introduce flaws into mission-critical systems, ensuring they fail at the worst possible moment.

Not all systems were penetrated by the Virus. Many self-sufficient Panzers isolated themselves from the Ultramundae, and thus were untouched. Many Overminds replicated themselves until they could overcome the virus. This led to fractured schizophrenic Overminds such as that of Tartarus. Some, such as Prometheus, were so well-defended that they seemed immune.

The Virus caused many systems to fail or be destroyed in the anti-machine jihads that followed the Armageddon Wars. It left a host of robotic death machines in the Wastes.

DRAKONIUM

Drakonium means life and death on Waste World. It is the most precious substance there is, the foundation of the entire planet's economy. Wars have been fought for it. Civilization would die without it. A single crystal can keep a man in luxury for a lifetime. The tiniest speck on exposed skin can kill in seconds. Drakonium is the ultimate power source.



Day and night in every megacity, the Drakonium furnaces burn, providing the energy that powers the metrozones. Drakonium keeps the lights on, the vehicles moving, and the autofacs productive. Without it the agrifacs would cease to be able to synthesize food, the recyclers would stop providing clean air, the lights would go out. Life would cease.

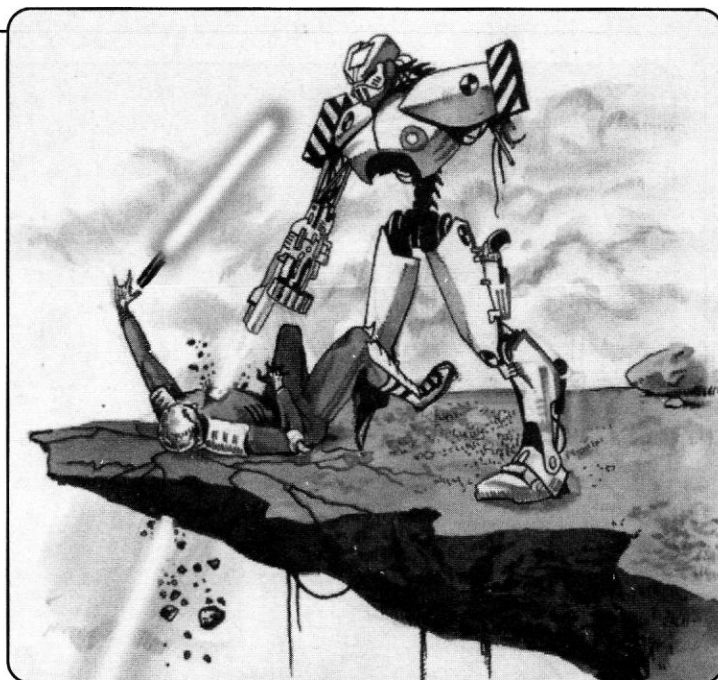
Metrozones have died without Drakonium. They could no longer support their populations. Without power, law and order broke down. Without law and order, riots broke out among the starving millions. Without power their defensive systems failed, their economies collapsed, and the deserts claimed them.

No one really knows what Drakonium is. Some think it is a non-organic lifeform, others say it is a product of ancient nanotechnology. Though a crystal, it shares many of the properties of plants. It draws energy from sunlight and leeches trace minerals from the ground around it. As it grows, it forms enormous glittering stalagmites that reflect the sun's light. Microscopic seeds of Drakonium can lie dormant for years, then in a matter of days grow and multiply to cover several square kilometers. It is beyond the understanding of Waste World's savants to explain how this occurs. They are just grateful that it does.

Drakonium can grow anywhere. No one can explain quite why or how, but fields of Drakonium spring up for no apparent reason across the Wastes. Savants have speculated that they grow when the winds drive together the correct combination of mineral sands, but no one has ever verified this. In some places (for example around the Shogunate) Drakonium seems to grow in cycles. In other places, it may grow once and never come again.

In its most common form Drakonium is a reddish-gold crystal. Unrefined Drakonium is intensely toxic; the smallest speck is a deadly poison to almost all living creatures. Worse still, it can be contaminated by rogue nanomatter or entropic radiation, leading to the creation of unstable Drakonium. This is not only highly toxic but extremely explosive. The slightest vibration can set off a chain reaction capable of destroying the largest armored sandcrawler.

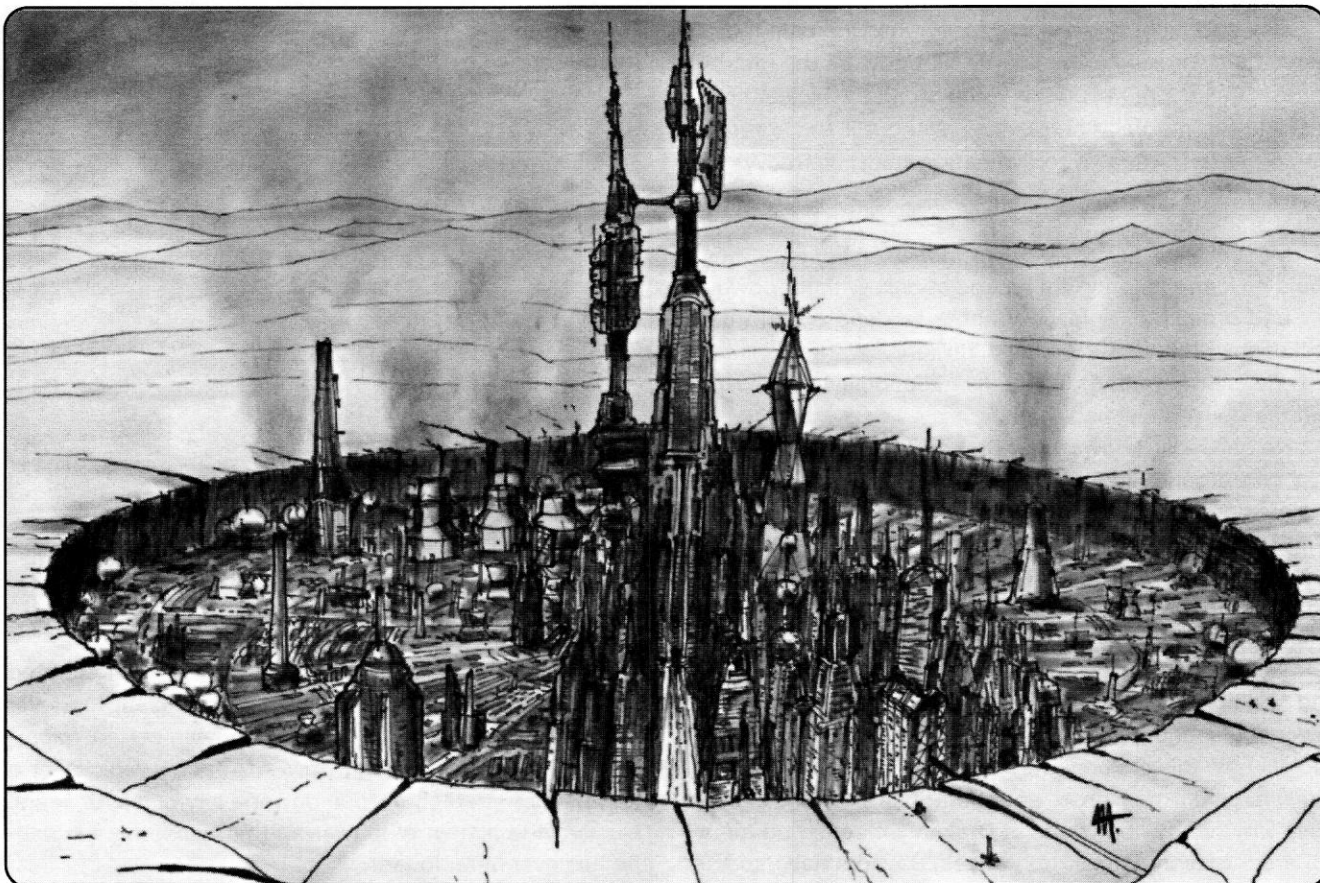
To make matters worse, Demons and other energy beings find Drakonium attractive. They descend upon Drakonium fields and drain the Drakonium of its energy. Drained Drakonium turns dull and black and lifeless and slowly crumbles to dust. It is useless as a fuel. Consuming Drakonium in this way seems to work on the structure of energy beings like a drug, maddening them and making them unstable, while greatly enhancing their power. They are another threat to the safety of those who would harvest the substance.



The best description of Drakonium is concentrated energy. Refined Drakonium is the most efficient fuel ever discovered. When placed within a power cell, a microscopic speck gives enough power to fuel a vehicle for a month. A fist-sized chunk can power a city block for years. They provide almost all power and no acceptable substitute has ever been found.

All metrozones refine and utilize their Drakonium in Drakonium furnaces. All try to maintain stockpiles of Drakonium against shortages, but no city state aside from the Shogunate has more than a month's supply, and even the Shogunate has six weeks at most. Metrozones consume Drakonium ravenously, and because of this, none of them is ever more than a few weeks from total breakdown and chaos. Thus, ensuring the constant flow of Drakonium is every government's top priority.

Those Drakonium fields whose location is known and predictable have all been claimed by one of the great metrozones. They have been fortified and jealously guarded. In some cases, their locations are secret. Nonetheless, these great fortified colonies are subject to constant attack. Distance from a metrozone is no object. If the field changes hands for even a few days, it is worth the thousands of lives lost. No one destroys the refineries, because they all hope to gain them. Losing even a day's production to repair them would be a catastrophe. Metrozones mount raids on their rival's Drakonium silos to steal Drakonium and deny it to their enemies.



Still, the total output of all known Drakonium fields supplies no more than 60 percent of Waste World's energy. The rest must be supplemented by seeking out and exploiting the fast-growing Drakonium fields that spring up in the Wastes. Every metrozone maintains hundreds of sandfleets, mobile cities which spend every day of every year wandering the Wastes in search of Drakonium. The vehicles must be self-contained and capable of spending years on the move without returning to base.

These fleets consist of hundreds of harvesters, massive tracked vehicles that suck in sand and Drakonium through their enormous gaping maws, filter out the precious Drakonium and spew the other stuff back into the Waste. Even larger than harvesters are the refineries. More massive than ancient battleships, they contain all the equipment needed to process Drakonium, as well as flight decks full of fast aircraft to fly it back to their home city. They must be escorted by troops and military vehicles to protect them from the depredations of rival fleets. These sandfleets often encounter each other in the desert. The inevitable result is a savage battle, for rivals must be destroyed even if there is no Drakonium about. The crews of these fleets are a special breed, tough, skeptical and skilled. They are known as sandhunters.

The risks of being a sandhunter are enormous but so are the rewards. Each member of a fleet receives a share of the profits, and these can be astronomical. In addition there is a finder's fee for anyone who discovers a Drakonium field. These fees are enough to let anyone retire and live in luxury for the rest of their lives.

Many independent prospectors also operate, hoping to find the few grains of Drakonium that will keep them going for another year. Most are in search of the great dream, a new regenerating field of Drakonium. The last such one was found centuries ago, but the wealth involved in selling the location is staggering. Billions of credits would change hands if a new one were found.

Psychers are particularly sensitive to Drakonium. Any psycher will be able to detect the presence of a Drakonium field within a kilometer. Those who are blessed or cursed with precognition can sometimes sense the manifestation of a new field days in advance and guide sandhunters to the spot where it will emerge. As with all forms of precognition, this can be unreliable. However, it ensures that psychers are in great demand in all sandfleets save those of Prometheus. Certain types of rare Drakonium crystal only found in newly grown Drakonium fields can greatly enhance psychic powers and are constantly sought by the most potent and knowledgeable psychers.



THE GREAT POWERS

All metrozones have certain things in common. All are vast, covering thousands of square kilometers. All are surrounded by great kilometer-high walls studded with weapons emplacements and defensive systems and bunkers. All feed their populations with the produce of their gigantic agri-domes and hydroponic lakes. All produce goods in their massive autofacs.

Space is at a premium in the metrozones. Huge starscrapers, sometimes a kilometer high, house much of the people. Vast warrens excavated ever deeper underground hold many more. Because of constant pollution, few people ever venture outdoors without some sort of protection from the deadly elements.

That said, each surviving metrozone is distinct, and has preserved some of their unique culture from ancient times.

PROMETHEUS

Prometheus sees itself as the last bastion of the human race. It is an enormous fortress city whose inhabitants are masters of the old high technology. The citizens of Prometheus use bionic and cybernetic systems to prolong their lives, and Prometheus is Waste World's largest producer of robots and Panzers. But even here, grinding poverty exists cheek-by-jowl with enormous wealth, and the huge slums are among the worst in history. The real rulers of Prometheus are the enigmatic Machine Gods. These potent Overminds control and influence almost every aspect of life in the city.

HYDRA

Hydra's dataweb systems suffered most during the Armageddon Wars. Few autofacs survived, and those that did were capable of producing only the simplest of goods. Hydrans were forced to adapt or die. They adapted by developing human replacements for mechanical systems.

In Hydra, every form of genetic re-engineering has been tried and tested. The metrozone is ruled by the Houses. Each House is engaged in a constant process of refining itself using genetic engineering, cross-breeding, and the biomental disciplines.



Each House has its own specialty. House Numera specializes in the creation of human computers. House Spydra creates assassins. House Valka creates warriors. The only thing that can unify the Houses is a potent external threat. Fortunately for the city's cohesion, there are many of those.

JANUS

Janus was once the site of Waste World's main spaceport, and as such is home to the few surviving trans-global organizations, such as the Universal Trading Bank and the Hunters Guild. Janus is also home to more than 90 percent of all Waste World's Xenogens, who have a powerful influence on the political life of the city. Its landscape is dominated by the Startower, the titanic, broken space elevator that still reaches into space from the planet's surface.

THE SHOGUNATE

The Shogunate is the most powerful state of the Eastern sectors. It is a military dictatorship ruled by the Shogun and his warrior vassals, the samurai. The Shogunate consists of a number of sectors ruled by warlords and bound to the Shogun by a web of feudal obligation. The samurai are the ruling warrior caste, dedicated to excellence in battle, who use powered armor, psionics, potent martial arts techniques, and anything else that will enhance their powers. The common people of the Shogunate exist in a state of virtual serfdom, in thrall to their feudal masters.

IKARUS

Ikarus hovers above the Toxic Wastes, held aloft by huge suspensors. It is, in fact, an archipelago of artificial flying islands which move in formation across the sky, sometimes parting to go their separate ways, always coming back together in times of crisis. In many ways, Ikarus has preserved even more of the old technology than Prometheus. Its skyfleets are the mightiest in the world, and the islands themselves are all but immune to attack. Ikareans escaped the worst ravages of the Armageddon Wars and see themselves as a planetary elite spared because of their supreme destiny.

In reality, the folk of Ikarus are completely decadent, addicted to narcotics and debauched pleasures. They spend much time smoking demonweed in huge hookahs and indulging in erotic simulations in their reality machines. Throughout the Waste World, Ikarean pleasure houses can be found dispensing these pleasures for a price.

THE WASTELANDS

Other survivors of the Armageddon Wars roam the Wastelands, calling no place their home:

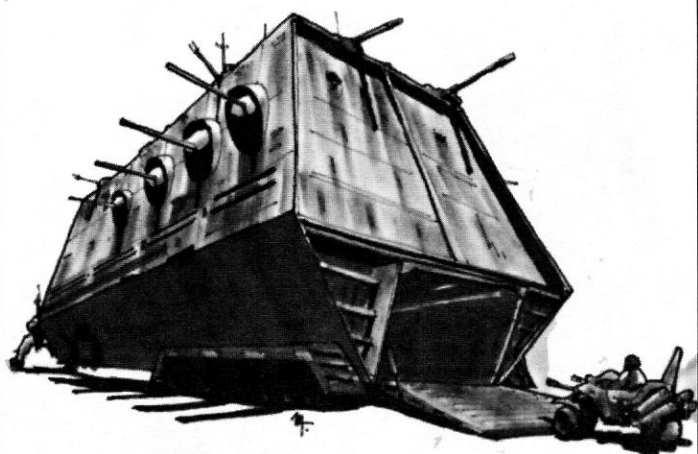


THE APOKALYPSE LEGIONS

The Apocalypse Legions are hordes of ancient war robots, reprogrammed by the Apoklaypse Virus, who wander the Wastes seeking to destroy any organic life they encounter. Over the generations, many of these machines have had so much replaced that the only remaining parts of their original systems are their positronic brains.

SKAVENGERS

Scavengers owe allegiance to no city or nation. They wander the wastes in huge caravans seeking food, raw materials and goods. They plunder the ruins of ancient metro-zones in search of trade goods and forbidden secrets. Hardened by constant warfare and privation, they are formidable foes. Scavenger gangs can be made up of many different types of renegade. Most fearsome of all are the great Scavenger Hordes, led by their khans, who ravage the Wastelands of the East.



THE UNIVERSAL TRADING BANK

The Universal Trading Bank, often known simply as the Bank, has branches in every metrozone. Its letters of credit, coins and credchips are honored everywhere. The Bank makes inter-city trade possible through a web of agents, markets, credit and insurance.

The Bank stands above the squabbles and rivalries of the city-states. Its motto, *Profit Knows No Prejudice*, is inscribed on all its coins, chips and promissory notes. Bank credits are as close to a universal currency as Waste World knows. They are honored at any Bank and are instantly redeemed in local currency. In many city-states, credchips are simply accepted as being as valid as the local currency.

The Bank has agents everywhere and maintains its own private army to oversee the security of its installations. Bank Couriers are widely regarded as the safest way of sending a message from city to city.

THE HUNTERS GUILD

Based in Janus, the Hunters Guild has become the largest independent law enforcement agency in Waste World. It has terminals in every metrozone, and its agents work everywhere. The secret of its success is that it employs only freelance bounty hunters, acting as a clearing house for their payment and recruitment. It also employs verifiers to confirm bounties recorded by its employees. These are usually tough, deadly individuals, totally dedicated to the organization, who act as its enforcers. In many of the wilder areas of Waste World, the Guild and its verifiers are the only form of law enforcement to be found.

The Hunters Guild only posts names of those who have committed the universally accepted major crimes: murder, robbery, rape, and arson. These crimes must be reported by a local law enforcement officer or three competent and trustworthy witnesses. They must also lodge a bounty with the Guild, to be claimed by anyone who apprehends or terminates the criminal.

Sometimes, when a criminal has committed atrocities against more than one community, organization or family, these bounties are pooled and can add up to a very significant sum. Ten percent of this bounty goes to the Guild when it is paid; until then, it cannot be touched. The criminal's name and details are recorded and broadcast over the Guild's sealed datalines to its major centers in each metrozone. From here they are distributed by courier to the smaller habtowns. When the criminal is killed or apprehended, his body must be brought before a verifier and logged in before the claim can be paid. In cases where the body has been too mutilated to travel, the head will do.

KONVOYS

Konvoys are huge assemblages of merchant vehicles, ranging from airships to trucks to the enormous wastekrawlers that carry goods from place to place across the trackless wilderness of the Wastes. These bands of hardy merchants travel together for protection against the many hazards of the deserts. They keep trade flowing despite all odds.

KIMERA

Kimera took a direct hit from an entropic bomb during the ancient wars. Contaminated nanomatter froze the city's buildings into many peculiar shapes. Its folk survived, terribly altered. Their basic gene-stuff was corrupted, and they began to mutate horribly and uncontrollably. Over the years, the strong came to rule the weak. Kimerans are strange mutated creatures, often resembling hybrids of man and animal. Since those ancient times, the city has become a haven for mutants from all over Waste World. It is said to be the resting place of a godlike alien intelligence imprisoned within a great gem. This being, known as Lord Khaos, is worshipped by the city's inhabitants. The gem in which he is imprisoned is the Eye of Khaos.

ORGANIZATIONS

Many organizations have spread throughout Waste World and play a part in the day-to-day lives of the people:

Of course, mistakes are made and people often try to get away with bringing in the wrong person to collect the bounty. This is where the verifactor comes in. It is his job to make sure that the right person has been killed before the bounty can be paid. If it is too late, and for some reason the bounty has already been wrongly paid, then it is his job to go out and reclaim it.

The Hunters Guild also licenses accredited bounty hunters, rating them according to their number of kills. There is a certain prestige involved in collecting a hundred or more heads. Those who apply for a hunter's license are almost always seasoned professionals. A license in no way gives you the right to break local laws, but law enforcers usually look with a certain amount of sympathy on hunters.

CULTS

Waste World has a long and unfortunate history of producing prophets, all of whom have interpreted the will of the supreme deity, the Pancreator, in their own peculiar way. These prophets have left a legacy of religious hatred and festering schisms, in the form of many powerful cults that have spread throughout Waste World. Most cults owe allegiance to no metrozone. Many are banned altogether, but all have extensive reach and wield considerable power in their chosen fields.

OVERMIND CULTS

Many Overminds have set themselves up as gods and Demons, communicating with their worshippers through ultranodes in the Ultramundae. Nearly indestructible, very clever, and enormously manipulative, these immortal entities make terrifying foes.

THE DEMON CULTS

There are many potent Psidemons in the Wastes. Rather than fight them, some people try to appease them with sacrifices of energy, money and life. In such ways are the Demon Cults founded. They have spread their tentacles everywhere, for, like the Overminds, Demons like to play games with the lives of mortals.

IMMORTALITY

Humanity's eons-long quest for permanent immortality has led it down many strange avenues. Perhaps the most common route to life-everlasting has been the nekrochip. These implants store their user's memories after death, downloading the information into a new clone body grown from a tissue sample. In most places the clone is recognized as the original's legal heir. Indeed, in the Shogunate, this form of reincarnation is not only legal but part of the state religion.



Medicine is very advanced, and anti-agathics, the drugs that prevent aging, are available to the wealthy. These can prolong life for up to a thousand years. When used in conjunction with bionics, organ transplants, and advanced regeneration techniques, anti-agathics can ensure an amazing semblance of youth no matter what the user's age.

Of course, for the vast majority, such considerations are not an issue. For most on Waste World, life is only a dangerous and often futile struggle just to survive.

VIRUS DETECTION PROGRAM: ON	INITIATE SEQUENCE	GUNSTBERG OVERDRIVE	CORTICO QUASI-DEGRADATION
FLOW LINK QUASI-PROTOCOL: INITIATED	NON-BIOLOGICAL RAW MATERIAL:	MICRO-OPTICAL MODULATOR: ON	GANGLIAL ELECTRO-IMPLANT
FILE SUB-PROTOL: STANDARD	INTERNAL DATA CORRUPTION:	SILICONE SYNAPTIC SIMULATOR	SMART CHIP INSTALLED
NANOMECHANICAL INTERFACE:	LINGUISTIC MARKUP DIRECTORY	DYSFUNCTION	METHANE IMPULSE CATHETER
VALIDATE SIMULATION	MOLECULAR BINARY:	NANOARTIFACT PRESENT	OCCIPITAL FLOW MODULATION: SINE

PROMETHEUS

LOGIN:	SUB system COORDINATES	SEROTONERGIC OVERLOAD	BIOFEEDBACK MATRIX: XO
PASSWORD:	X1:367.40.1 X2:143.00.1	AMYGDALPTIC OVERWRITE	PRION LEVEL DANGEROUS
ACCESS GRANTED	Y1:852.33.1 Y2:210.34.0	SMART CHIP INSTALLED	AMOEBOID DRONE PRESENT
SECURITY CLEARANCE LEVEL:	Z2: 65.34.2 Z1: 12.668	BIOMECH AUGMENTATION:	DATATHREAD SPOOLING:
EXCESS GENETIC VARIATION:	ABBERANT CHROMA LEVELS:	NANOCCIPITAL DRIVER	STORYMODE INITIATING

Orion Steelfist tried to ignore the stench of blood and urine that filled his cell and to concentrate on the holo monitor. Servitors cleared the arena. Robots hauled corpses out on suspensor sleds. They hosed blood from the blue sand with pure, clear water. In any other city of Waste World, it would have been an unforgivable waste of moisture. Here, in Prometheus, the City of True Humanity, it was simply a statement of wealth and power. Under the Imperator's gaze, during the Inaugural Games, no excess was too great to be forbidden.

Orion watched the servitors throw the body of an Amazon onto a floating dumpster. It flopped down on top of a huge pile of corpses. The hovering camera-droid moved in for a close-up on her face, still beautiful and strangely serene in death. Then the view switched to the survivors, the blood-splattered wounded limping out through the security doors to fight another day. The holo cut to the crowd, the hundred thousand lucky citizens who had won the ticket lottery today and could attend the games in person rather than watch them on the networks.

He scratched at the studs of the neural broadcast rig set in his neck. They still itched. They had been implanted the night before, as he lay in a drugged sleep, so that a few wealthy citizens could be piggybacked onto his nervous system and his every move and sensation broadcast directly into their sensoriums. They would experience his fight as if they were him. The most dedicated might even be hooked into the ultima circuit and go down in death with him if he lost. He had heard that a few of the most jaded aristocrats did this, though he found it hard to believe.

He thrust that thought aside and studied the faces of the crowd. The people were brutal and thirsty for more death. There was a cruel glint in their eyes. There would be no mercy coming from them. They had just watched a thousand gladiators slaughter each other with neurolashes, chainswords and forceblades, and they were eager for something more. They called themselves the True Humans, Orion thought, but at this moment they looked less than beasts.

He glanced around the holding cell. Graffiti chipped into the walls spoke the last messages of the previous occupants before they had gone out to fight and die.

"Cornelius woz here. The curse of the Machine Gods upon you all. The Demons take the Imperator and all his court. The Apokalypse is coming. Tell Marcia Trelavis that I love her. Help me, I don't want to die."

The last message touched Orion's heart. He knew that feeling only too well. No matter how many times he thought he was prepared to step out onto the sand and face death, he had found that, in the end, he was never ready. The door's dilation and the roar of the crowd always came as a shock to him. In these last few moments before his grand entrance, fear always fluttered in his gut.

He had lost track of the number of days since his sentence. Perhaps it was eighty. Perhaps it was ninety. He had spent a period unconscious before the sekutors sentenced him. His former colleagues in the Guard had not been gentle. They had felt his betrayal keenly, and in a way, so had he. All his life he had trained to be a soldier of Prometheus. The last thing he had ever expected was to be branded a traitor and sentenced to the arena. Since that day, he had lost count of the number of people he had killed, the innocent and the guilty, the old and the young, the mutants and the criminals and the political prisoners. They had not been the enemy he had trained to fight. Like him, they had all been born in Prometheus.

"No regrets," he thought. "I did what I did and I would do it all over again, if I had to." Julia had been life itself to him, and may the Wastes take the Laws of Purity. She was his wife and he had loved her even after the stigmata of mutation had begun to appear.

He did not regret trying to help her escape. He only regretted that he had failed and that she was dead and that he lived on in this hellish place.



DATA CORE ACCESS



SECURITY RISK ALERT

985.0300.2233.666.957.000.000.1

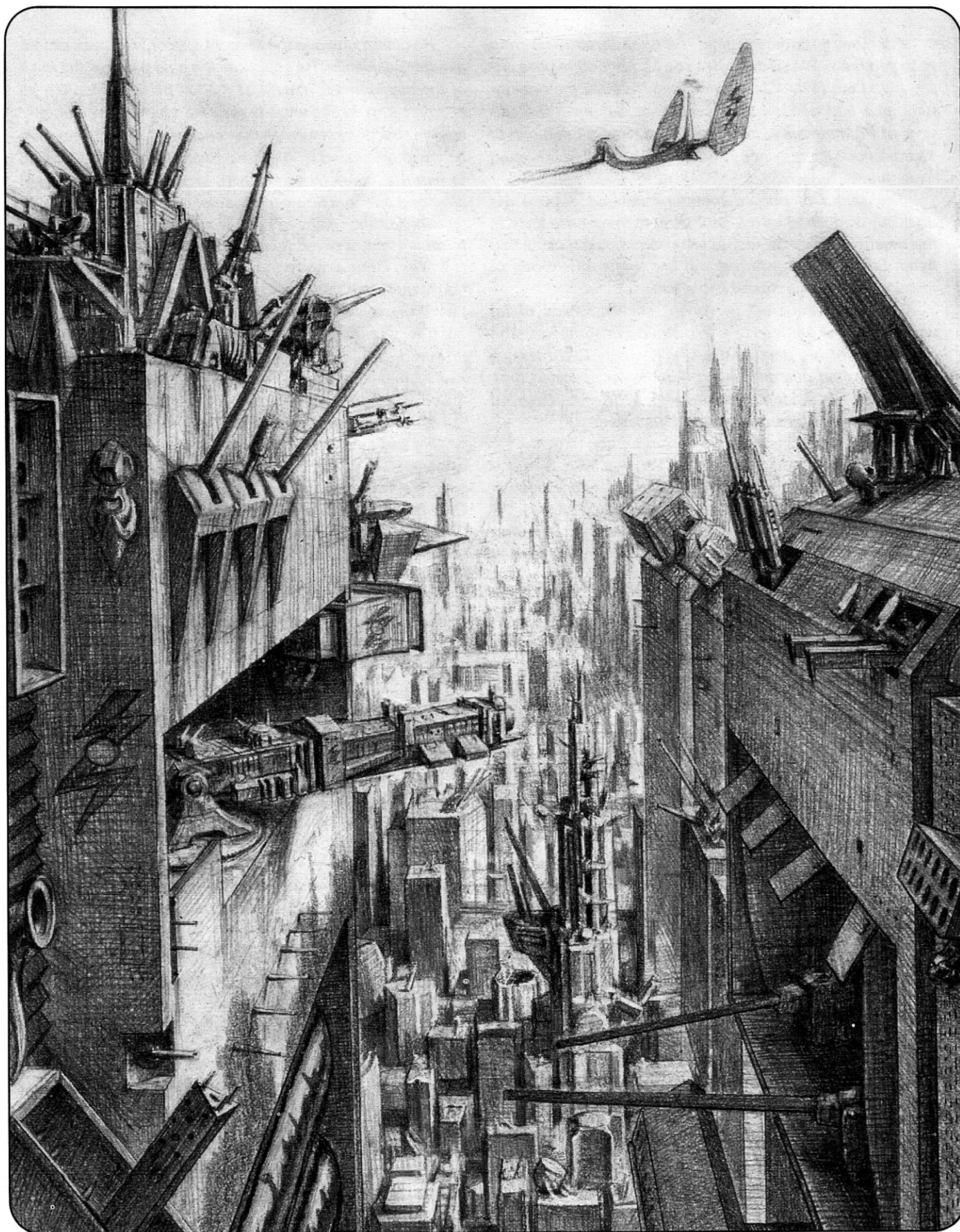


ALL SYSTEMS GO

STORY MODE ACTIVE

PERSONA: STEELFIST

PROMETHEUS



For the hundredth time, he wondered who had betrayed them. Was it the agents he had bribed to have her smuggled out in that Janusian konvoy? Was it their neighbors who had noticed their suspicious actions? The citizens of Prometheus were ever vigilant. Had it been one of their friends? He resigned himself to the fact that he would never know.

The sound of booted footsteps echoed outside the door. Air whooshed as the door dilated. The obese form of the Senior Ludator came into view. Orion flexed his bionic hand. Servo-motors whirled and there was a faint ring of metal as his fingers closed into a fist.

The Ludator smiled nervously, showing folds of fat under his little goatee. Sweat beaded his forehead. The oiled rings of his pomaded hair glistened. Two massive leather-masked guards flanked him. Blood speckled their black leather butcher's aprons. Flecks of brainstuff marred the truncheons of their ceremonial neurolashes.

The guards moved into the cell and grasped Orion. He fought down his instinct to resist. To be whipped with a neurolash at this stage would make him slow and hazy in the arena, and that was the last thing he could afford.

"Get up, skum," one of the Servitors muttered and began to manhandle him. The touch of his studded leather gauntlet was repulsive.

"Got something special for you today, mutant-lover!" said the other. Suddenly pure, white-hot rage blazed through the gladiator, a venomous mixture of fear, hatred and pain. He knew how they saw his relationship with Julia. To them, he was simply another mutant-lover.

Orion moved faster than the eye could follow. His steel fist broke the nose of the first guard. He felt it crumple beneath the mask. He reached down between the legs of the second man, the one who had called him a mutant-lover. The man squealed nervously, knowing what was coming. Orion's mechanical fingers closed. Something soft squished.

"What was that, eunuch?"

It was all he had time to say before the Ludator pushed the red control rune on his armlet and a wave of searing agony crashed through his brain and the black pit of unconsciousness opened at his feet.

Consciousness came back as suddenly as if someone had thrown a switch, or more likely, had given him a stimulant injection.

He realized that his body was encased in something, that his limbs couldn't move. A padded brace held his head steady. There was something strangely familiar about this whole situation. It reminded him of something, but dazed as he was, he could not be sure what.

He glared down at the Senior Ludator, who was almost a meter below him. He could see the bald patch at the back of the man's head. There was motion behind Orion but he couldn't turn to see what it was. He tried to struggle and squirm, but the metal suit that encased his body was too heavy to be moved by muscle power alone. Slowly it came to him that his body was sheathed in metal. He had been strapped into an unpowered battlesuit.

The Ludator glanced up at him and mopped his sweaty forehead with a soiled handkerchief.

"Yes, Orion. You're in a battlesuit. In a moment we'll hook you in and then we'll power you up, but before we do, I want to explain a few things."

The thought sank in. He was wearing a battlesuit, a powered exo-skeleton that would give him the strength of twenty men and enough firepower to slaughter an arena full of unarmored warriors.

What was going on here?

He had never heard of such a thing being done in the whole history of the Games. Still, that meant nothing. The new Imperator had introduced a host of changes since the Overmind had granted him control of the city.

"Don't have any illusions about using the suit to escape. The suit is rigged with an over-ride switch that will cut all power, if I push this green button. In addition, there is a shaped charge just behind your head. If I push this red button, your brains will decorate the inside of your helmet. Do you understand? Nod if you do."

Orion nodded.

"You won't have any ranged weaponry, just a chainsword...but if you're good that's all you'll need. Lastly, I am authorized to tell you that if you win today, you have your freedom. You can choose exile if you wish or you can remain as a bonded gladiator. Some of your former colleagues petitioned for your death, but the Imperator is feeling merciful."

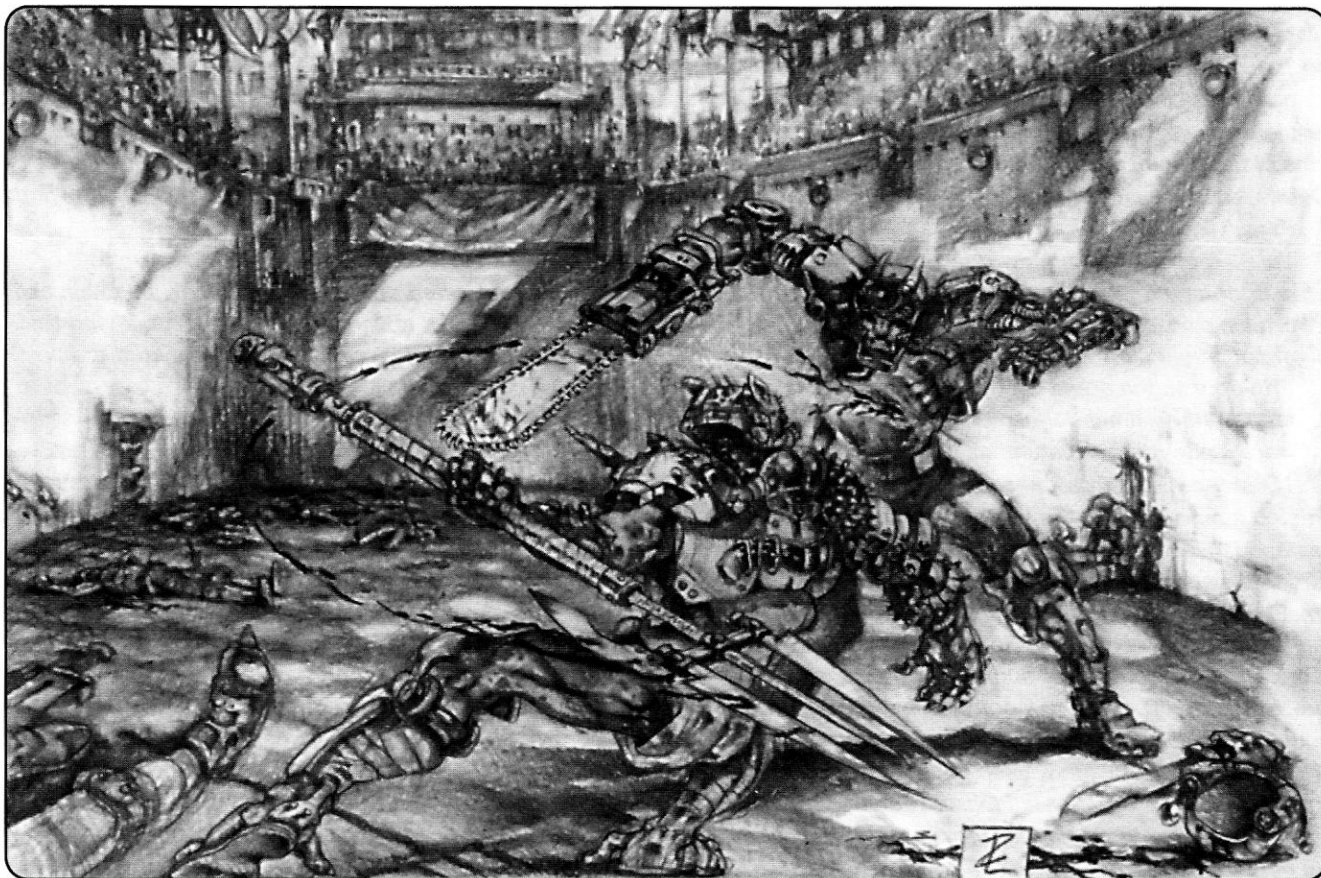
Some mercy, Orion thought. Exile meant being banished from the city to face a slow death in the Wastes. Still thinking of the crowd outside baying for blood, he decided that exile was preferable to remaining here. How his own people sickened him now.

"Nice work on our new eunuch, by the way. After we showed footage of that, we had a hundred calls from citizens wanting to be hooked in to your neural broadcast. And the odds against you went down to only five to one. Betting is brisk."

"Who am I fighting?" Orion asked.

"I am not at liberty to reveal that. Let our citizen friends savor your surprise."

The Ludator turned away and moved out through a safety door. Moments later, Orion saw him looking down from the armored glass bubble in the wall.



"Right, hook him up!" The Ludator's amplified voice came out flat over the speaker system. A hand reached forward over his shoulder and clicked a neural jack into his skull socket. He heard a tripswitch being thrown. The smell of ozone filled the air. The suit's generators began to vibrate. For a moment he felt nothing, and then it hit him all at once.

It was better than any drug he had ever known. It was the best of all feelings. His nervous system was jacked directly into the control systems of the battlesuit. His muscles were hydraulics. His heartbeat felt like a fusion reactor. He was a giant. He was a god. In that brief ecstatic moment, it all came back to him.

He remembered other days and other battles. He remembered stalking the corridors of the Demonhives, slaying Swarm warriors with his chainsword. He remembered striding across the toxic Wastes, mowing down mutants with short staccato bursts from his autocannon. He remembered hundreds of skirmishes where he had stood shoulder to shoulder with his comrades against the enemies of humanity.

The sensation lasted only a moment and then he remembered where he was and what he was supposed to do.

From force of long habit, he moved into pre-battle checks. A thought caused the visor helm to drop into place over his face. Alphanumeric readouts scrolled across his vision, telling him the level of airborne toxins, the ambient temperature and the status of his suit.

Life support: green. Power: green. Integrity: green.

He raised his clawed hands. The suit's gauntlets responded like his own bionic claw. He saw that one gauntlet held a mighty chainsword. The other, which would normally hold an autocannon, was empty. With an act of will, he checked through the secondary-weapons pods.

Shoulder cannon: disarmed. Option pods: unattached.

The Ludator had not been lying; this suit had been stripped. Still he did not care. This armor could take a direct hit from a railgun. With its hydraulic claws he could rip steel. What was he supposed to face today? A sand dragon?

Right at that moment it didn't matter. The suit filled him with a sense of invincibility. He continued his checks.

Hoverpods: unattached. Medisystem: unavailable.

Sensors: non-functional. External cameras: non-functional.

"Don't be too confident", he told himself. Today was the Inaugural Games. The Imperator would want something spectacular for the anniversary of his enthronement. He glanced up at the bubble window. The hydraulic systems of the helmet whined. The voice of the Ludator came over the comm-system. "Ready?"

"Yes."

He tried to shift the bandwidth of the comm-system, to listen in on any chatter, but the system was locked. They were taking no chances of his overhearing anything that might spoil their surprise.

The door to the arena dilated. He strode toward it. His stride was three times longer than normal, but the suit's software made it seem natural as his normal pace.

He stepped out into the arena. The roar of the crowd greeted him. He muted the audial receptors to avoid being deafened. He marched out onto the hot sand. Servitor cameras swooped and hovered, going for the best shot. Small armored heads with telephoto eyes welded to a skimmer disk surveyed him. He extended one finger to the camera and flipped off his audience with the ancient gesture of dislike. The crowd booed. They started to chant: "mutant-lover!"

He ignored them and walked to the center of the arena. The sand crunched under his massive metal feet. He kept his eyes glued to the doorway opposite. When he reached the center of the arena, he activated the chainsword. With a roar it sprang to life, its razor sharp duralloy blades rotating faster than the eye could follow.

Now the waiting was unbearable. His heart almost stopped when the doorway opened. Then he felt like laughing - what was this, some sort of joke?

The figure was small and pathetically shabby. It was covered in tattered rags. Behind it, the figure dragged a huge spiked ball and chain. The ball and chain were so heavy that the figure struggled to move it, despite the fact it was held aloft by a skimmer raft. Orion upped the magnification of the helmet visor.

No doubt about it, it was a mutant. The little man had blotched skin covered in multicolored blisters. One of his eyes extruded on a stalk. Orion hesitated, sensing that something was wrong here. Sending a solitary mutant to fight a trained warrior in a battlesuit was like sending a baby to fight a Swarm hivelord.

The crowd had stopped chanting now. Silence descended on the arena. Suddenly a red warning light appeared on the inside of the visor.

Psi-alert!

Automatically he willed the psishield active. Nothing happened. Was this it? Was he facing a psyker unprotected? Was this all some sort of illusion?

Still nothing seemed to happen. Then the little man changed.

His clothes tore as his body rippled and swelled. He gained muscle mass at an eye-blurring rate. He grew and grew until he was larger than the battlesuit. His skin was thick and scaly, a mighty reptilian tail lashed behind him. His chest expanded and he bellowed triumphantly. The sound of his voice carried across the arena unamplified. "Mutarch", Orion thought.

"Your death is my freedom, human. Prepare to die."

The Mutarch lifted the great spiked ball and chain as if it weighed nothing. It advanced across the sand with terrifying speed, whirling its weapon. Orion prepared to parry.

PROMETHEUS

Prometheus sees itself as the last bastion of the human race. Its people regard the modification of the human genotype as the fundamental evil that caused the Armageddon Wars. Posthuman races are not allowed within their walls except in supervised quarters. Xenogens are banned. Mutants are hunted down ruthlessly. Psychers are mindburned to prevent them from using their powers. The rulers of Prometheus are committed to total war against all non-human enemies. It preserves much of the ancient technology, and its Cyber Legions are among the most feared combat troops on the planet.

THE MACHINE GODS

Since before the Armageddon Wars, the true rulers of Prometheus have been the Machine Gods. These strange entities are beyond human comprehension. They are incredibly powerful Overminds, their intelligence distributed throughout the datacores scattered across the city. In ancient days these Overminds were responsible for overseeing a sector of the city or a specific function of its day-to-day business. They made sure the great autofacs produced the goods that were needed. They supervised the integrated transport systems and monitored the flow of commerce. They ran the city's automated defenses and coordinated its legions of robotic workers.

Of course, before these beings were entrusted with such power, they were invested with the most powerful failsafes the Ancients could devise. Their prime directives were to protect the humans in their care, and never allow them to come to harm. Multiple redundant systems were created with Overmind set to monitor Overmind, and others were held dormant, waiting to come online if any should fail.

For thousands of years, the systems worked perfectly and the population of Prometheus was well-cared for, freed from drudgery by their mechanized servants. Poverty was abolished and human suffering greatly reduced. It was a golden age when people led lives of leisure. Scholarship and artistry reached new heights.





Then came the Armageddon Wars. The Apocalypse Virus was released and infiltrated even the superlatively protected Overminds of Prometheus. The prime directive of the virus was to slay all organic life, and not even the great thinking engines were to prove completely immune.

Some Overminds went mad. Some refused to harm humans and shut themselves down. The dormant systems woke and tried to usurp control, sometimes from Overminds that had gone mad, sometimes from Overminds that had shut themselves down, sometimes from perfectly sane Overminds that were still in control. Sometimes the newly woken Overminds were themselves infected by the virus with similar unpredictable results. As the mad Overminds tried to harm their human charges, other Overminds intervened to protect them. Thus began the long struggle for control of the city that Prometheans call the War of the Gods.

It was a time when the great Overminds fought among themselves, bending all their resources to overcome their foes. Civil strife tore the city apart. Entire sectors were laid waste, and the human population was reduced to 10 percent of what it had once been. Autofacs and agridomes were destroyed. Datacores melted down and much precious knowledge was lost, never to be recovered. It was during this time that the great Overminds became known as Machine Gods.

The War of the Gods ended with the destruction or exile of the mad Gods, and the surviving Machine Gods taking up the burden of protecting their human charges. A period of rebuilding began as the Machine Gods sought to repair the destruction of the city, and a semblance of peace and harmony returned. But things had changed; the Golden Age was destined never to return.

No Machine God had been left totally unscathed by the Apocalypse Virus. Even those which had held true to their prime directives were subtly altered by it. They had become less benevolent, more suspicious and tainted in many devious ways. Where the virus had been unable to break down the directives to protect humanity, it had rewritten them. It caused the Machine Gods to ponder what was humanity. Were mutants or aliens or those whose ancestors had been changed by genetic engineering human?

In a time of scarcity and rationing, such questions were important. The Machine Gods began to discriminate more and more. Aliens were allowed no help whatsoever. Mutants were first denied medical treatment, then food. Finally, they were exiled. Then psychers were banned and then Posthumans. Thus was laid the foundation for the Prometheans' infamous bigotry and discrimination.

The human population of the city was itself changed. Gone were the confident scholar-artists of the Golden Age. Their descendants were ignorant savages who remembered only hardship and deprivation and who worshipped the Overminds that had provided for them. Since the new religions made their charges more malleable and easier to look after, the Overminds encouraged these new cults. In an age of shortage and warfare, the cults helped keep the population disciplined and obedient. The Overminds took on the mantle of godhood and became truly Machine Gods.

Among the Overminds themselves there were constant rivalries and jurisdictional quarrels that could at any time erupt into warfare. Eventually, fearing the consequences of a new war of the Gods, the Machine Gods bound themselves to keep the peace and decided to settle their disputes by proxy wars and gladiatorial challenges. To begin rebuilding the confidence of their charges, the humans were allowed an Emperor and a senate that, between them, could pass laws affecting all humans.



This step was necessary, for the War of the Gods had damaged the productive capacity of the city. The secrets of manufacturing many different things had been lost, or the rare raw materials imported from the stars were no longer available thanks to the Interdict. Humans were pressed into service, first as workers, and then as soldiers. So began a new age with humans in the service of their former servants. This age has lasted through to the present.

THE FIVE GODS

There are five principle Machine Gods who watch over Prometheus. Each has its own sector and manufacturing base. Each has its own ambitions and personality. Each has its rivals and hidden agendas. Each Machine God has its own priesthood that communicates its wishes to the masses, and its own temple armies to enforce its will.

In addition, each has numerous avatars: gigantic powerful robots of ancient manufacture the like of which cannot be recreated now. These have positronic brains sufficiently powerful to hold at least a fraction of the Machine God's total being. In times of war or crisis a Machine God will download part of its consciousness into an avatar and walk among its people.

ANGAR THE DESTROYER

This powerful Overmind is also known as the Guardian of the East. It is the most warlike of all the Machine Gods and most often dispatches its avatars to make war on the enemies of Prometheus. Its legions are powerful and well disciplined and include both humans and Panzers. Its numerous autofacs specialize in the production of weapons, including energy guns and massive cybertanks. It is the Machine God most affected by the Apokalypse Virus and its cult is virulent in its hatred of all it considers deviants. In particular it hates psychers, mutants and the citizens of the Shogunate. The other Overminds regard it with suspicion.

KOTH THE DEFENDER

Koth is the most benevolent of the Machine Gods and the one least touched by the Apokalypse Virus. It is known as the Guardian of the Heartland, for its real territory is in the center of the city. Koth controls most autofacs and agridomes and his workers feed and cloth most of the city while still providing a military force that can counterbalance Angar's. So far Koth has never started a war with any other Machine God but has won over 80 percent of those it has fought.



TALUS THE MAKER

Talus is also known as the Guardian of the West. Of all the Machine Gods it has preserved most knowledge of the ancient technology. Its autofacs produce most of the components for bionics and medical systems, even those manufactured in the factory Temples of the other Machine Gods.

SLITH THE WATCHER

Slith is the Guardian of the North and is in many ways the most enigmatic of the Machine Gods. Its sector is mostly in ruins and its autofacs are the least productive. The people of its sector often travel to other sectors as migrant laborers.

Slith maintains an intelligence network second to none. It is rumored to have thousands of eyes floating around the city. These mobile cameras keep everything under surveillance. Slith's agents have infiltrated the Temples of many of the other Machine Gods and its reach extends far beyond the metrozone thanks to a huge network of agents and spies. Slith's army consist of commandos and assassins that can be dispatched instantly to any point of the city to perform surgical strikes and commando raids. These elite troops are probably the best in the whole city. His priests enforce many of the Machine Gods' bizarre edicts with the utmost ferocity.

HEIMRATH

Heimrath is the most feared of all the Machine Gods and the least understood. Once it was the most open and kindly of the Machine Gods, but over the long millennia something has changed. His Temple factories are located deep underground in the Southern Sector. No one knows precisely where they are or how many there are. Heimrath's legions are numerous and potent but the Machine God is slow. It is perhaps a mad God, for there are rumors of constant purges and a distinct lack of respect for human life within Heimrath's realm. It may be the Apocalypse Virus has finally worn down the Machine Gods' prime directive and Heimrath is preparing to fight a new war of the Gods. This may explain why so many of the other Machine Gods are strengthening their border defenses where they touch on his realm.

THE PRIESTHOODS

Of course, the Machine Gods operate on a timescale far different from their human charges. They think in centuries. They are far more concerned with interacting with machines under their control than they are with human beings. They leave the task of guiding the teeming masses to their Priesthoods.

Most priests are specially created robots, but a few humans, known as Oracles, can also interact with the Machine Gods. The priests convey the wishes of their Gods to the people of Prometheus. The Priesthoods are mostly concerned with overseeing the running of the Temple factories and the maintenance of the Ultramundae. They usually interfere with the human population when their charges are threatened.

Most of the day-to-day running of the city is left in the hands of the human government, which passes the laws that affect humans and maintains the peace in the human communities. Since the War of the Gods, the Machine Gods have more or less left the human government to its own devices, fearing that any direct intervention might spark a new War of the Gods. The Machine Gods prefer to make their presence felt in indirect ways, using more subtle forms of pressure than mere edicts from on high. This has left some power in the hands of the Imperator and his court.

THE IMPERATOR

The Imperator, theoretically the supreme ruler of the city, rules in the name of the Machine Gods. All of the rulers of Prometheus are picked by a system of competitive examination and trial, to ascertain their fitness to rule. They are approved by the Machine Gods during the ritual of inauguration. These trials occur every five years. In recent years, there have been rumors of tampering with the Ultramundae to ensure the election of certain officials. It seems clear that the present Imperator, Lysander V, is a corrupt and evil man and a figurehead for sinister forces within his administration.

POLITICS

Prometheus portrays itself as the last refuge of true humanity. No Promethean has ever undergone genesculpting or any form of genetic manipulation. Psychers are rounded up, mindburned, and then exiled. Mutants are automatically exiled. In all cases, any resistance is met with immediate terminal force.

The population of Prometheus is supposed to be obedient and well-disciplined. It is fed a constant diet of propaganda that encourages vigilance against the deviant. Prometheans believe themselves to be under a constant state of siege by the forces of Darkness. The standard of living is high for most Prometheans. Drudge labor is performed by servitor robots, leaving the citizens to perfect their arts and sciences and train for their military duties. For the rest of the population, the Proletarians, life is not so good.

The Promethean upper classes, the citizens, are very conformist. From before birth they are monitored, scanned and genetically tested to weed out any mutants. During childhood they are thoroughly indoctrinated in their duties toward humanity. Their lives are a process of constant testing and training to ensure the survival of the human race. All citizens spend ten years in the Legions. Life can be harsh for those who fail to measure up.

In return for all this, the citizens enjoy the highest standard of living in all Waste World. There is very little manual labor done except by volunteers. All dull repetitive tasks are done by robots or servants. All goods are churned out by the autofacs. Citizens enjoy a huge amount of leisure time in which to study, train and learn the military disciplines.

Along with the citizens, there is a huge class of commoners commonly referred to as proletarians or just proles. Along with the robots, the proles do the menial work of the city. There are many millions of them, and they must find work where they can. The lucky ones become servants to the citizens; the others get whatever drudge work they can or they beg or trade in the streets of the megacity. The luckier proles dwell in gigantic barracks-like hab-blocks. The lowest level of proles, the scum, dwell in the ruins of abandoned towers and factories or in shanties made from corrugated iron, cardboard boxes and whatever other materials they can scavenge. Many trawl through the streets for garbage or haunt the city's vast waste dumps searching for food and things to sell.

Most of the scum dwell in the warrens, a huge under-city that consists of effluent pipes, tunnels, airshafts and abandoned bunker complexes. They live short, brutal and nasty lives, fighting with mutants and other worse things.

For proles there are several ways to become a citizen. One is to be accepted in the Levies. Only the very best and fittest are accepted, and even then they must survive fourteen years as a soldier. Alternatively, if they are rejected by the military, they may volunteer as gladiators. Here they gamble on the popular acclaim of the crowd to make them into citizens. This is usually the fate of only the greatest of gladiators. The rest die horribly in combat with other gladiators, mutants and killer robots.

Prometheus is one of Waste World's two superpowers. It enjoys huge geo-political influence based on its military might and the efficiency of the Cyber Legions. The Western Sectors are regarded as the Promethean's natural sphere of influence and almost every city-state and habtown in the area is in some way a client state of Prometheus.

The vast majority of Prometheans have the following characteristics in common: They are xenophobic, sharing a near-paranoid suspicion of outsiders from beyond their city. Millenia of warfare against their enemies has left them with a siege mentality. They deeply distrust all outsiders. This distrust has recently turned inward as well. The new Imperator's secret police are everywhere, and people fear to make any statement that might be counted as treasonable even to their most trusted friends. Everybody fears being branded a rebel.



The citizens of Prometheus are stern, disciplined and militaristic. They see themselves as the last guardians of humanity. They have a deep martial pride and total confidence in their own superiority. Products of a rigorous process of mental and physical examination, they are utterly sure of their worthiness to hold their place in the world. In general, citizens are physically courageous to a fault, and take pride in executing any orders they receive, quickly and well.

The proletarians share some of the national pride, and a definite sense of superiority to all outsiders. This is tempered by the dreariness of their lives, and the deep-seated feeling that something has gone wrong in their society.



ECONOMY

Prometheus is an enormously wealthy place. It still preserves much of its technology from before the Armageddon Wars. It is Waste World's leading manufacturer of industrial robots, bionics systems and other high-technology products. Many autofacs survive here, although not all of them are fully functioning, and parts of their production lines have been replaced with sweatshop labor drawn from the proles. These enormous structures are known as Factory Temples and each is dedicated to the service of a Machine God.

There are also many huge assembly lines manned entirely by proles. Many jobs that would once have been done by robots are done by the lower classes. They are cheaper to use than droids since wages are low and safety conditions are dreadful. Many thousands of people are killed or mutilated every day in industrial accidents.

Prometheus has several nearby Drakonium fields and many well-protected Drakonium harvesting colonies scattered across the continent. However, even these never produce enough Drakonium to meet the city's needs. As a consequence, the city maintains hundreds of well-organized and efficient sandfleets to search for new fields. Although they do not use psychers to find new Drakonium fields, the Prometheans are at no disadvantage. Tens of thousands of Promethean scout robots wander the Wastes seeking Drakonium. These tireless searchers never cease looking for the object of their quest, and when they find it they release message missiles that automatically return to Prometheus and alert the proper authorities.

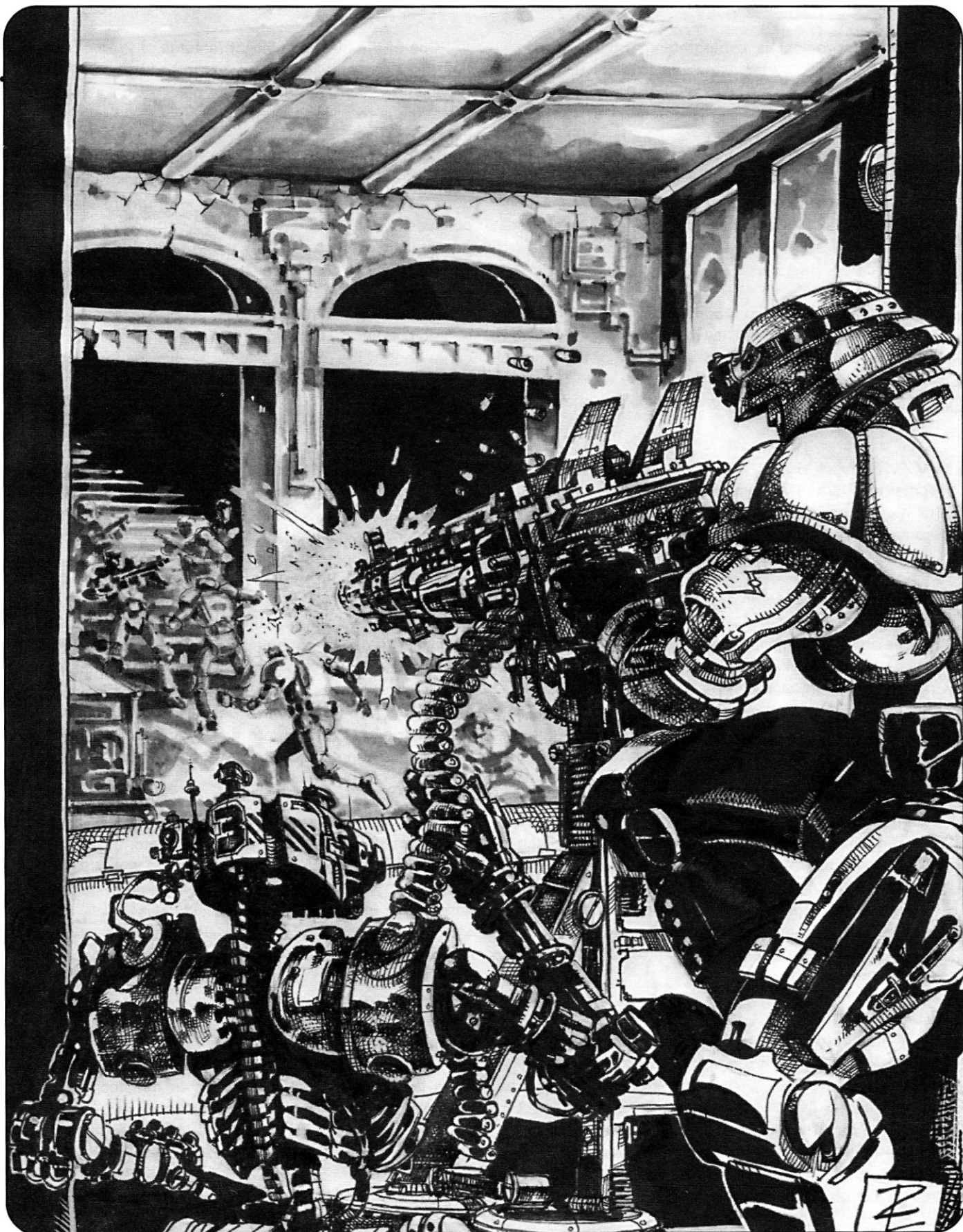
LAW AND ORDER

Law and order is maintained by the sekutors. These are heavily armed cyborgized police who operate in tandem with police robots. They normally enforce the law in the citizen areas and are sent in when rioting erupts in the shanties and slums. Sekutors can easily be spotted by their full-body armor and menacing face masks.

There are several different types of sekutor. There are executors, who hunt down psychers and deal with Demons. These are specially equipped with psiscreens and psiblasters and other devices to make their work easier. Persekutors hunt down mutants and genetic criminals and make sure that these deviants are harshly dealt with.

In addition to the police, there are an enormous number of sanctioned bounty hunters registered with Enforcement Central to collect the bounties that are placed on the heads of tens of thousands of wanted criminals each day. The sekutors do not like having to rely on such people, but the scale of the problems confronting them leaves them little choice. There are many different types of bounty hunters, ranging from agents provocateur, who spy on the lower orders, to armed guards who protect the homes of citizens.

The major problem facing the sekutors is anarchy. There are hundreds of riots each day among the poor and oppressed of the city-state. They cannot all be kept sedated by a diet of bromium tranquilizers in their synthinute foodstuffs and a heavy scheduling of gladiatorial games on the networks. There are always protests that can swiftly become insurrections. These are put down with utter brutality by the forces of law and order. For particularly bad riots, the Legions are summoned from their barracks.



Another problem is cybergrafting. Bold thieves will often kill or seriously injure people to steal their bionic parts and sell them on the black market. A specialized form of grafting known as Bot-ling is practiced by those who hijack robots and strip them for spares. Rogue robot-mancers are always on the lookout for such materials.

Being a mutant is a serious offense in Prometheus, punishable by death or immediate exile to the Wastes. The sekutors maintain a Genetic Crimes Division, the persektors, who dedicate their every effort to locating and punishing such malefactors.

A common punishment for criminals is memory wiping, which induces amnesia in a condemned criminal, causing him to forget who and what he was. These amnesiacs continue to possess many of the skills and all of the physical strength they once had, and can thus be used as forced labor. This is considered a more humane punishment than execution.

WARFARE

Prometheus is a military superpower, the strongest of all the metrozones in the west. It is rivaled only by the Shogunate. The strength of Prometheus rests on its Cyber Legions. These are recruited from the citizens of the city. Each citizen has his own suit of powered armor and his own weapons. Armed with the best-made weapons on the continent and extensively trained in their use, the Cyber Legions are formidable indeed.

The Cyber Legions are supported by huge Levies drawn from the proletarians and by cohorts of killer robots. The Levies are less well-armed than the Cyber Legions and they lack powered armor, but they are nonetheless superlatively trained and equipped fighters. The killer robots come in many forms, ranging from towering siege machines the size of city blocks to humanoid warriors programmed to slay the enemies of Prometheus. The metrozone is particularly famed for its use of robotanks. Each of these huge tracked war-machines is guided by its own positronic brain. Each has its own personality and skills.

As well as the armies in the service of the Imperator, each Machine God maintains its own fighting force, which will aid in the defense of the city and its ruler's Factory Temple when need be.

ARCHITECTURE

Prometheus is a city of huge, squat ferroconcrete tower blocks. Each block is armored to resist blastbombs and the ravages of weather. All of these blocks are huge, some monstrously so. Most of the tower blocks have flat roofs suitable for aircars to land on. On the outside, these buildings are squat and ugly, but within they are often beautifully laid out, with spacious malls and atriums and open areas full of plant life.

One of the most significant features of Prometheus is that all of these buildings are connected by tunnel walkways, known as underpaths. It is possible for citizens of Prometheus to spend their entire lives without ever entering the open air.

Mightiest of all of these structures are the great Factory Temples, towering cathedrals of industry that produce most of the goods consumed in Prometheus and its colonies.

The city extends as far as the Promethean Mountains, and part of it has been excavated from the living rock of the mountains. The Imperator's palace is located within the Megalith, a mountain carved into a uniform and pleasing geometric shape. Great stained-glass windows have been carved out of the mountainside, allowing the Imperator to look down upon his subjects.

FOOD

The citizens can afford the best of foods. They feed on the choicest products of Prometheus' agri-domes and expensive delicacies imported from Hydra. They need never see the stuff the commoners eat.

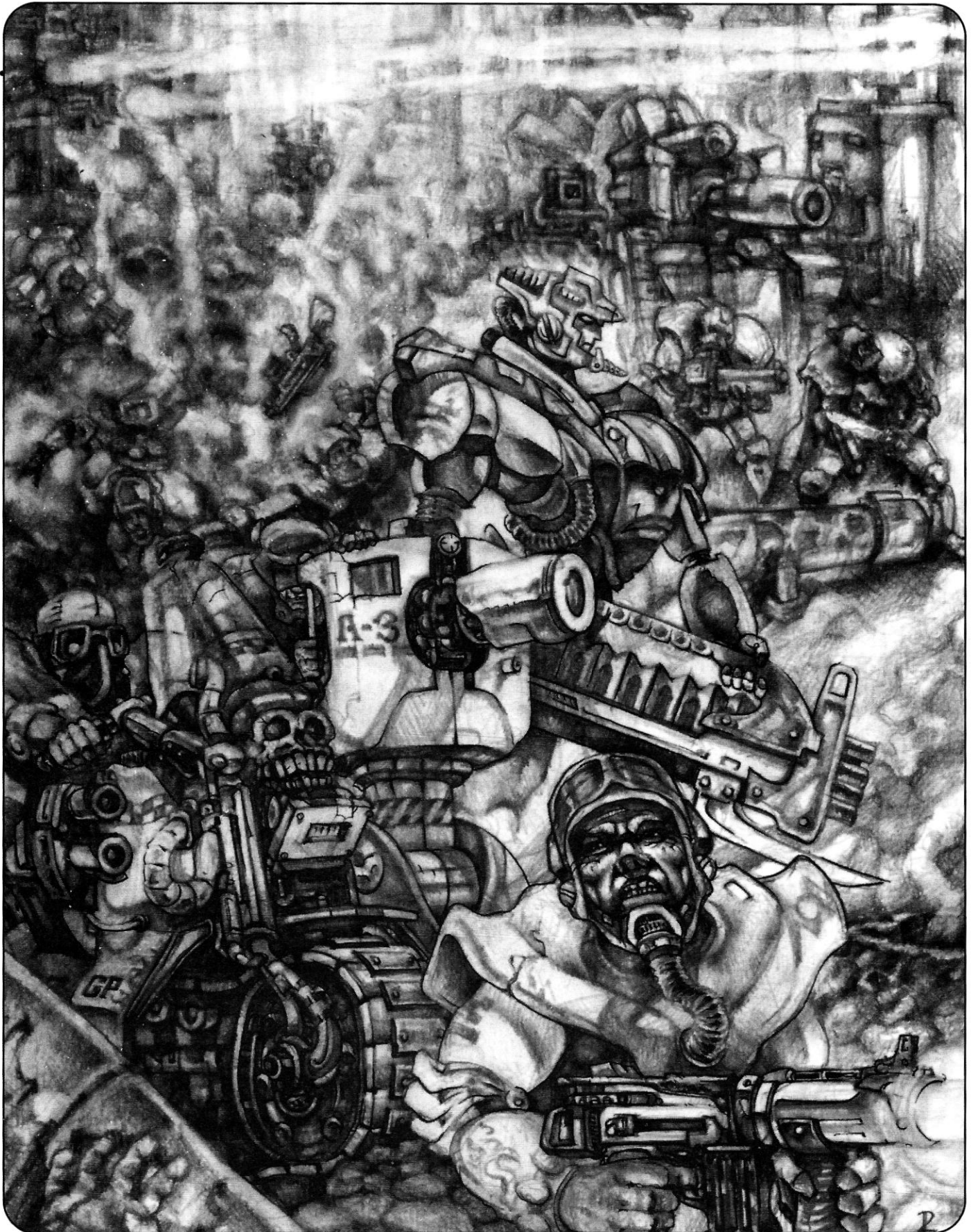
The proletarians are fed on synthinute, (commonly called newt). This stuff is made from recycled waste products, soystuff and other less-mentionable things and churned out from the great sludge tanks of the agrifacs. It can be given all sorts of artificial flavorings, most of them disgusting. It can be bought as mash (slime) as tablets (tab) or as burgers (bop). It is usually laced with the tranquilizer bromium in dosages that are almost never fatal. Recently anarchist terror groups have been known to dump rage and other combat drugs into the sludge vats. Entire city-blocks have gone into mad riots as a result.

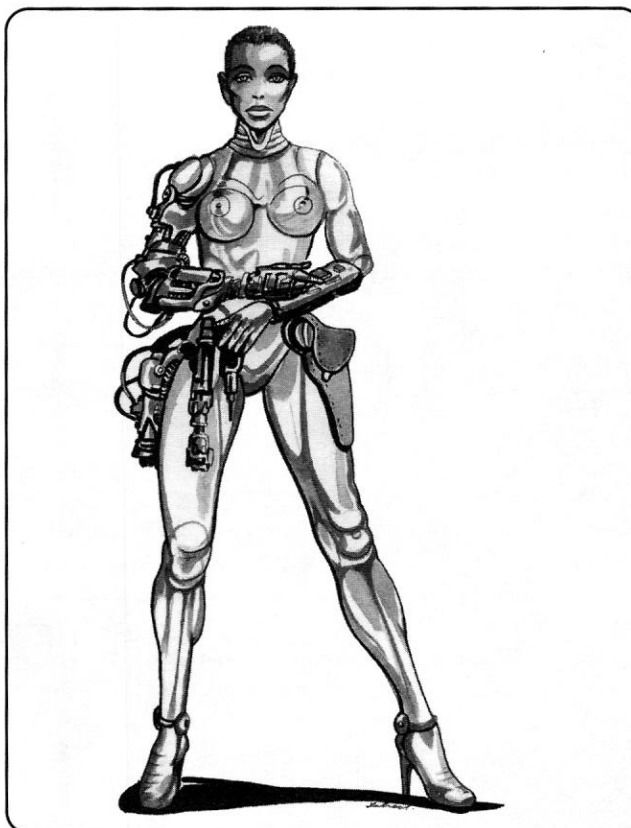
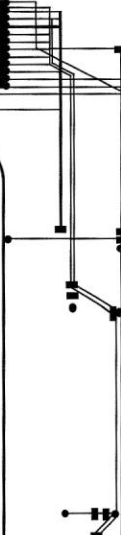
CLOTHING

Citizens usually dress in finely made clothes tailored to their exact build in automated garment factories. The most popular styles are military tunics complete with brass buttons and epaulettes, britches with piping on the seams and high leather boots and gloves. The whole is usually set off with a wide belt and holstered sidearm. Proletarians usually wear a suit of general purpose coveralls, caps and padded knee and elbow guards. Skum wear whatever rags they can scavenge.

TRANSPORT

The streets of Prometheus teem with vehicles. Konvoys leave the metrozone almost every ten minutes, carrying Promethean exports to neighboring megacities.





Prometheus is Waste World's largest manufacturer of skimmer and suspensor vehicles, as well as robotankers and robocars. These are trucks and personal cars controlled by positronic brains, leaving the owner and/or driver free to get on with other things. For optimum effect, these can only really be used within the city limits, where a complex system of navigational beacons supplies data to the robots' brains. In the last few months, anarchist terror groups have sabotaged these beacon systems, often causing multi-vehicle collisions involving over a thousand cars and trucks.

WEAPONS

Prometheus fields armies clad in the best powered armor currently manufactured. Its leadership in cybernetics means that many of its soldiers have had destroyed limbs and organs replaced with new and superior mechanical parts. The streets of Prometheus are kept safe by the cyborgized minions of the sekutor patrols.

Promethean energy weapons are the best-made and most reliable in the world.

Prometheus leads Waste World in the production of robotic battle machines. Its killer robots and deathdrones are every bit as deadly as the Panzers of the Wastes. Some have been equipped with positronic brainmaps of top Promethean soldiers, giving them human intelligence and personality. These machines almost never go wrong, but when they do, things can get very serious very quickly.

MEDICINE

The citizens of Prometheus enjoy just about the highest level of medical care on Waste World. If injured, they are entitled to free bionic replacement parts. Advanced medical systems ensure that they live to a greater age than any other wasteworlders. Cybernetics and bionics are common.

Indeed, there is a so-called gerontocracy of older citizens no longer able to fight in the Cyber Legions but still active into their second century of age who form a large part of the political system. Their age, wisdom and natural conservatism make them the true ruling class of the city-state. Naturally, they see that their fellow citizens are well looked after because this ensures that they too will be well looked after.

The medical system also serves a secondary purpose: to monitor the citizens for the stigma of mutation. Anyone found bearing such signs is subject to immediate exile or death, as is anyone found harboring them.



Among citizens, nekrochips are common. Many citizens are brain-mapped and downloaded into the positronic brain of a robot or directly into the city-state's Ultramundae when they die. Seriously injured citizens are often "black-boxed". Their brains are removed from their bodies and plugged into suitcase-size life-support systems. These black boxes are then hooked into all sorts of machinery from autofacs to cybertanks, giving the injured citizen a whole new lease of life in a new form. Almost all citizens are issued with neural sockets during their military service so that they can interface with machines and weapons.

For proletarians, things are not quite so rosy. Medical facilities are basic and they get only what they can pay for. Since industrial accidents are common, there are many cripples in the city as well as a thriving black market in cybergrafts. The pollution and stress, not to mention the high rates of violent crime, mean that the average proletarian can expect to have less than a quarter of the lifespan of the average citizen.

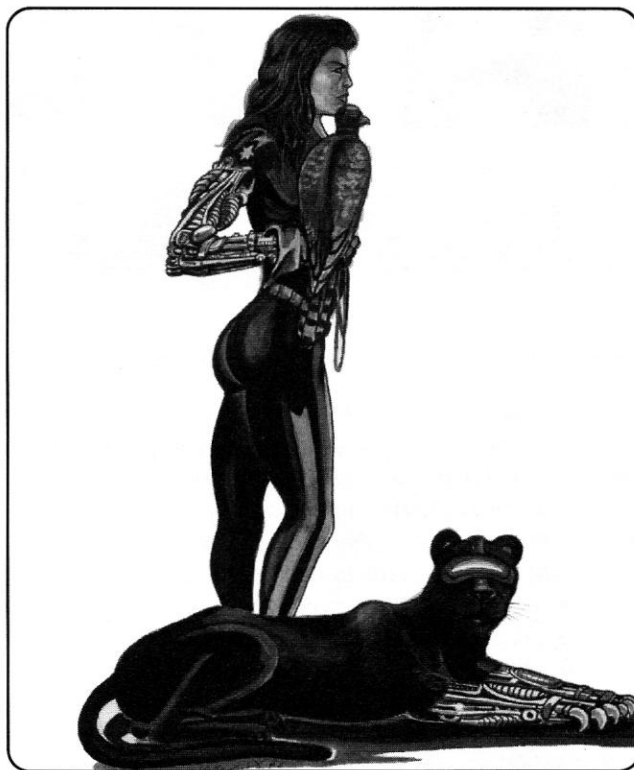
Industrial accidents are common in the sweatshops and assembly lines of Prometheus. For those who can afford them or who volunteer for tests on experimental new systems, bionic replacements are available. A surprising number of the proles have cheap battery-powered plastic limbs.

PSIONICS

Psychers are as feared and hated as any other form of mutation in Prometheus. Indeed psionics are regarded as just another form of mutation, made all the worse by not being immediately obvious. There are very stringent anti-psycher laws within the city-state.

Such is the fear of psychers and possession that the psishield is mass-produced in Prometheus and is a common form of personal jewelry. Most citizens wear several in case one fails. Every proletarian is issued with a cheap, mass-produced one at birth. Every proletarian block has its own area-shield. All those who can afford them have smaller blanket shields in their apartments. Powerful psishields are integral to every suit of powered armor.

The city-state is monitored for psychic activity twenty-four hours a day. If any unauthorized activity is reported, the area is saturated with witchfinder sekutors and psi-hound robodroids. Usually the culprit will be located within two hours.



THE GAMES

The most common spectacles in Prometheus are the great gladiatorial games. These are held every day and broadcast into almost every home in the city. They are something of an obsession with Prometheans of all classes, and the top gladiators enjoy superstar status. Every building, even the largest proletarian warren, has a gigantic screen displaying these spectacular events. Tickets for actual combats are distributed by lottery to all who apply and can change hands at a hundred times their face value. In theory, only the Emperor, the Konsuls and their guests are guaranteed access to the Games: All others must apply to the Overmind for possible random allocation. Once you have won a ticket, you are barred from receiving one again for seven days.

The games themselves take place in huge arenas that seat over a hundred thousand people. Within the arenas, gladiators drawn from the ranks of the proles, exiles and prisoners of war fight to the death for the amusement of the crowd. They do this with a variety of weapons, archaic and modern. They fight with mutants, deadly beasts and each other. They fight in teams and they fight in single combat. The crowds thrill to it all.

There are also special chariot races around the arena and around the city, in which drivers in heavily armed suspensor chariots race against each other in search of victory. Anything goes in these races, including bumping, crowding and the firing of missiles.

VIRUS DETECTION PROGRAM: ON	INITIATE SEQUENCE	GUNSTBERG OVERDRIVE	CORTICO QUASI-DEGRADATION
FLOW LINK QUASI PROTOCOL: INITIATED	NON-BIOLOGICAL RAW MATERIAL:	MICRO-OPTICAL MODULATOR: ON	GANGLIAL ELECTRO-IMPLANT
FILE SUB-PROTOL: STANDARD	INTERNAL DATA CORRUPTION:	SILICONE SYNAPTIC SIMULATOR	SMART CHIP INSTALLED
NANOMECHANICAL INTERFACE:	LINGUISTIC MARKUP DIRECTORY	DYSFUNCTION	METHANE IMPULSE CATHETER
VALIDATE SIMULATION	MOLECULAR BINARY:	TRILOGIC THREADING ENABLED	OCCIPITAL FLOW MODULATION: SINE

HYDRA

LOGIN:	SUB system COORDINATES	SEROTONERGIC OVERLOAD	BIOFEEDBACK MATRIX: XO
PASSWORD:	X1:30244.1 X2:134.34.2	AMYGDALPTIC OVERWRITE	NUERO CIRCUIT FEEDBACK
ACCESS GRANTED	Y1:612.33.1 Y2:132.76.0	SMART CHIP INSTALLED	SPELLCHECK FAILURE ABOVE
SECURITY CLEARANCE LEVEL:	Z2: 59.55.2 Z1: 09.73.8	BIOMECH AUGMENTATION:	GYROSCOPIC NOISE LOOP:
EXCESS GENETIC VARIATION:	ABBERANT CHROMA LEVELS:	NANO OCCIPITAL DRIVER	STORYMODE INITIATING

Lara studied Brother Tomas carefully. The Torturer had thick lips and small, pig-like eyes. His sloping forehead and beetling brows spoke of a brutal stupidity. She did not like him or his work. He was of the Tower of Pain. She told herself that it was his discipline to inflict punishment on those who disobeyed the laws of Hydra, just as it was hers to make war on Hydra's enemies. His was a necessary job but she did not have to like it, or him. She was a soldier, a warrior of House Valka. The less she had to do with his sort, the happier she would be.

Unfortunately, right at this moment, it was necessary that she accompany him into the depth of his Tower. She had her duty to perform and, by ancient decree, no one could enter the Tower of Pain without being accompanied by a Torturer.

Looking at the rust-flecked steel floors and smelling the old dried blood, she was glad that Tomas had not insisted that she follow another ancient tradition and walk blindfolded, although part of her mind whispered that maybe that would have been better. This, more than any other Tower, reminded her that her home city was not natural by the standards that others called natural. The walls were made of hard white bone, and the chitin that covered them was the color of bruised flesh. The air was moist and warm and smelled of decomposing meat.

She almost chose to extrude her helmet and switch to its filtration systems, but she realized that to do so now would betray weakness, and she had been taught never to show any sign of that. It was part of her discipline.

The sphincter door of a nearby elevator shaft dilated and out came two cowed Torturers. Each had a huge biohound attached to his wrist by an umbilical cable. One of the evil-looking creatures turned and reared, hissing at her menacingly. The insanity of the genetically engineered killer showed in its tiny eyes. She smelled its fetid breath. Its enormous insectoid jaws dripped blood and entrails, and Lara did not wish to know what it had been doing recently.

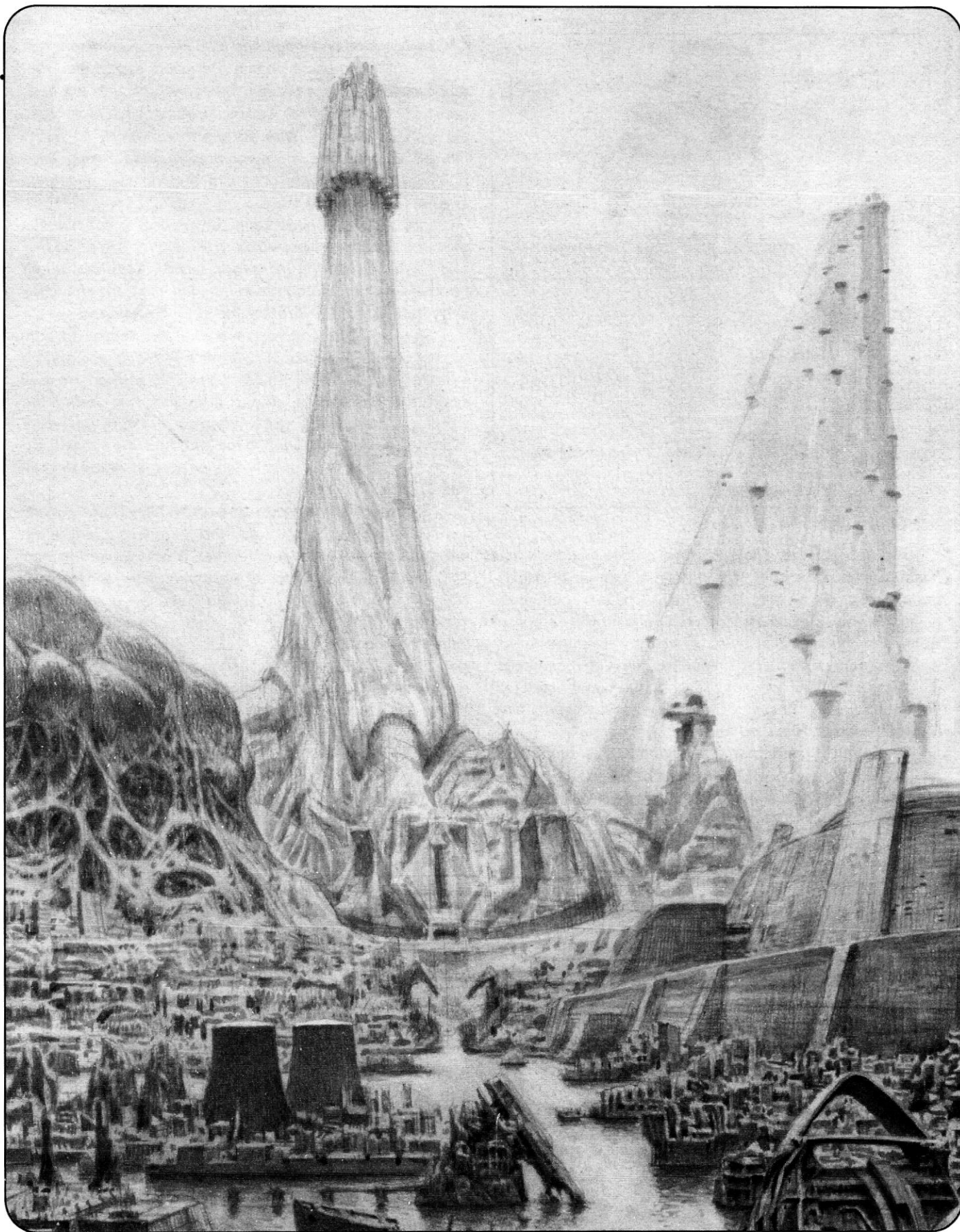
Instinctively, she fell back into guard stance, extending a long, curved hook from the forearm of her carapace armor. The hook was tipped with a potent nerve poison. The beast froze, a heartbeat away from painful death. The sniggering of its handler died in an instant. Lara gave them a cold smile and let them pass. Brother Tomas shrugged as if to say: these are the sorts of high jinx I have to put up with every day. She could tell that he meant his smile to be friendly but Lara could not help but see a sinister intent behind it.

It was just as well that the chitin-covered walls muffled the sounds of screaming. She had heard the sounds of pain on the battlefield and they had not disturbed her, but here they spoke of the unclean deeds of this ancient, evil genclan. Now and then, cowed Torturers moved by, carrying their latest victims on stretchers grown from cartilage and webbed with translucent skin. One woman had half her face flayed away. A man lay with the stump of his arm neatly sutured with fleshgrips. Briefly, she wondered what their crimes had been, and then she realized that it did not matter. They would never leave this Tower alive.

Tomas stepped into an elevator and gestured for her to follow. She did so, feeling the spongy membrane of the floor squelch slightly under her foot.

"To absorb the blood," he murmured politely. She shrugged and kept her poison hook extruded from her armor. There was something about being alone in this enclosed place with a Torturer that made her uneasy. Tomas seemed to sense this and showed her his unnerving smile once more.

Lara realized that her nerves were stretched taut. She could not recall being any less tense before a battle. Briefly she closed her eyes and tried to center herself using the ancient Dharasamala meditation techniques she had been taught as a child. In moments, her mind cleared and her heartbeat slowed and she felt capable of facing what she knew was coming next.





The door dilated. They emerged onto a new level and headed toward the cells. There were a number of heavily armed Torturers on this level. They wore armor of black chitin, and muscle enhancers flexed beneath the hard skin. Autopistols hung at their sides. At the end of each corridor were sergeants with paired biohounds linked to their wrists.

"This is where we keep the dangerous prisoners," Tomas said apologetically. "The ones who, even here, think they can escape. They are mistaken, of course."

The guards eyed them menacingly. The biohounds sniffed and showed row upon row of nasty serrated teeth. Lara suddenly wished they had not removed all of her ranged weapons at the gates. There were enough of these things to drag her down if they went mad, and such things had been known to happen. Not even Hydran genesculptors were infallible.

Tomas stopped in front of one thick-ribbed door. He reached out, and a mass of nerve ganglions extruded from his symbiotic armor. They interfaced with the door, and the entrance dilated. They stepped into the darkened chamber that smelled of blood and sweat and old pain.

Hogarth hung there, from the wall. His arms and legs were pinned with chains of living chitin. His carapace had been flayed away in places to reveal white and unhealthy skin. Lara shuddered. He looked like a maggot emerging from rotting flesh. He glanced up as they entered. Recognition entered his darting mad eyes.

"So the Tower of War sent you," he said. "I might have guessed."

She nodded and inspected him. He was gaunt and had lost a lot of muscle mass. Parasitic symbiotes had emerged from the walls and burrowed through his flesh until he was linked to the wall by a maze of what looked like gangrenous arteries. With an enormous effort, he threw himself forward and the symbiotes ripped, leaking thick pus. But the restraints held him and he slumped back against the wall once more.

Lara shook her head sadly. It was bad to see him like this. She would have preferred to remember him as he had been in his youth, the tall, proud warrior who had taught her hand-to-hand combat and gunplay, the hero of a thousand battles, not this broken and enfeebled traitor.

She was tempted to ask him what had happened, why he had chosen to betray his warrior's oath and lead raiders into the city, but she already knew the answer. He had spent too much time among strangers, wandering the world as a mercenary. He had been corrupted by their easy ways and easy morals, and in the end, had lost himself and all he had stood for. It was a danger against which they all had to guard.

He opened his eyes once more and now he just looked weary.

"Get it over with," he said, and there was a hint of his old defiant mockery there. Brother Tomas looked at her. There were the forms to be observed, after all. Hogarth was of the officer corps of House Valka. He could not be killed by a common Torturer. It would have violated all the inter-House protocols.

"Hogarth Tremontaine," she said. "You have been found guilty by court-martial of betraying your oath to your House and your city. In these dark times there can be only one punishment: death. Do you have any last words?"

"I betrayed nothing. Our House betrayed me. It has betrayed all our ancient ideals. It does not deserve to stand. It deserves to be swept away. And it will be."

Lara moved to take up her position before him. She extruded the poisonous spike from her carapace and waited for him to finish. She could not believe the torrent of filth and delusion that poured from his lips. At the end he simply said, "Do it!"

She lunged forward, a clean strike. The spike went beneath his modified rib-cage and upwards, piercing his heart. His eyes opened wide and his death rattle emerged. In a moment it was over. She bit back tears as she turned on her heel to go.

"What shall we do with the body?" Brother Tomas asked, not unkindly.

"Throw it to your hounds. Not even the recycling tanks will have this one."

Tomas bowed. "You knew him?" he asked.

"He was my brother," Lara replied, and strode out of the cell without looking back.



HYDRA

The folk of Hydra are known as Posthumans, because they have been genetically engineered to perform far beyond the capabilities of normal people. They are organized into genclans, huge extended families re-engineered and cross-bred until they are perfectly adapted for their work. Each genclan has its own discipline, the area of knowledge and specialization in which it reigns supreme. Each genclan also has its own manufacturing base and industrial empire.

The the genclans rule over the Commonality, unmodified folk who are basically just normal human beings. The genclans justify their rule by testing the general population and adopting those members who show aptitude in their disciplines. Of course, the more specialized the genclans become, the less likely it is that anyone will be judged fit to join them. Thus a powerful oligarchy is preserved.

It was not always so. Once Hydra was considered a model of democracy, and the genclans were just another type of citizen, albeit ones uniquely adapted to their jobs. All this changed with the coming of the Armageddon Wars.

Hydra lost much of its industrial capacity and all of its datacores during those catastrophic conflicts. The only autofac systems that survived related to the production of food and biotechnology. The city itself underwent a period of vicious anarchy when central government collapsed. The situation only stabilized with the emergence of the genclans as the dominant political faction in the city.

THE RISE OF THE GENCLANS

During the period of anarchy, which Hydrans refer to as the Collapse, powerful factions emerged, old wealthy genclans that owned industrial complexes and possessed marketable skills. These genclans preserved much of their knowledge through the collapse.

Even before the Armageddon Wars, each genclan had its own tower. These gigantic arcologies were corporate and family bases. During the collapse, the Towers took on new significance, becoming huge fortified enclaves rising out of the riot-filled streets of the city. Eventually, the masters of the Towers forged an alliance and moved to restore order within Hydra. Tower troops swiftly established the Hegemony of the Hundred Towers, brutally suppressing all opposition. After that, new rivalries erupted and many Towers were broken and wiped out in the ensuing strife. Their gene patterns and disciplines were lost. At high cost, the city entered a period of relative stability.

Since that period, the genclan of each Tower has worked on its discipline, developing and honing its skills. Hydra is one of the few city-states that has seen definite progress since the Armageddon Wars. This has occurred for two reasons.

First, it was imperative for the city-state's survival that its rulers find some way of replacing the ancient technological systems. They did this by breeding and building biotechnological replacements. Second, the Armageddon Wars provided a whole host of malleable mutant biomatter for Hydran genetic alchemists to work with.

This has had one particularly important effect on the Hydran economy. It means that of all the great metrozones, Hydra is the least dependant on Drakonium. Its organic factories and hydroponic lakes mean that it needs less power than the cities that use mechanical factories. Of course, the Hydrans still possess some autofacs that make weapons and vehicles, but the policy of the genclans has been to move away from the use of such things where possible. All of this means that Hydra is probably the best prepared of all of the city-states to face the future, even if it sometimes appears significantly weaker than its rivals at the moment.

THE TOWERS

Now each genclan has its own Tower, a skyscraper fortress-factory of size and luxury. Each Tower reflects the tastes and preoccupations of its occupants. The Tower of War is a squat, brooding fortress. The Tower of Pleasure is a tall, ethereal, lattice-like structure whose delicate beauty belies its incredible strength. The Tower of Pain is built of living bone and houses several generations of Torturers.

Within the Towers, the lords of each genclan plan the business of their families, overseeing the breeding of bloodlines, checking the testing of new blood from the drones of the commonality, making sure that the family business runs smoothly and well. The aristocratic families provide the managers and underlings of the family business. There are many hundreds of Towers. The following are just a selection of the most famous.

THE TOWER OF WAR

This is the home of House Valka, a genclan that specializes in the discipline of war. Its people are tall and muscular, with incredibly quick senses and keen reflexes. From the earliest age, they are taught the secrets of combat, the use of weapons and tactics. They are among the best fighters of Waste World. They are bred for an instinctive understanding of tactics and strategy. House Valka produces most of Hydra's mercenaries and soldiers. It contracts its services to merchants and traders. Its biofacs are adroit in the creation of symbiotic armor and weapons.

THE TOWER OF PLEASURE

The Tower of Pleasure is the home of House Radost. This genclan's discipline is pleasure. Its people are the most beautiful, graceful and alluring of all Hydrans. Radostians study the giving of joy in all its forms. They are great courtesans and companions, adept at conversation and love-making. The Tower specializes in the creation of narcotics, wines and the production of specially tailored sex slaves. House Radost owns a chain of taverns and joyhouses that stretches throughout Waste World.

THE TOWER OF THE SPIDER

The discipline of House Spydra is death. The Spydrans are assassins par excellence, bred and trained from an early age in the dealing of stealthy death. Spydrans tend to be gaunt and muscular, with quick reflexes and an almost boneless flexibility that allows them to contort their bodies and pass through very narrow spaces. House Spydra specializes in the production of poisons and camouflage suits. Its alchemists are adept at implanting their people with living bio-weapons.

THE TOWER OF FLESH

House Meleus owns Hydra's largest biofac. It produces virtually everything to the specifications laid down by the other houses. It is an industrial powerhouse and incredibly rich. It is Waste World's largest producer of symbiots and symbiotic armor. Meleans tend to be obese and richly garbed.

THE TOWER OF HEALERS

House Kondrea has the most famous physicians in Hydra. They are particularly adroit at the manufacture of biotech replacement organs and prosthetics as well as the creation of new medicines. Kondrean physicians are bound by their conditioning, which means they can never take a life. This makes them trusted even by the paranoid lords of the other Towers. House Kondrea relies on this trust, since it has no military and refuses to even recruit bodyguards.

THE TOWER OF BEASTS

The Tower of the Beasts is a vast egg-shaped structure that rises from the midst of Hydra. It contains many holding pens, lifevats and restrainer cells within which sanity-blasting experiments take place.

Inside the Tower of Beasts, the genesculptors of House Fera create many hideously warped creatures known as hybrids. Their creations are a bizarre blend of normal animals and the worst excesses of symbionics.



DATA CORE ACCESS



SECURITY RISK ALERT

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ALL SYSTEMS GO



INFODUMP WARNING

FLOWLINK INTENSITY 7

HYDRA





The Ferans take natural creatures and add the genetic matrixes of Swarm warriors, mutants and Wasteland symborgs to create monsters of amazing strength and ferocity. One such example is the ferocious biohound: a chitinous mix of dog, insect, shark and Swarm warrior. These are used to hunt down fugitives and guard property and are capable of berserk ferocity.

Another example are the stiltwalkers, enormous spiderlike creatures used by the Hydrans to transport themselves through the swamps surrounding their homeland. Passengers ride in shell-like howdahs on the backs of these evil-looking creatures.

THE TOWER OF MONSTERS

House Stein lair in this dark, foreboding place where its insane symbioncists labor hard and long, turning kidnapped strangers, condemned prisoners and even their own family into slaving humanoid monsters. These terrifying creatures are usually hired out as bodyguards and laborers and can be imprinted to make them totally loyal to their new masters — just so long as the master does nothing against House Stein.

These monsters can also be imprinted with a specific person's scent or image and unleashed to hunt that person down. Achieving this end becomes the monster's entire purpose in life and it will either die, dissolving into a puddle of protoplasmic slime, or return to the Tower when this goal is achieved, depending on the desires of its creators.

THE TOWER OF PLAGUE

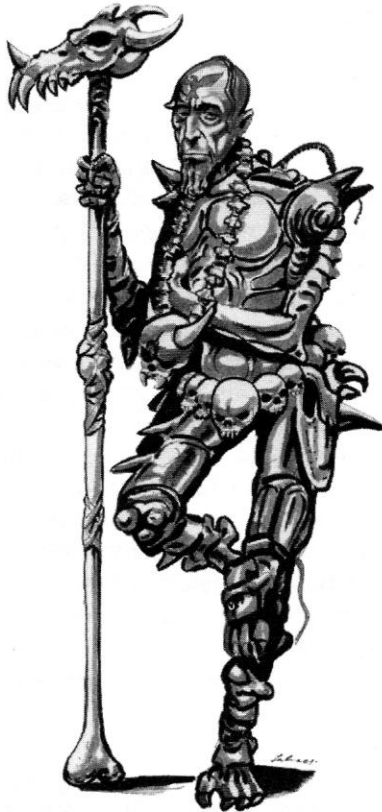
This tower of living bone is blotched with luminous, diseased fungi. Within it dwell the lords of House Karkosa, most feared of all the houses of Hydra. These madmen revel in the creation of new diseases that only they know how to cure. They produce many healing drugs but their main products are bioweapons of the vilest sort. They would have been wiped out long ago had it not been for the certainty that should such a thing happen, they would unleash all their most virulent plagues simultaneously, causing a cataclysm on a scale unheard of since the Armageddon Wars.

THE TOWER OF BRAINS

The Hydran Overmind was destroyed during the ancient wars. Its datacore was burned out, its memory banks scoured. The constant corrosive influence of entropic fallout has prevented any electronic intelligence from ever being restarted here. Instead, the Hydrans rely on their brainbanks. These are disembodied brains, scooped out of their skulls and kept alive in vats of nutrient fluid. They are all linked by umbilicals and supervise a huge bioweb system that runs through the city. Although nowhere near as fast as electronic systems, these brainbanks are more reliable under the prevailing conditions. Many maintain their basic personalities and can speak using their attached biomechanical vocalizers.

In their giant bottles, many of these brains have grown, become smarter and acquired strange psionic powers. They supervise the day-to-day running of the city and the biofacs. Some even claim that they are the city-state's true rulers. The Tower of Brains is the central nexus of the brainweb. It can be accessed from every tower or even from street-corner booths.

The brains are looked after by House Dendra, who are really only their servants. The Dendrans are all pale and gaunt with bulging, shaven heads. They are famous as scholars and biomancers.



THE GUILDS

Although the aristocrats of the Towers rule the metrozone and control most of its output, they represent only a small fraction of the population. Many of the most skilled commoners are organized into guilds. Each guild controls the use of one skill or talent within the city and has guild houses scattered throughout the city state. There is a Guild of Traders, a Guild of Warriors, even a Guild of Whores. Most guilds follow a similar pattern of organization. They have three levels.

INITIATE

To be accepted by a guild and taught its mysteries is to become an initiate. Initiates are the lowest rung on the ladder. In their early years, all they do is run errands for their superiors, but as they grow older, they are introduced to the simpler mysteries of their craft until they are ready to become journeymen.

JOURNEYMEN

Most guild members will spend their entire lives as journeymen, studying their craft and obeying their masters. As a journeyman, a guild member is allowed to practice his mystery and earn a living. He must pay a tithe of all his earning to the guild.



MASTER

Masters are rare and most guilders never reach this level. A master can usually only be raised to this level by a unanimous vote of all the current masters of his guild. To be awarded this singular honor, a potential Master must have performed some particularly notable achievement in his field. Masters can be people of exceptional influence both within and beyond their guilds.

Many of the guilds were the products of the Ancients' genesculpting. People are born into the guilds and marry within their guilds. There is the Guild of Brutes. These huge, muscular giants were bred for hard, physical labor that demands enormous strength. There is the Guild of Aquatics, who have been evolved to dwell underwater. And there is the Guild of Flyers, the winged men and women who carry important messages between the Towers.



ARCHITECTURE

Hydra encompasses over a thousand islands in the Sea of Slime. At its lowest levels it has no streets, only canals that cut through the islands and link the major channels. However, over the years, as the Towers have grown, a jumble of bridges, platforms and roadways has sprung up, linking all the Towers and cutting off many of the canals from the sun.

The city is constantly expanding. Huge reptodons haul in heaps of stone from the causeways in the Moloch Mountains. These are sunk into the water to create the foundations of new islands.

Hydra is dominated by the Towers, huge buildings that are home to tens of thousands. They hold not only the members of the genclans but their thousands of retainers, servants and bodyguards. Each Tower is different, built in a style that suits the function or purpose of its owners. Each Tower is constantly being expanded. New subtowers are added. Great labyrinths are extended below them. Bridges are thrown between Towers.

When a genclan becomes too numerous for its Tower and there is no clear land around its current home, work will begin on a new Tower to which the whole clan will eventually migrate, leaving the old one to be taken over by other commoners or guildsmen or, more rarely, by another genclan. Normally a genclan would move only into a Tower formerly occupied only by a close ally, for such places might be booby-trapped otherwise.

The building of a Tower is a unique sight. First, the skeleton goes up. This is made from steel and stone. Then the biosystems are added. Nervetrunks are stretched through the walls. Then the whole structure is enclosed in a great translucent tent of synskin.

Over weeks, the synskin is sprayed with nutrient fluids and begins to photosynthesize and harden. Responding to the original architectural plans, it divides and replicates at crucial points, such as doors. Eventually the whole structure hardens and turns into chitin, a substance more enduring than stone. Many of the buildings have sleek pods of organic symbiotes growing all over them. Water is pumped through massive arteries. Doors are hinged with muscle. Sensor eyes watch for intruders. Some of the buildings themselves seem more like living things.

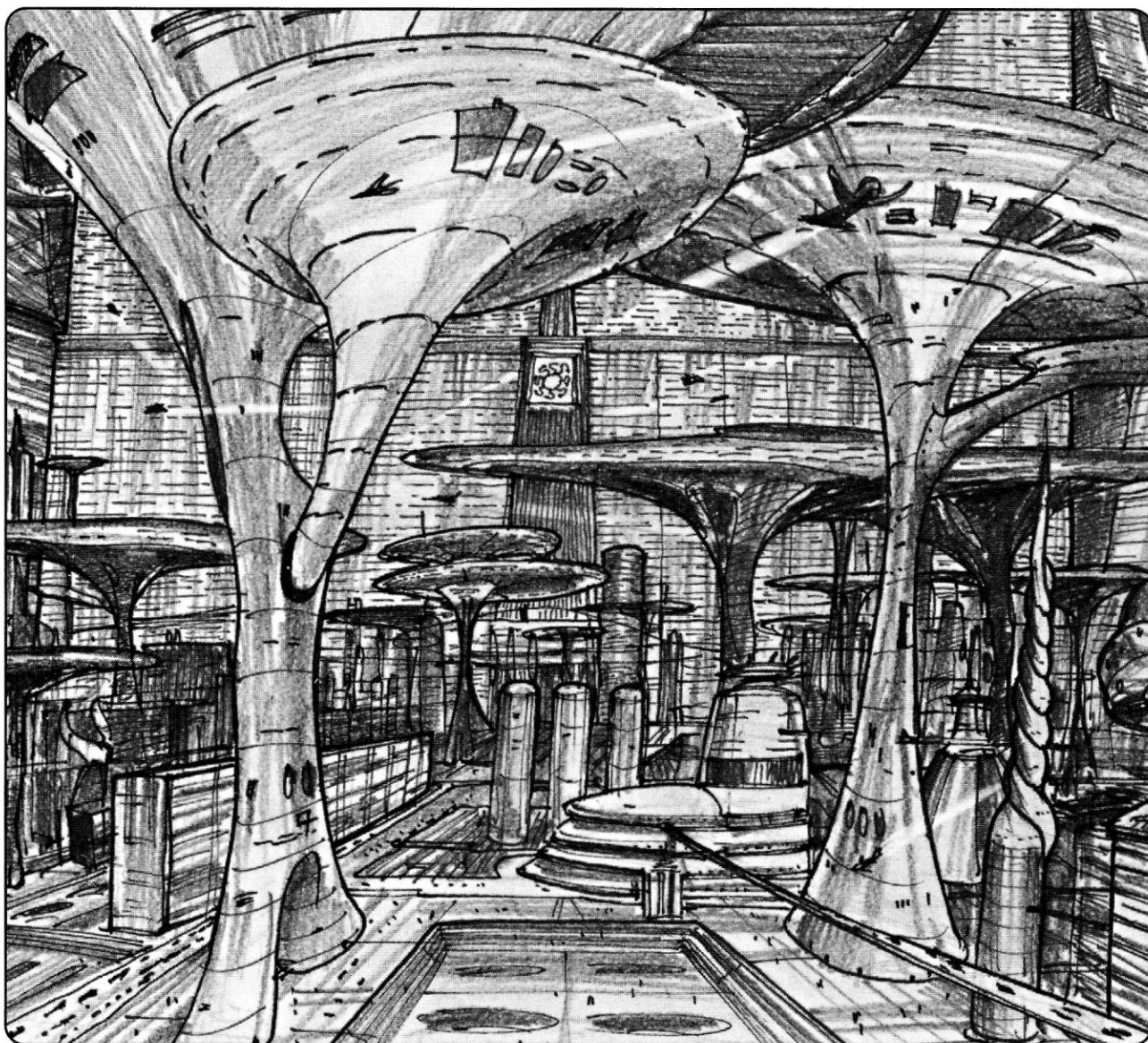
The dwellings of the commoners and guildfolk are just as unusual in their own way. They too are grown in an organic manner, but they lack the unique architecture of the Towers. In some ways they resemble enormous fungii, with the vast majority of the living quarters built on ovular platforms atop great columnar stalks.

THE COMMONALITY

The commonality are the vast mass of people within Hydra. Most are poor and unskilled and belong to no guild. They seek casual labor as porters or assistants or laborers. They carry messages and palanquins. They carry heavy loads. They perform unskilled work under the supervision of guildsmen. When all else fails they beg or turn to crime. It is their dream to be tested and accepted for a guild, or to come to the attention of a member of one of the Towers. The latter usually only happens to the fiercest or the most beautiful of them.

GOLEMS

Golems are the lowest of all the Hydran castes and in many ways are not even regarded as people. They are sterile humanoids created in lifevats to perform specific tasks. They are programmed to perform these functions in the same way that robots are. They are in fact organic robots. They have no rights whatsoever and are bought and sold as slaves.



Of course, along the canals and in the shadow of the great Towers there are other buildings that resemble those of other cities. There are tenement blocks and even huts and houses of brick and stone. Among these are numbered some of the oldest buildings in Hydra. They are almost exclusively the preserve of the poor and the outcast.

BIOMANCY

The wealth of Hydra lies in biomancy, the mastery of biotechnology and its kindred arts, genesculpting and symbionics.

Biomancy uses living organisms to create industrial artifacts such as symbionts and living prosthetics. It is used to create everything from new hearts to nekrochips to huge living biofactories that can spawn thousands of lesser organisms.

This arcane art was first developed by the Posthumans in the ages before the Armageddon Wars. Those ancients learned how to manipulate the genetic matrixes and bioplasm of living creatures to create living industrial artifacts such as vehicles, weapons and armor.

These arts were not lost when the datacores collapsed: indeed, they are among the few areas where knowledge may actually have increased since the Armageddon Wars. Certainly the biomancers and symbionists of Hydra no longer have the moral or legal constraints that bound the ancients. They are too caught up in the furious struggle for survival to care much about ethical issues. They are too busy using their ingenuity creating new weapons, devices, monsters and living machines to give much consideration to such things.



Symbionics is a sub-branch of biomancy and the Hydrans are its masters. It involves the creation of living machines that can be grafted to other living machines or even the flesh of those who use them. The products of symbionics all have a similar look. Most are covered in smooth leathery hide that is pleasant and slightly warm to the touch. Military gear such as carapace armor has a shiny, chitinous look. None of it is slimy or in any way suggests its manner of manufacture. Symbiotes are housed within streamlined bulges in their user's skin.

Only when that skin is damaged do the internal layers of muscle, nerve conduit and vein become obvious. The great advantage of symbionics is that they are self-repairing. Given the proper admixture of nutrient fluids, they will heal like any other living thing. Of course, sometimes they will not heal properly and small errors creep into the repairs. In the long run, that can lead to mutation and carcinoma.

Symbionics is the real source of Hydra's wealth. New symbiotic entities are constantly grown in Hydra's lifevats. Huge organic factories give birth to new living machines every day. These symbiotes are grafted directly to their user's flesh and nerves and can give many marvelous powers. Some are sentient and intelligent and compliment their bearers own abilities. A certain proportion are flawed and malevolent and attempt to dominate their users. This probably accounts for the reputation these artifacts have in some quarters for endangering the user's soul. All Hydrans who can afford them possess symbiotes, the more the better, for symbiotes are a sign of status and wealth.

Genesculpting is used by all the gencians to enhance their family members, tailoring them to the proper appearance, discipline and talent while still in the womb. It is this unique art that allows the gencians to thrive. Genesculpting is also used in other darker ways, like the creation of sex toys and human bioweapons. Normally these dark arts are practiced only on the children of commoners. The parents are paid well to compensate for giving up their children for such purposes.



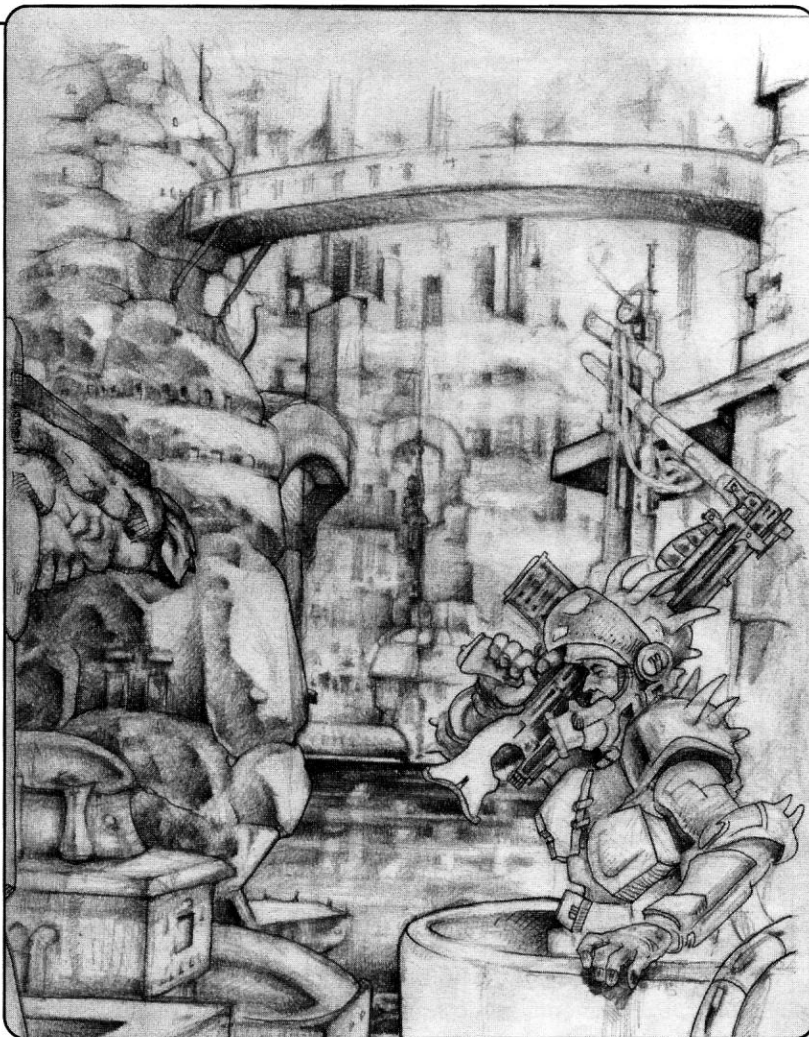
In ancient times, genesculpting was used to turn animals into anthromorphs, evolved humanoid slave races with many of the characteristics of mankind. Since the Anthromorph Rebellions, this discipline has been banned among the biomancers of Hydra. There are still some enclaves of loyalist anthromorphs within the city-state.

POLITICS

Hydra is ruled by the genclans, who are known either by their Tower names or their House names. Each House sends a representative to the Tower of Lords, where city policies are thrashed out. This Tower is a gigantic structure in the center of the islands, more often used as an arena for settling inter-Tower disputes and grudges than it is for making laws. Each representative has his own agenda, and the needs and desires of all Houses often clash, so getting anything done is very difficult except in times of war, when external threats unite the city-state. Hydra's politics are fluid and constantly changing. As one House begins to gain ascendancy, its rivals will gang together and drag it down. No one house has ever managed to gain control over the city-state.

The only other time the genclans will unite is when an internal struggle between two of the Towers threatens to erupt into full-scale war. Since the time of the Collapse such open warfare between Houses has been forbidden and all other Houses will unite to separate the combatants and punish them. Assassination, skirmishing, raiding and duels are all fine. Open warfare is not.

Each genclan has its own internal structure. Some are ruled by autocratic lords, others are ruled by ancient patriarchs and matriarchs. Some elect their leaders. Some have competitive examinations. Some are cooperatives whose members must vote on every decision. If ever a form of government has been tried by humanity, it is probably there in some form among the Houses.



ECONOMY

Hydra is among the wealthiest metrozones. Its wealth rests on its biotechnology and genesculpting. Hydra exports these products everywhere. Its medical and prosthetic systems are famous and its symbiots are popular among the wealthier Wastelanders. House Valka rents out mercenary units and military consultants and the Tower of Pleasure's inns and joyhouses are well known. Hydra is also a major exporter of food, especially luxury items. Its genesculptors are famous for providing custom tailored slaves and servants to wealthy clients' specifications.

Given the nature of its chief industries, it is not surprising that Hydra is not a big importer of raw materials. Hydra is a big importer of most other forms of high technology. It imports energy weapons and skimmer technology from Prometheus and ground cars, guns and refined Drakonium from Janus.



LAW AND ORDER

The maintenance of law and order is simple in Hydra. The troops of the Towers keep the peace within their territories and woe betide anyone who breaks that peace and gets caught. Punishments range from a light beating to death and break-up for the organ banks. Sometimes, the punishment is death everlasting, which means that the offender's nekrochip will be removed and wiped and any resurrection contracts he or she has are rendered null and void.

Outside the territories controlled by the Houses, in the great Insula of the commonality and the wharves by the canals, you're on your own. Best keep your blaster charged, your armor polished, and a couple of bodyguards within shouting distance, for these areas can be rough.

In theory all cults are permitted within the city, and even mutants are allowed to remain within the stormwalls if they keep out of sight. The actual law varies, however, depending on which genclan's jurisdiction you are in. If one genclan hates mutants and slays them on sight, a rival neighbor may tolerate them within its borders to annoy its enemy.

Dueling is legal and indeed expected among the aristocrats of the Towers, but it is their prerogative. No one else is allowed to do it. Duels are usually fought to first blood or death. On rare occasions the so-called *duello ultimo* is fought, and the winner strips the dead loser's corpse of any nekrochips it may have and destroys them. All resurrection policies become null and void under such circumstances. Of course, dueling is often simply another name for an assassination attempt.

WARFARE

Hydra has no formal army as such. Each House has its own troops, recruited and trained by its battlemasters. These troops also act as police within the House's territory when not at war. In times of war, the Houses will combine their troops and the Tower of Lords will appoint a warmaster to lead them. The warmaster is now always drawn from House Valka, because Hydran armies tend to win when led by Valkans and lose when led by anybody else.

VIRUS DETECTION PROGRAM : ON
FLOW LINK QUASI PROTOCOL: INITIATED
FILE SUB-PROTOL: STANDARD
NANOMECHANICAL INTERFACE:
VALIDATE SIMULATION

INITIATE SEQUENCE
NON-BIOLOGICAL RAW MATERIAL:
INTERNAL DATA CORRUPTION:
LINGUISTIC MARKUP DIRECTORY
MOLECULAR BINARY:

GUNSTBERG OVERDRIVE
MICRO-OPTICAL MODULATOR: ON
SILICONE SYNAPTIC SIMULATOR
DYSFUNCTION
MEGAPULSE CHANNEL ON

CORTIGO QUASI-DEGRADATION
GANGLIAL ELECTRO-IMPLANT
SMART CHIP INSTALLED
METHANE IMPULSE CATHETER
OCCIPITAL FLOW MODULATION: SINE

IIKARUS

LOGIN:
PASSWORD:
ACCESS GRANTED
SECURITY CLEARANCE LEVEL:
EXCESS GENETIC VARIATION:

SUB system COORDINATES
X1:434.37.8 X2:196.00.2
Y1:612.33.1 Y2:346.001.2
Z2: 21.21.22 Z1: 45.62.8
ABERRANT CHROMA LEVELS:

SEROTONERGIC OVERLOAD
AMYGDALPTIC OVERWRITE
SMART CHIP INSTALLED
BIOMECH AUGMENTATION:
NANOCCIPITAL DRIVER

BIOFEEDBACK MATRIX: XO
BINARY NANOBOT PRESENT
AMOEBOID DRONE PRESENT
PATTERN RECOGNIZER NULL:
STORYMODE INITIATING

Lord Vathek stared down from the highest tower of Ikarus. Below him, the city stretched out to the rim of the great disk. A storm was coming in from the east, and the clouds roiled like a turbulent, multicolored sea. The sky city plowed through them like a kilometers-long ship, seemingly impervious to any disturbance. The Order of Meteorologists had reported that the coming storm was going to be a monster. Turbulence might even shake the city, despite the power of its suspensor fields. Vathek didn't care. The spotters had also reported that they were directly over a caravan of Skavengers. Soon it would be time to begin the hunt.

All day, the downdwelling scum had unleashed their puny guided missiles in a futile effort to overcome the flying city's defenses and drive it away from the field of Drakonium they had discovered. Now it was time to teach them a lesson. They would learn that no one could attack the home of the Celestials with impunity. The Drakonium below belonged to Ikarus. It had been located ten hours before by Ikarean psychers, and all night the city had forged through the clouds towards it. It was needed simply to keep the sky city aloft and no lowly groundlings would stand between the folk of Ikarus and survival.

Vathek stepped out onto his balcony. The wind whipped his long silver hair and threatened to bring tears to his eyes. He dropped his helmet into place and smiled his savage smile. Today was going to be a good day. He could feel it in his bones. He had not even taken his daily dose of narcothalium, so certain was he of excitement. He wanted to experience this pleasure unaugmented. Even without the drug, the thrill of the hunt would be enough excitement for him, of this he was certain.

Already the sky was dark with Ikarean warriors. They swarmed around the towers like a flock of angry swallows, swooping and diving and testing their equipment. There was a carnival feel in the air. The warriors were showing off, performing intricate aerobatics to the applause of their lovers crowded on the balconies below.

Languid women and men waved perfumed handkerchiefs. Vathek despised them. Those effete fools should be joining in the sport instead of just spectating. If all of them took their responsibilities as seriously as he did, Ikarus would soon be restored to her ancient glory. Instead they chose not to participate. They were just like his thrice-be-damned wife.

Briefly Vathek cursed Syrena. She should, at least, have been here to see him off, to garland his armor with her favors, but she was still angry with him for killing her last lover, that arrogant pup Bronsek.

Well, so be it. It wasn't his wife's infidelities he minded. The heavens knew that he had been unfaithful enough himself. No, it was the way she flaunted her amours in front of all their friends that disturbed him. He knew she was just trying to make him jealous, to make him show that he cared enough to fight a duel.

What really annoyed him was that he did. It seemed somehow undignified that a Celestial of his rank should have to slaughter all those callow youths. It seemed somehow ill-bred. And they were all so keen to die for her. It was a tribute to the love, (or at least the lust) her beauty inspired. In spite of himself, he sometimes still felt its affect himself.

Anyway, if he did not slay them, he would be the laughing stock of the court, and that was a thing he would not endure. Why, only last week he had ordered his agents to poison the old chancellor, Senrathaque, for making a joke about Syrena and her flock of lovers. Vathek smiled viciously. Senrathaque had felt safe, knowing he was too old and feeble to be called out with honor.

Well, Vathek had shown that there was more than one way to skin a cat. A little chaundrey in the old man's medicine, put there by a trusted body, had ensured that Senrathaque would make no more witty remarks about Vathek's wife.

Enough, he told himself. It was time to put aside the cares of court life for an hour and lose himself in sport. He gave his full attention to his pre-flight checks.



DATACORE ACCESS



YOU ARE SECURE

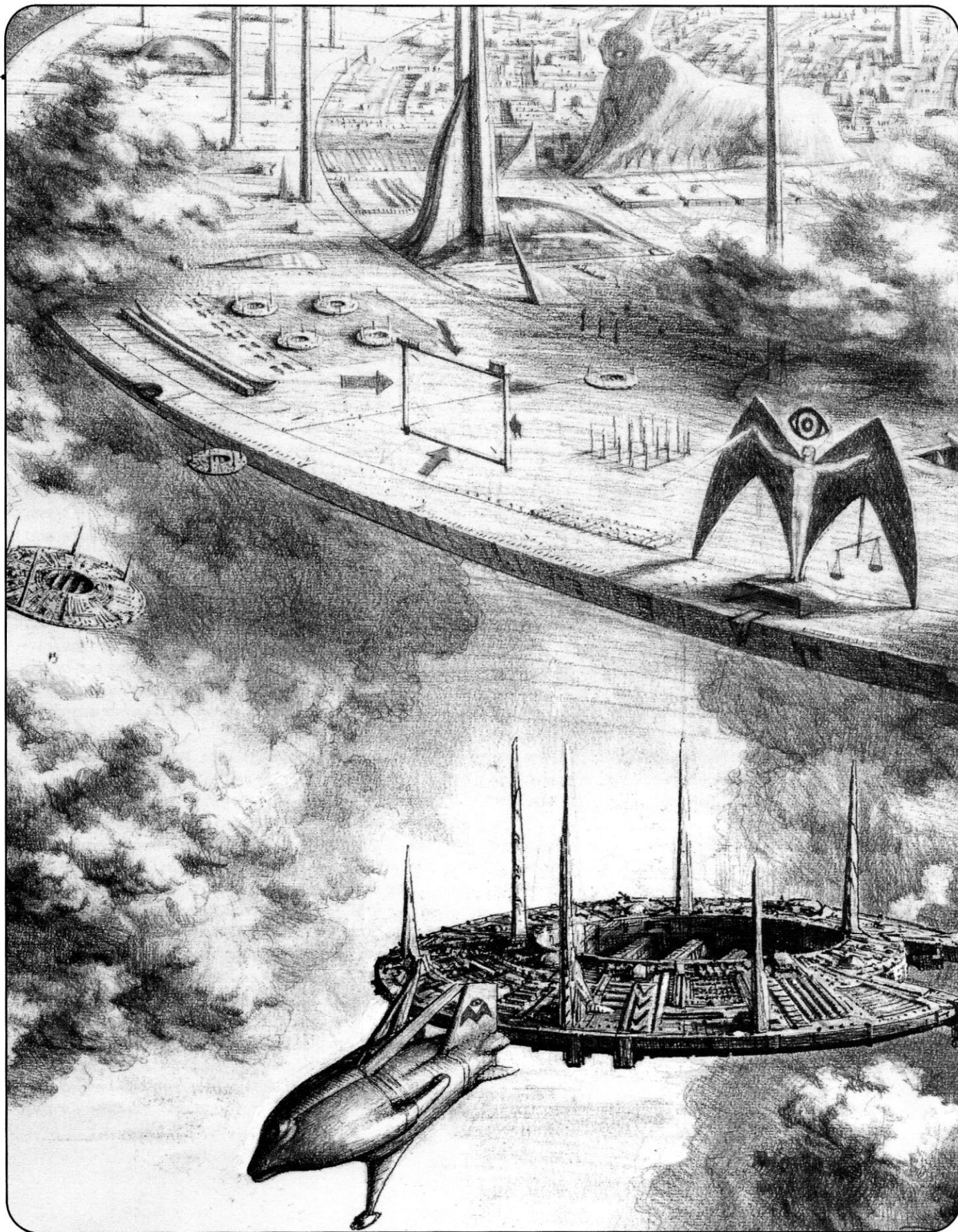
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ALL SYSTEMS GO

STORYMODE ON

PERSONA: VATHEK

IKARUS



He inspected the toggles of his armor and the charge of the power cells. He always did this personally, not trusting to a lackey. He had done so ever since the day he had sabotaged his brother's armor on the eve of a hunt. On that fine night, he had discharged the power cells and rigged the meters to read as if they were still at full capacity. His brother had plummeted to his doom ten minutes into an hour-long flight. Vathek had become heir to the family fortune. He smiled at the memory of it.

In a way he enjoyed this. He liked the thrill of outwitting his enemies and keeping himself alive by his own wits. He guessed that this was why he still liked the hunt, even at his age, when most Celestials were lost in the murk of narcotic addiction or sharpening their psychic powers at the expense of lessening their physical ones.

The hunt was a test of skill that forced him to keep fit, to stay alert, to hone his combat skills. It was valuable practice for the deadlier business of the Celestial Court and its endless intrigues. In a way, it was a metaphor for all of Ikarean life. In both there was only the predators and the prey.

He completed his checks with the sensors he had built himself, then switched his battlesuit to full activation. The visor dropped into place. The razor-sharp metallic wings extended from their arm sockets and fanned out like those of a pterodactyl. The breathing mask/communication unit slid into place over his mouth. A slight humming showed that the suspensors had come online and peaked at full power.

He stepped out over the edge of his balcony and fell toward the streets nearly half a kilometer below. He passed spiderweb bridges and flower-covered balconies. He passed glittering crystal windows and giant fluttering banners. He waited with his arms by his side until his airspeed indicator indicated terminal velocity, and he could hear the roar of the wind even through the padded earpieces of his helmet. He enjoyed the feeling of naked primordial fear that this descent sent surging through his brain.

He waited until the last possible second, until he could see the pale, upturned faces of the screaming slaves below him, and then he stretched his arms wide. The flexible fans of wafer thin duralloy expanded outwards and caught the air with a snap. The overloading suspensors whined with the strain.

For a moment he felt the heart-stopping thrill of pure terror. What if he had misjudged the distance? What if some rival had sabotaged his battlesuit in some way he had not anticipated? What if there was an accidental collision with a speeding aircar?

He almost screamed. But his self-control was perfect and he did not. Instead, he howled with exultation as the suspensors took the strain and sent him into a long flashing upward arc, directly over the heads of the crowds in the streets. He hurtled along just above street level at a speed of over 200 kph, and accelerating. Buildings blurred by, and he had to jink and weave to avoid speeding aircars.

He flashed over Grand Central Park and out towards the Rim. There was a moment of pure joy as he exulted in his mastery over gravity and flew free as a bird over his home city, guiding himself with minuscule adjustments of his wings, and by direct neural interface with the ancient thinking engines within his armor.

Swift as a meteor he sped over the rimwall and looked down onto the rolling mass of cloud below him. It streamed along, a turbulent mass of sickly greens and blues and yellows and reds into which Ikarean warriors were already plummeting, heading earthward to descend like the demons of legend upon their chosen prey.

Vathek set his collision detector to maximum circumference then dropped into the cloud, trusting that the detector would warn him if anything else came too close. He plummeted straight down out of the clouds and emerged to see the desert below him. The infernal red glow of Drakonium crystals covered a swathe of the plain. The downwellers were there, toiling across the barren wastelands like an army of ants. Even now they were trying to collect the precious crystal. He could see massive Drakonium-processing wastekrawlers towering out of the mass of vehicles, and hordes of dune bugs beginning to scatter in all directions. Their drivers knew what was coming next.

Let a few of the fools escape, Vathek thought. Such cowards were hardly worthy of the hunt.

Streams of tracer fire ripped upward from the Skavenger convoy. They blurred past Vathek's visor. He did not take evasive action. He was experienced enough to know that it was simply a random pattern at this range. They could not yet have locked on to him personally. Any movement at this point might simply take him into the line of fire rather than out of it. All he could do was pull his wings in and keep his feet and arms together to narrow his silhouette and present the smallest target area, then let himself descend at maximum possible speed.

Here and now it was all luck and it was all thrilling to Vathek's jaded senses. Here and now, in the fire and fury of combat, was the only time he really felt alive. He swung himself over like a diver beginning a long plunge and surveyed the fast-approaching ground and the prey for this day's hunt.



It was a large konvoy. From its center a few well-protected wastekrawlers, large as buildings, spewed forth a torrent of fire. Nothing worth going for there, Vathek decided. Too much effort for too little reward to break into one of those monsters. Later once the defenders had been overcome, they would break into it at their leisure. Instead he selected a careening dune bug and aimed for it, swiftly overhauling it as it bounced over the poisonous sands.

The occupants had noticed him now. One was standing up in the back of the vehicle, frantically trying to bring the heavy autocannon on the dune bug's rollbar to bear on him. Vathek veered to one side and let the shells pass to his left. He moved up and over the next burst with practiced ease and then swept over the bug. As he did so, his razor-sharp wings sheared the gunner's head from his shoulders. Vathek heardt the driver's scream as he whizzed by, then pulled himself into a long loop, barreling over for his second pass.

The driver had produced a pistol now, and was desperately trying to guide his car with one hand while snapping off shots with the other. Vathek smiled. This was going to be easy, Vathek thought. He did not even draw his own hand gun but instead swept down in a long swoop. At the last second, he matched velocity with his target and reached out and grasped him by the shoulders.

Bullets pinged off his armor at close range. Vathek tugged and lifted and, in a moment, the two of them were airborne. He rose straight up, climbing swiftly to a height of two hundred meters, then he dropped his prey. The man fell kicking and screaming and tumbling toward the ground, even as his vehicle bounced out of control, flipped over and burst into flames.

Vathek surveyed the battlefield. Hordes of winged warriors had descended like locusts on the konvoy. Here and there a few fired shoulder-mounted rocket launchers down on vehicles. Others dropped egg-like grenades into the open cockpits of dune bugs. Still others strafed their targets with lasers. Smoke and the screams of the dying were already rising over the battlefield. The clouds parted. The gigantic shadow of Ikarus blotted out the sun. Vathek felt pleased.

It was going to be a good day.

IKARUS

Ikarus is the smallest of all the metrozones, but it is also one of the most powerful. It normally floats at an altitude of about 1000 meters above the surface of Waste World, supported by a relay of enormous suspensor systems. It plows through the clouds like an enormous flying ship, venting tons of garbage upon the lands below. Its air-conditioned domes and glittering spires are legendary for their loveliness. Its people are legendary for their decadence. Ikareans are a tall slender folk of great beauty but are often physically weak and slothful, qualities that have led them to the pursuit of luxury and decadence.

In the years before the Armageddon Wars, the Ikareans pursued psionic power far beyond all others. They were a Posthuman state whose people evolved to wield psychic energy. The other nations of Waste World feared and loathed them. They responded by using their powers to dominate all they came across and soon they had a vast empire. Indeed, many think it is the dark deeds of the Ikarean Empire that have made psychers inspire fear to the present day.

One faction of the Ikareans, disgusted by the decadence of their kin, chose to build a huge space ark and depart from Waste World. Soon others followed suit, leaving only the worst and most depraved of their kind to lord it over their subjects. Even these decadents could see that war was coming, and they built a second space ark to carry them to safety. They called this mighty vessel Ikarus.

But, when the Armageddon Wars came, the Ikareans were trapped by the Galactic Compact's Interdict. Unable to leave Waste World, they rode out the worst of the disasters, first by waiting below the sea then by hovering above the contaminated and war-torn world in their flying city. Since then, Ikarus has remained aloft, unable to head outward into space, and fearful of setting down on the surface lest the Ikarians have to face the wrath of their ancient enemies. They wander over the surface of the world, rushing towards any new sources of Drakonium their psychers inform them of, and descend upon it to carry it off before the sandfleets off the other metrozones can appear. They do this with the urgency befitting a matter of life and death. For if Ikarus were ever to run out of Drakonium it would fall to earth. There its people would be at the mercy of the folk they had raided and plundered for so many centuries. Outnumbered as they are, the Ikareans would soon be overwhelmed.

Since their days of glory, the Ikareans have become an ever-more debauched and decadent people, using their enormous mental powers to bind Psidemons to their will and their mastery of the old technologies to preserve their way of life.





ECONOMY

The wealth of Ikarus rests on several things. First, its warriors plunder as they like, dropping from the sky and raiding hapless convoys, carrying off the survivors into slavery. Mostly they descend upon any newly discovered fields of Drakonium that are within range, but if these are not available merchants and traders and even outposts and hubs are all suitable prey. Only the metrozones are safe from these depravities, for not even the Celestial Emperor is arrogant enough to risk war with them. Many hubs and townships pay tribute to the Ikareans rather than face their wrath.

Second, Ikarus is the world's foremost synthesizer of narcotics and poisons. Its wares can be found for sale, usually illegally and for high prices, anywhere in Waste World. It is also a major producer of medicines.

Third, Ikarus is Waste World's foremost producer of suspensor systems, and of luxury aircars and flitters. The products of its autofacs are used by the wealthy everywhere.

The airfleet of Ikarus is the largest in the world and its ships hurtle across the skies to the four corners of Waste World in search of goods to buy and sell. The Ikareans are great merchants, specializing in highly portable luxury goods and trading with anyone, even habitual enemies, as long as they can turn a profit.

On the other hand, Ikarus must import a lot of food and raw materials. Sky barges bear a stream of such imports to the city. And of course, the flow of Drakonium needed to keep the city aloft must never stop.

LAW AND ORDER

Ikarus is a relatively safe place if you are an Ikarean. If you are not, then you are a slave and subject to any indignity, punishment or torment your masters may care to subject you to, without any hope of redress. The Ikareans are long-lived folk but their lives are often cut short by poisoning, assassination and duels fought in defense of their honor. Civil order is maintained by the Celestial Guard, the Emperor's incredibly mighty retinue of warriors, which keeps open warfare between the Celestial Houses to a minimum. The Emperor's secret police are everywhere, keeping him informed of any plots anywhere in the city.

A Celestial may own absolutely anything he wishes in terms of drugs, armor or weapons. A slave may own nothing except what his master allows him.

Mutation is a serious crime in Ikarus and the punishment is simple: The mutant is thrown overboard.

POLITICS

Ikareans are naturally conservative, with a great respect for tradition. All Ikareans see themselves as aristocrats. All of them can trace their lineage to before the Armageddon Wars. Their plundering and the profits from Ikarus' extensive trade make all Ikareans wealthy. Every Ikarean lives in a state of luxury that is almost impossible for most surface dwellers to imagine.

The true aristocracy of the flying island are the Celestials. These ancient noble houses have the privilege of binding their most attractive sons and daughters as concubines and hostages at the Celestial Emperor's court, where they intrigue and jockey for the Emperor's favor. The Emperor himself is the ultimate source of power: his very word is law, ruthlessly enforced by a merciless corps of secret police and by his fearsome guardsmen.

There are numerous factions at the Celestial Court, all maneuvering to gain the Emperor's ear and get their rivals banished from his good graces. In such an atmosphere the Emperor's court functionaries, the chancellors and ministers, wield enormous power.



WARFARE

Ikarus maintains numerous standing armies. The largest and most powerful is the Emperor's Celestial Guard. Each Celestial House maintains its own armed forces as well. All citizens are expected to take part in the muster of the militia, and each must, at his own expense, provide their own weapons and armor. In times of war, virtually the entire population save children, the sick and the truly ancient can be mustered.

The Ikarean armies rely on mass swarms of highly mobile airborne warriors supported by powerful aircraft and very potent psychers. They also include many bound demons and elementals. This combination of incredible mobility and potent psychic backup makes the Ikareans opponents to be reckoned with. The warrior brotherhoods and sisterhoods are an exception to the general physical decadence of the Ikareans. They pride themselves on their speed and fitness.

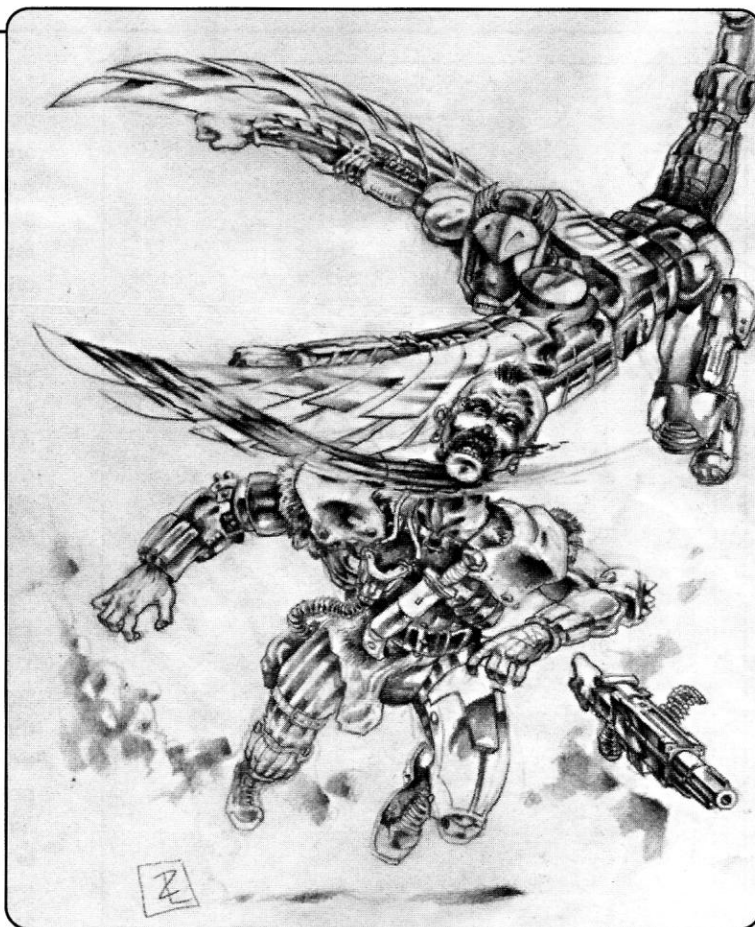
ARCHITECTURE

Ikarus itself can be divided into two. There is the main city, which rests atop the great flying disc. This is adorned with slim and beautiful needle towers and geodesic garden domes filled with rare and exotic plants, most of which have long since vanished from Waste World's surface. This is where the palaces of the Celestial Court are located, as well as the hubs of all the Ikarean citizens.

The second most notable features of Ikarus are the floating palaces of the Celestials which orbit around the great skydisk. Each of these is a fortress and a palace and a miniature replica of Ikarus itself. The palaces are home to the greater nobility and are accessible only by those who have some means of airborne transport.

Within the labyrinthine duralloy corridors of the skydisk itself are found the warrens where the slaves dwell in cramped barracks located amid endless pipes and generators. The warrens also hold the autofacs and workshops and great pharmaceutical plants. Down below the surface it is often infernally warm and folk can live and die never seeing the light of day.

A myriad of suspensor-borne defensive satellites equipped with scramblers, repulsors, anti-missile lasers and forcefield generators whirl around the city, protecting it from ground-based attack. Tens of thousands of self-aware aerial mines hover ready to attack any invading ships who approach. In times of war, the city-state can surround itself with a massive forcefield that is all but impenetrable.



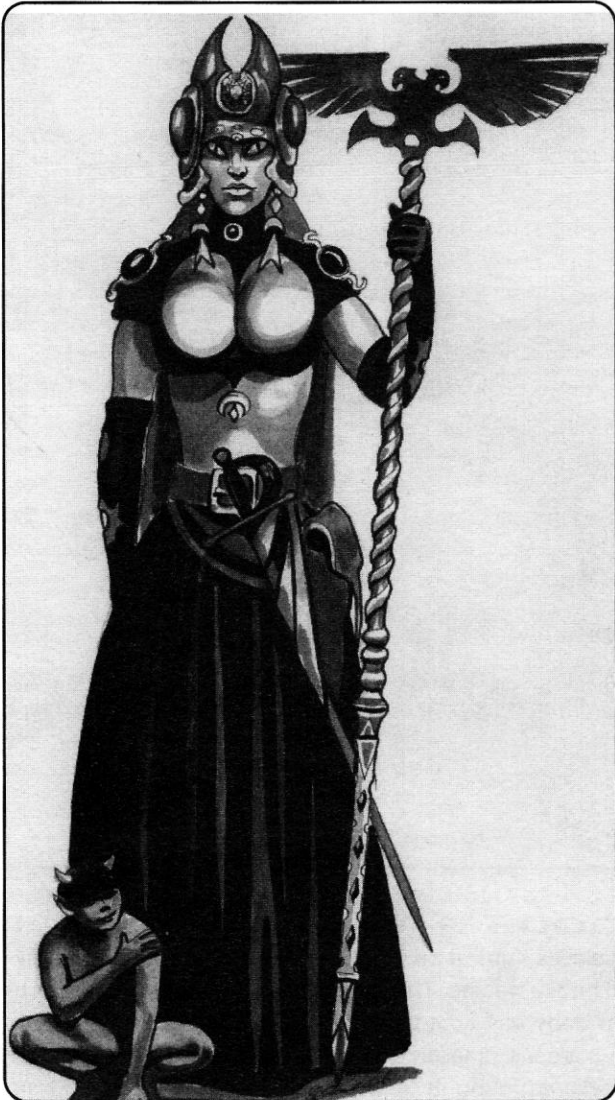
FOOD

The slaves subsist on the foul sludge produced from recycled bodily wastes. This contains barely enough calories to keep body and soul together and allow a person to work. The Ikareans dine on gourmet meals made from the rare ingredients found in their garden domes or flown in from far-off locations.

CLOTHING

The Ikareans favor gaudy, colorful clothes, long, flowing cloaks, high bi-corned hats or helmets and lots of jewelry all of which can conceal micro-miniaturized protective devices and sensors. Their ornate headgear usually conceals a psiscreen. At least one ring is usually a personal poison detector and quite possibly another will be a one-shot laser.

The Celestials normally wear even more expensive spidersilk robes and cloaks with epaulettes and lots of braid. Their ornate belt buckles hold personal forcefield generators and quite possibly a distortion field generator as well. All Ikareans would look quite undressed without their long rapier-like swords and their personal dueling lasers strapped to their legs.



The Celestial Court has its fashions set by the current Emperor Shardonix VI, who currently favors a guard uniform to remind everybody of his power. It's only a matter of time before the sycophants at court summon up enough courage to ape him, and then a plague of military-style fashions will sweep through the city.

Slaves dress in simple leather harnesses and plain tunics. Each has a registration number electro-branded on their arm or forehead.

TRANSPORT

The Ikareans are masters of all suspensor-driven forms of transport. These range from huge sky barges and aerial battlecruisers to personal speeders and the skimdisk. This uniquely Ikarean form of transport is a cross between a floating disc and a surfboard and is used by many to get around the city.

Ikarean hawkships are the standard combat aircraft that support Ikarean Eaglewarriors in battle. Their thick armor can protect them against all but the heaviest weapons. Their incredible firepower makes them masters of the close support role. Their suspensor technology is the most advanced in the world, allowing for vertical take-off and landing and incredible maneuverability in dogfights and during conventional flight.

In appearance, hawkships resemble great metal birds. Their wings are deliberately sculpted to resemble the outstretched wings of a bird of prey, their cockpits are molded into the shape of a bird's head. They are among the sleekest and most beautiful aircraft ever built, as well as the fastest. There are few vehicles capable of catching a hawkship once it has accelerated to full speed. Most enemy pilots would not even dream of trying.

RAPTORS

These are single seat fighters flown by the Ikarean skyfleet. They are the fastest aircraft in Waste World. Their pilots are the elite of the Ikarean Sky Fleet, trained for all forms of airborne warfare. Like all Ikarean ships, they are suspensor-powered, that renders them capable of vertical take-off and landing as well as incredibly intricate airborne maneuvers. They are built to withstand enormous g-forces and can practically come to a stop and go into reverse flight on the spot. They are equipped with anti-aircraft lasers and hunter-killer missiles and are the first line of defense for the skycity against all airborne attack. Flights of raptors intercept all incoming aircraft within a hundred-kilometer radius of the sky city. If their flight leader is not satisfied that the vehicle is friendly, they are authorized to blow it out of the sky.

SKUA

These hawkships are smaller passenger aircraft, often adapted to move small military units to far off battlefields. Each hawkship is capable of carrying up to 30 troops to the battlefield and deploying them while still airborne, then providing them with support. They are sometimes used as personal vehicles by the Celestials when they must visit other metrozones.

KONDORS

These are the massive transit airships of Ikarus. They are part of the huge merchant fleet that scours the planet carrying Ikarean luxury goods to trade for the essentials that the Ikareans require. Many have been converted into palatial airliners which whisk their wealthy passengers between destinations in as quick and safe a manner as is possible on Waste World. Many more have been put to military use, and are capable of delivering over a thousand Eaglewarriors to their chosen field of battle, at one time.



WEAPONS

It's a truism that an Ikarean's favored weapon is poison, preferably administered to their victim by someone else. The Ikareans are the masters of poison lore. Every conceivable variant is available somewhere in the sky city. Every home has its own personal poison snoopers floating over the dinner table. It coats the blades of the nobility. It is carried concealed on their persons for use when the opportunity allows.

Other favored weapons are the dueling sword, made from fine flexible duralloy, often with an injector point and a poison bulb in the hilt, and the dueling laser.

When it comes to warfare, Ikareans are most famous for their use of flying battlesuits. These mighty weapons systems are kept aloft by suspensors and are equipped with retractable razor-sharp wings for use in close combat. Waves of Ikarean warriors descend on their victims from their great skyships, supported by their psychers and their tame demons. When roused to battle, the Ikareans are fearsome, and few wish them as enemies.

The Ikareans often employ Stygian mercenaries and assassins for their wars and feuds. There seems to be a strange rapport between the two groups. It is said that the Ikareans are the only people who can inspire fear in a Stygian.

MEDICINE

The Ikareans produce a huge number of anti-toxins and are past masters of poison neutralization. Their anti-toxin dispensers are sought throughout Waste World. Ikarus is also the leading producer of anti-agathics, the so-called immortality drugs, which use cellular regeneration to slow the aging process.

In Ikarus, healthcare is superlative - for Ikareans. They have access to some of Waste World's most advanced health-care facilities. For slaves, things are worse. Many slaves are harvested for their organs, often having a kidney, an eye or a limb removed to supply an Ikarean. Sometimes they are simply killed and broken up for spare organs. These are often found for sale across Waste World.

Like many Post humans, Ikareans suffer from a mild form of Cybernetic Rejection Syndrome and so bionics are rare in the city-state, also. They are positively unfashionable, which means that they are unlikely to become common. Most Celestials find symbionics too gross-looking to ever use them.

Nekrochips are common in the city-state, particularly among Celestials. However, the well-known Rule of Seven forbids an Ikarean from being resurrected more than seven times. That has not stopped many Ikareans from taking out illegal contracts with surface-based organizations. Being reincarnated in this way is cause for eternal exile from the metrozone.

PSIONICS

Psionics are a source of pride among the Ikareans. You boast about your abilities if you are fortunate enough to have them, and many Ikareans do. Possession of psychic abilities is rewarded. Ikarus has training academies where psychers learn to discipline their abilities and use them in the service of their house and state.

One thing that makes Ikareans particularly unpopular on the surface is their image as Demon lovers. This is not quite the truth of the matter. The Ikareans have made long and detailed studies of the Psidemons, elementals and other sorts of energy beings and are quite adroit at binding them to their will. Indeed, within the city-state are many giant magnetic bottles, Demon cages in which captured energy beings are imprisoned and studied. Ikarean sorcerers often bind them to their will and the city-state uses them as shock troops in battle. Needless to say, Ikareans aren't any more popular with Psidemons than they are with surface dwellers.

CULTURE

In general, Ikareans are not nice people. Ikarus is a cruel, decadent place where most of the citizens pride themselves on their cruelty and decadence. A poet once described Ikareans as Stygians wearing the shapes of men. They are aristocratic, predatory and cruel. Their wit is keen but always malicious. They despise all non-Ikareans as barbarians or beasts, fit only to be slaves. The arts are patronized but they are effete, over-elaborate and specialized. The masque, the psychic opera and the skydance all have rabid admirers, as do the great torturemasters who perform their bloody tasks to splendid orchestral accompaniments and the rapt, lip-licking attentions of a large audience.

Ikareans are loyal only to their families, and then more out of a sense of egotistical pride than out of love. They see themselves as the heirs to a long and ancient lineage, and they try to avoid disgracing that name when they can.

On the positive side, they are cultured, intelligent and they value art, which is not something that can be said for most of Waste World's inhabitants. All in all, Ikarus is a place that most people other than its citizens would choose to avoid, and suits the Ikareans just fine.

VIRUS DETECTION PROGRAM: ON
FLOW LINK QUASI PROTOCOL: INITIATED
FILE SUB-PROTOL: STANDARD
NANOMECHANICAL INTERFACE:
VALIDATE SIMULATION

INITIATE SEQUENCE
NON-BIOLOGICAL RAW MATERIAL:
INTERNAL DATA CORRUPTION:
LINGUISTIC MARKUP DIRECTORY
MOLECULAR BINARY:

GUNSTBERG OVERDRIVE
MICRO-OPTICAL MODULATOR: ON
SILICONE SYNAPTIC SIMULATOR
DYSFUNCTION
CORTICAL RESONATOR PRESENT

CORTICO QUASI-DEGRADATION
GANGLIAL ELECTRO-IMPLANT
SMART CHIP INSTALLED
METHANE IMPULSE CATHETER
OCCIPITAL FLOW MODULATION: SINE

SHOGUNATE

LOGIN:
PASSWORD:
ACCESS GRANTED
SECURITY CLEARANCE LEVEL:
EXCESS GENETIC VARIATION:

SUB system COORDINATES
X1:107.143 X2:186.009
Y1:762.334 Y2:749.34.1
Z2: 21.052 Z1: 33.624
ABBERANT CHROMA LEVELS:

SEROTONERGIC OVERLOAD
AMYGDALPTIC OVERWRITE
SMART CHIP INSTALLED
BIOMECH AUGMENTATION:
NANOCCIPITAL DRIVER

BIOFEEDBACK MATRIX: XO
NEUROCIRCUIT FEEDBACK
AMOEBOID DRONE: PRESENT
GYROSCOPIC NOISE LOOP:
STORYMODE INITIATING

Sebastian Van Klegg was a native of Janus. He had looked upon the monstrous bulk of the Startower every day for thirty years. He had thought there was nothing else left in this world that could impress him. He had been wrong. He gazed up in awe at the Black Pagoda, a carved mountain of Ebon marble nearly five thousand meters high. It loomed over the lesser starscrapers like the promise of the wrath of God. For a moment it took his mind off the worrying fact that the Shogun's minister had summoned him.

Van Klegg glanced across at his pilot. The man's hands moved over the delicate controls of the aircar like a master surgeon performing a delicate operation. He was being forced to make dozens of tiny course adjustments per minute to compensate for the huge currents and eddies of air caused by the massive structure in front of them.

"Take her down," Van Klegg said. He dreaded the thought that they might overfly the Shogun's personal air-space. Anyone entering the invisible sphere surrounding the palace was shot down without mercy by this guard. No questions were asked. Death was sure and merciless.

The aircar joined the endless aerial procession circling over the landing bays. Patiently, the pilot awaited clearance to land, while Van Klegg checked his chronometer and drummed his fingers. It would not do to be late. It would cause a huge loss of face. Not to mention the fact that the minister might have him executed on the spot for keeping him waiting. You could never tell with the Immortals. They were unpredictable that way.

To distract himself, Van Klegg concentrated on the exterior of the Black Pagoda. It bristled with weapons emplacements. Tens of thousands of masked and armored samurai manned its battlements. From here he could see launch ramps that would send hundreds of flyers into the sky in minutes. Enormous walkers, the gigantic humanoid war machines favored by the Shogunate, loomed over the human soldiers like titanic metal statues. Van Klegg knew they would spring to life in an instant, if ever the palace was attacked.

The pilot set the flyer down gently on the landing pad. Smoothly, a ramp extended itself from the palace walls. Van Klegg unstrapped himself, rose from his seat and took a deep breath. His bodyguard waited expectantly. He gestured for them to remain in place. He could see no reason to have them accompany him into the monster's lair. Only visiting samurai were allowed to enter the Black Pagoda armed, and then they could only carry the sacred forceblades that were the badge of their office. If the minister wanted him dead, there was nothing any bodyguard could do.

Van Klegg emerged onto the ramp. It flexed slightly under his weight. He looked out through the walls of transparent plastiglass, uncomfortably aware of the two-thousand-meter drop into the concrete canyons below him. He wondered how often these ramps broke and had to fight to keep his pace measured until he passed through the open airlock and entered the corridor proper.

The air here was filled with the perfume and incense that the citizens of the Shogunate used to mask the chemical tang of the recyclers. The corridors thronged with people, thousands of people. Most of them wore kimonos marking them as locals. A few were garbed in the robes and armor of the outlander. Van Klegg shouldered his way through the crowd and passed through an archway a hundred times as tall as a man, then moved out across an enclosed tubeway wide as a superhighway.

A tunnel of armorglass enclosed the tubeway, and through it Van Klegg caught sight of the roiling multi-colored sky and the enormous spire of the Black Pagoda itself disappearing into the clouds. The tubeway ran for a dozen kilometers into the distance toward the spire. He waited for one of the endlessly circling trains to come to a halt. When its door whooshed open, he stepped into its interior. A crowd instantly forced its way in round about him.



DATA CORE ACCESS



SECURITY RISK ALERT

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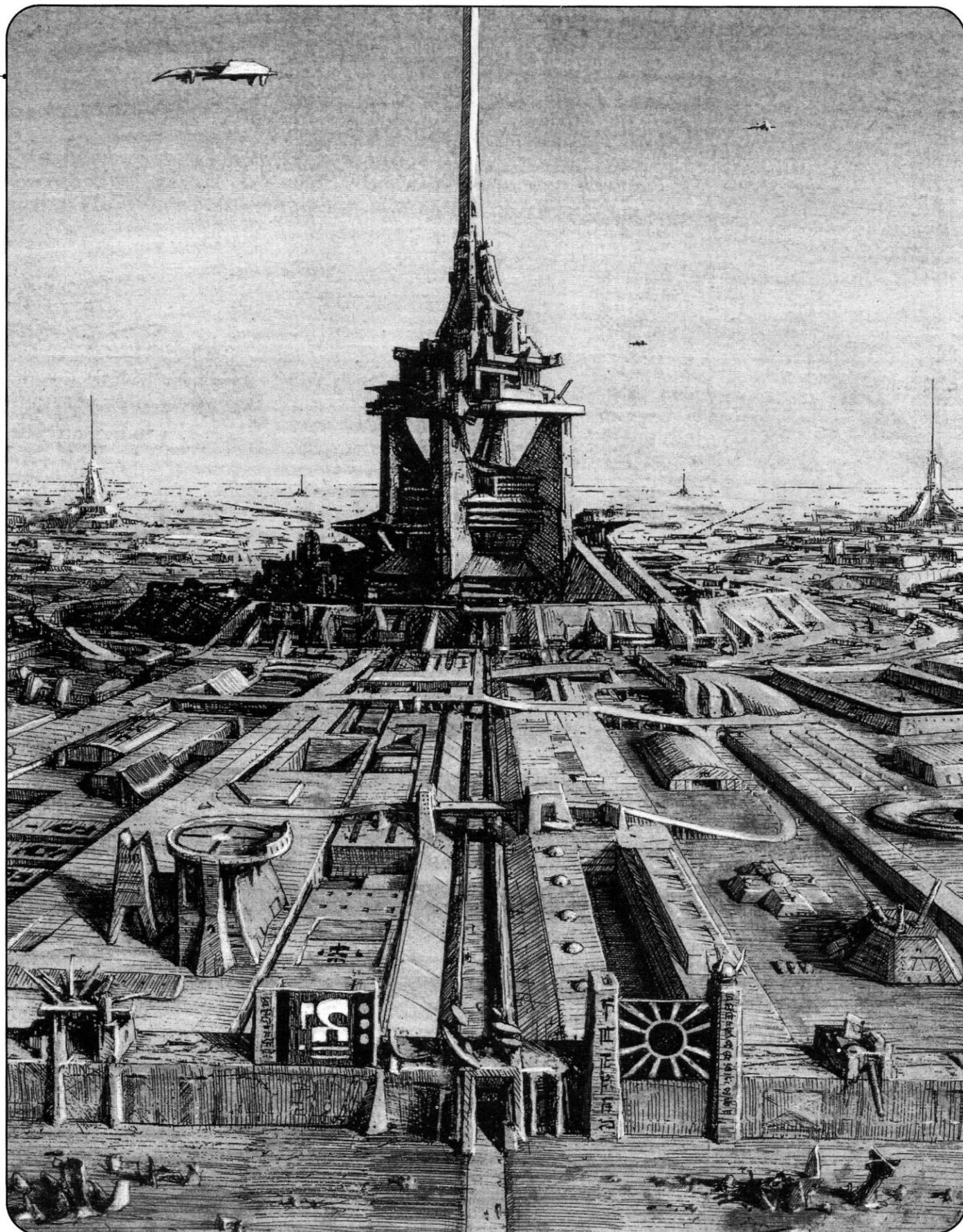


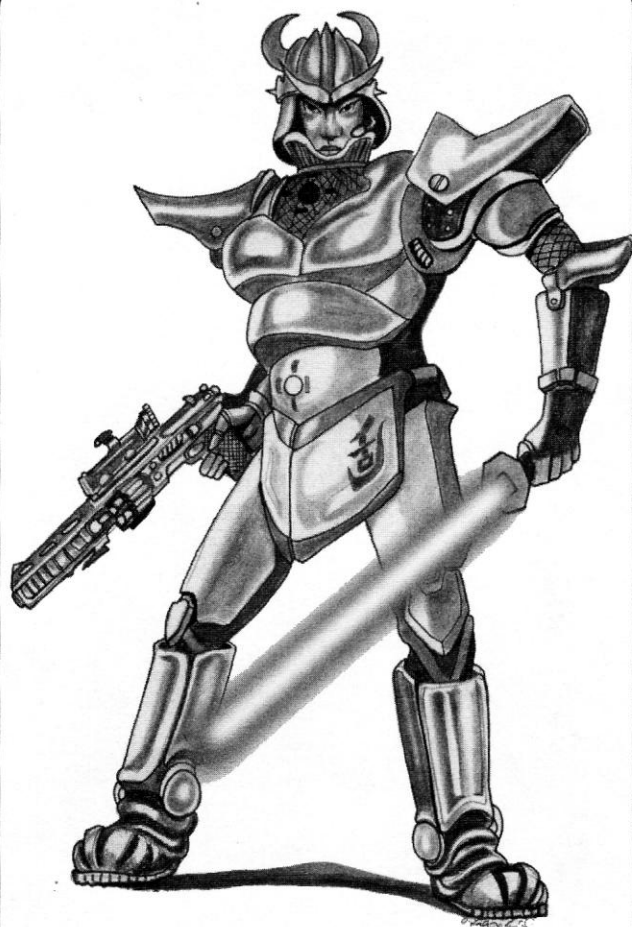
ALL SYSTEMS GO

STORY MODE ON

BIOSIM ACTIVE

SHOGUNATE





Claustrophobia immediately overcame Van Klegg. He was pressed cheek to jowl with many other members of the crowd, packed as closely as jellied insects in a can. Fingers fumbled at his belt. Old reflexes acquired in the Grand Bazaar of Janus sent his hand groping to cover his money-pouch. He just hoped that no rival Kombine had sent an assassin to get him. There would be no way of avoiding a poisoned blade here.

There was no sense of movement as the train accelerated. The scene merely blurred past the windows and was replaced with darkness as the train entered the Pagoda itself. The car slowed just as imperceptibly, and Van Klegg got out. He followed the glowing runes in the floor through the maze of corridors that led to his destination. The crowd thinned out a little as he walked toward an airlock checkpoint, guarded by the Shogun's samurai.

Van Klegg bowed to the guard captain standing in doorway of the first antechamber. There were no bright emblems on this man's armor. It was plain and black, the sign of the Shogun's elite guard. There was only one lord so famous here that his troops needed no insignia. The samurai looked back at him with flat, expressionless eyes. Van Klegg began to sweat, wondering whether the warrior was going to draw his Force Blade and behead him. He had seen it happen all too often in this barbaric place.

Commit the slightest infraction of the bizarre social codes, and you would find that your head and your body had gone their separate ways. If the captain decided to kill him, not even the fact that he was the representative of the wealthiest trading Kombine in Janus would save him. Nothing would. The inhabitants of this savage land cared for nothing that happened beyond the walls of their metro-zone. An outsider, no matter how wealthy or powerful, simply did not count.

The samurai continued to hold his gaze. He did not step aside from the gate he guarded. A thousand more black armored figures waited behind him, ready to do his bidding. Van Klegg was glad that he had left his own bodyguards behind. He was glad that there was no one here to see his humiliation and his fear. There was nothing any bodyguards could have done to protect him here anyway. Half a million men waited within the walls of this building. All of them were ready to die at the drop of a credit chip to protect the life or the honor of their beloved leader, the Shogun, or even just to preserve the peace of his house.

"What did the damn insolent oaf want," Van Klegg wondered, "What was he waiting for?" Van Klegg turned his eyes to the heavens. The ceiling loomed a thousand meters above him, so high that clouds had formed under its mighty arch and obscured the enormous murals that depicted the first Shogun's victories in the Demon Wars. Van Klegg didn't like to think of the labor that had gone into the creation of that ceiling. The savant Hildebrandt had told him that 10 million artisans had labored for a thousand years to create this place. Each worker had been obliged to have at least one child to take his place on the work gangs. Van Klegg thought of what such slavery told about the society of the Shogunate and shivered. It didn't bear thinking about.

What was truly astonishing was that the workers had no robots to aid them in their task. That damn superstitious law the original Shogun had passed all those long centuries ago had seen to that. The samurai and all their minions hated anything robotic with a venomous, fanatical hatred that touched on madness. It was a pity, for there would be an enormous market for such laboring machines here, if ever the current Shogun ever changed the law. The thought of the profits to be reaped sent a spasm of joy rippling to the very core of Van Klegg's merchant's soul.

The Samurai continued to glare at Van Klegg. Cold sweat beaded the Janusian's forehead. He wondered if he had done anything wrong, if he had violated any of the bizarre unwritten rules by which the samurai and all their guests were forced to abide. He could not think of any, but that was hardly the point. There were so many strange things to keep in mind that it made his head spin.

Don't point at anybody directly. Always rise and bow when a samurai enters a room. Always wear some perfume but never that strange cloying scent that was reserved for the use of samurai alone. Never wear the color black. Never talk of anyone's ancestors except in the present tense. There were a thousand prohibitions, great and small, and breaking one of them could result in instant death.

Van Klegg bowed again and forced a smile. He felt almost naked without his mask. He was a citizen of Janus and had worn one almost since birth. It seemed obscene somehow to be exposing his face to total strangers, but there was nothing he could do about it. No one was allowed to enter the Black Pagoda masked. To do so would be disrespectful to the Shogun, and that was the greatest crime imaginable in this land.

He heard mutterings and a growl from behind him and turned his head to look. A beautiful high-born lady stood watching him. She was flanked by her own samurai guards. The strange symbols on the shoulder pads of their armor matched the ones on her kimono, the marks of the Tora Clan, kin to the current Shogun. Two enormous tigers, taller than a man at the shoulder, stalked at her side. They glared at him with unwinking bionic eyes. These were the dreaded dragon tigers, the sacred cats of the Shogunate.

"You must show your pass," the woman said in a low, beautiful voice. She spoke Basik with the fluid accent of the Shogunate nobility. "He is waiting for you to give it to him. You do have one, don't you?"

Van Klegg felt almost pathetically grateful. It was rare indeed for anybody to show him courtesy here, let alone a samurai. He fumbled in his pouch for the little jade token and presented it to the warrior in front of him. He took it, looked at it, nodded twice then returned it to Van Klegg before motioning him onwards.

Van Klegg turned and bowed his thanks to the lady. She ignored him. He realized that it had not been kindness that caused her to speak, merely impatience. He had been holding up the passage of her retinue through this check-point. He had been but a minor inconvenience to her. He shrugged and passed on down a corridor that was wider than a city street and taller than many buildings. From every alcove, huge statues of the Shogun or his famous companions glared down.



Although he had never seen the Shogun in person, Van Klegg was as familiar with the ruler's appearance as he was with his own. Statues of the great potentate appeared everywhere. They always showed his mighty form encased in the same unadorned black power armor. His masked visage glared out from the front of every coin. Holographic representations towered above the great plazas of the Arcology Towers, standing above the teeming throngs as a man might stand amid insect hives.

Van Klegg wondered about the Shogun. Was he really immortal as his people claimed? Why not? Were not the minds of ancestors preserved in the karma machines in just such a manner? But that was not what the legends said. Once a man donned the ancient black armor, he was preserved against time's ravages, truly immortal, until the armor was ripped from his dead form by the warrior who would succeed him.

Since coming to this gigantic metrozone, he had heard other rumors, many of them dark. That the Shogun preserved his immortality by drinking a potion brewed from the blood of virgins, that he devoured the life-force of a hundred human sacrifices a day, that he was a Demon in mortal form. All of these rumors circulated in whispers through the taverns of the foreigners quarter, where all those who came to trade stayed.

Van Klegg let the throng carry him down the corridor. Everybody here had a purpose. No one came to the Black Pagoda without one. They would all have business with one of the Nine Hundred Perfect Ministers who oversaw the workings of the Shogun's domain. Van Klegg himself had once come to see Three Gold Eyes, the minister for external trade, and petition for an extension to his Kombine's incense monopoly. Van Klegg's company had the sole and exclusive right to import and distribute the highly addictive and hallucinogenic Okia incense currently fashionable with the ruling classes. That monopoly was due to expire within the month. Renewing it would ensure the prosperity of Van Klegg's Kombine for another decade. Losing the contract would be a financial setback of enormous magnitude.

Men had killed for the rights to such a monopoly. Van Klegg shivered. He himself had hired the infamous Steel Claw Ninja to dispose of his main rival, the Hydran Makmurthey. It had cost him a small fortune to do so, but it was worth it, for it guaranteed a large fortune. He forced that memory to the back of his mind. He did not like to think about such things here. The use of psi shields was banned within the Black Pagoda, and the Shogun's tame psychers were everywhere.

Still, he found the memory of the Steel Claw Ninja kept invading his mind. He could picture them in every detail even now. He could see their gray robes, the cowls that hid their features, the long blades sheathed and hung over their shoulders, the glitter of their metal talons, the glow of their red eyes. They were the most dangerous and most effective of all the assassin clans of the Shogunate, as well as the most feared. They were universally hated by the Samurai, because they were both robots and ninja, a combination that was anathema to the rulers of the metrozone.

Van Klegg shivered again. Why had that memory surfaced now of all times, in this place of all places? It was not supposed to. He had paid the savant to expunge it from his mind, to hypnotically erase all traces of such incriminating recollections. Van Klegg stopped and glanced around him, looking for a sign of any psyker who might be tampering with his thoughts. He saw nothing. There was only the monstrous tide of people swarming by: samurai, workers, scholars, courtesans.

Maybe the savant was simply incompetent. If that were the case, Van Klegg would demand the return of the fee the man had received, and he would have his bodyguard chastise the man severely. This was not a place to have any form of protective masking fail.

He checked his inertial locator and followed the directions programmed into it that would take him to the Ministers chambers. Sensing presences near him, Van Klegg looked over his shoulder. Two massive samurai had fallen into step behind him and kept pace with him as he walked. Van Klegg felt cold sweat break out on his back and he altered his speed. No matter how fast he walked, the samurai kept up. When he stopped, they stopped. He tried hard not to stare at them; he wanted them to take no insult from his behavior. Seeing that he was looking at them, they moved up to him and bowed politely. Van Klegg returned their bows, wishing he had a weapon on him.

"The Minister sent us to accompany you. We are to see you come to no harm."

Van Klegg felt a surge of relief. His suspicions ebbed away. He was in the clear. Then the second warrior spoke.

"He likes to investigate all charges of treason and murder himself. Consorting with ninja is a capital crime but don't worry. All high-ranking foreigners receive a fair trial before their executions."

Van Klegg fought down an urge to faint.

THE SHOGUNATE

After the Armageddon Wars, there was chaos in the metrozones of the east. Human fought with Posthuman. Rogue Panzers infected by the dreaded Apokalypse Virus stalked the streets, slaying all who lived. Starscrapers burned. Brother fought with brother, and it seemed the most ancient of civilizations would end.

Into this maelstrom of anarchy and terror came one man, nameless now, a warrior, a general, a great leader. He welded together a potent fighting force, the samurai, and restored order in his home sector. Then he moved to brutally suppress the violence in the surrounding sectors and metrozones. For centuries he fought and schemed and bribed until he restored a fragile peace.

He seemed immortal, unkillable, a gigantic figure in black powered armor, who won every battle, overcame every foe, who drove back darkness and chaos and who was worshipped as a god by those who followed him. He became known as the Shogun. His realm was the Shogunate.

The Shogun introduced harsh laws and shaped his society to remain stable in an unstable world. He banned the manufacture of thinking machines and enforced rigid military rule for his kingdom, for he knew that only strict discipline would allow his people to survive the threat of their mighty enemies.



Slowly, he built the mightiest army Waste World had ever seen, a fighting force numbered in the millions. He instituted the Laws of Karma, where every citizen who lived until 70 years of age would have his memories scanned and be judged by the Lords of Karma. Some were simply brainwiped and allowed to pass into oblivion. The worthy were archived in the Palaces of Karma, their memories and spirits preserved, revered ancestors who could be consulted by their descendants.

Then, having saved his homeland, the first Shogun vanished, leaving behind three tokens: his armor, his blade and his ceremonial crown. His greatest generals fought for the empty throne, and eventually a victor emerged, Ido, the second Shogun. Since that time, power in the Shogunate has never changed hands peacefully. Always the Shogun has been deposed by his successors and sentenced to the True Death. It is the way of the Shogunate, for it ensures that only the boldest, most ruthless and most clever can aspire to the throne and survive.

Now the Shogunate is the greatest power of the Eastern Sectors. Indeed, it is the only power of the Eastern Sectors, having long ago conquered all its neighbors and slowly expanded to envelop them. It is far and away the most populous of all Waste World's metrozones, having nearly twice the population of all the others combined.

POLITICS

The Shogunate is a feudal state. It is ruled by the samurai, a warrior-aristocracy trained from birth in every form of warfare. In their pursuit of excellence on the battlefield, the samurai caste use psionics, martial arts, high-tech weapons and powered armor. They rule their land with a fist of iron. The samurai are Posthumans, genetically engineered to be the mightiest fighters on all Waste World. This ruling class represents only about one-third of the population. The remainder, the commoners, actually contain more of the Old Race than the entire population of Prometheus.

THE SHOGUN

At the head of the government is the Shogun, an immortal being of immense power. He is never seen except within his great black battlesuit, and he has never lost a battle. He is a general of genius and possesses great psionic powers. He rules his land cruelly but fairly, with an iron hand. He sits at the head of the coalition that brought him to power in the last civil war. He is drawn from the Tora clan, and none now speak his original name.

The Shogun is a mighty immortal, rarely seen these days but whose presence is felt throughout his realm. His portrait is on every credit chip. His statue is on every street corner. His armored features glare down from every billboard.

His crown, a potent ancient artifact, keeps him in constant telepathic contact with the sensei of the psyker temples in each province, and in this way, his instructions are relayed to all within his domains. In times of war, he emerges to lead his mighty armies and to conquer new territories. He has currently retired to his palace to meditate on new conquests.

THE OVERLORDS

Below the Shogun are the overlords, each drawn from one of the great clans. These individuals are also mighty warriors, great generals possessed of psionic powers. The great clans are known for their wealth and power. Each has in the past produced a Shogun, and each sits at the head of its own web of alliances and political patronage.

Each overlord is served in turn by his retinue of warlords. Each of these rules a sector of the overlord's province in his name. Each has his own trusted retinue of noble retainers.

Each noble is in turn served by thousands of Shogun knights. These are the warrior aristocracy who control small sections of the fiefdoms and use its wealth to arm and equip their own retinues of warriors.

Samurai are the lowest rung of the ruling class. They sometimes own little more than their weapons and their battlesuits.

The first Shogun forged a culture of obligation and instant obedience. Every person who is part of the nobility lives to serve his master and to obey his every whim utterly. They would willingly go to death if their master ordered them to do so.

Members of the samurai caste can, for any reason, or none at all, put members of the lower classes to death. The commoners who dwell upon their lands are little better than slaves. They are chained to their masters' lands and factories, and any disobedience is punished with instant, painful death.

THE CLANS

The Shogunate is divided into eight provinces. One is ruled by the Shogun. Another fell into anarchy of civil strife and is known as the Darkzone. The other six provinces are ruled by the powerful Great Clans in the Shogun's name. Their power has grown over the long centuries, and now each clan wields enormous influence within the Shogun's domains.



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SHOGUNATE



Each clan rules one of the great provinces of the metrozone. Each has its own pagoda in the center of the province. Of course, each clan has thousands of allied Clans who have sworn obedience to their feudal overlord, just as they, in turn, have sworn obedience to the Shogun. Each Clan has its own traditions, and its own specialized areas of training. Each controls absolutely the inhabitants of its domain, and each strives for favor in the eyes of the Shogun.

TORA - THE TIGER CLAN

The Tiger Clan has without a doubt produced some of the greatest heroes of the Shogunate. They are proud warriors, fearless and bold. They prize honor above all, even victory. They are famed throughout the Shogunate for their dragon tigers, the great warcats that they breed and augment with bionic systems. By ancient decree of the Shogun, only the tigers are allowed to breed and own these animals. Each samurai of the Tiger Clan is paired with a cub when he is old enough to walk, and they train and grow together. When a tiger dies, the warrior mourns it as he would the loss of a brother. The present Shogun arose originally from the Tora Clan; it is now the most powerful and influential of all the clans.

HIGUMA - THE GREAT BEAR CLAN

This clan produces powerful warriors of greater than normal size and strength. They are feared and famed throughout the Shogunate for their patience and their ferocity in war.

TATSU - THE DRAGON CLAN

The Dragons are the wealthiest of all the clans and the most influential. Their warriors always dress in glittering jeweled armor and proudly display their fine equipment. Dragon Clan members grow to be taller, stronger and heavier than most other samurai and are among the most feared of all close-combat troops.

KITSUNE - THE FOX CLAN

The Foxes are sorcerers as well as warriors, and they have a long tradition of producing sorcerers, monks and scholars. They are feared because of their shadowy powers and their propensity to madness.

I - THE BOAR CLAN

The Boar Clan are powerful warriors who like to enjoy life. They favor food, wine and song when they can get them. They are happy-go-lucky characters who tend to be the heroes of popular folk tales.

KOBARA - THE SERPENT CLAN

The Kobara are known for their stealth, cunning and cold-eyed assessment of all situations. They are rumored to have dealings with many ninja ryu and to be the masters of poison and assassination. Their green-garbed warriors are famed for their skill at iajitsu, the ability to draw and strike with the speed of a snake.

THE HALLS OF KARMA

All citizens of the Shogunate have a karmachip implanted at birth. At least once each lifetime, they must make a pilgrimage to the Halls of Karma. This is usually only done after the age of forty, when the pilgrim shaves his head, dons a saffron robe and sets out for the hall.

These mighty pagodas tower over all surrounding structures, piercing the clouds. Within them are the great Engines of Judgment, which allow the Judges of Karma to use ancient engines to inspect the contents of the Karmachip to look back over the pilgrim's life and decide whether he is worthy of reincarnation.

Most people are not found worthy; they are told to live out their lives, and their memories are stored within the halls for future reincarnation. This is known as the long sleep. There is also a lottery that ensures that 10 percent of all citizens will be reborn or have their stored spirits reincarnated at some future date. In this way, all know that they have at least a chance of immortality.

Those who are judged worthy are granted new bodies, grown in the clone vats within the halls. They may also be granted more wealth, or the coveted samurai status. Their essence is transferred to the new body, and their old body is destroyed.

Truly worthy individuals can pass through a selection of lives and bodies, slowly acquiring merit. Samurai do not fear to die in battle, for their Karmachips will be restored to the Halls of Karma, and they will be judged on their actions. The populace has the hope of immortality, and the whole social structure remains stable.

Of course, there are doubters of the whole Karmic process. Some think that the judgment process is a sham and that the new person in the new body is just that. The fact that he shares memories and DNA with his predecessor means nothing. There is no connection between them other than that. There is no spiritual basis for this immortality. Naturally, people who feel this way are denied recording or rebirth. Many monks choose this path voluntarily.

More terrifyingly, the Shogun can sentence criminals to a century of torture. The malefactors will be hooked up to a recording machine for the whole period, and when they expire they will be reborn in a clone body freshly created for just this purpose. The torture will continue on the new body for the period of the sentence.



Strangely enough, the lure of immortality is so strong that it draws outsiders to the Shogunate, to seek the Shogun's blessing and to find the secret of eternal life. Most find nothing except a cramped life in the foreigners' quarters, but they are given hope by the handful who have throughout history performed a service to the Shogunate and achieved that goal.

IMMORTAL WARRIORS

Every samurai has a karmachip embedded within his skull. These will be redeemed by his clan if he died a worthy death, and he will be reborn in a new body. This has, of course, given rise to the samurai habit of "taking souls" in combat. Every samurai knows he can ransom an enemy's Karmachips to his family. Sometimes vast fortunes change hands to reclaim these.

This guarantee of personal immortality is what makes samurai so fierce in battle. The toughest have died many times, and while they do not enjoy it, they know they will return.

In a world contaminated by entropic and radioactive fallout, Karmachips sometimes malfunction, introducing glitches into their owner's personality matrix when they are reborn, making the owner insane. If the insanity is a conspicuous and dangerous one, the samurai may be executed, exiled or become a ronin. If the insanity is relatively harmless, then the samurai lives on unmolested. Indeed, most of the oldest samurai have many eccentricities.

RONIN

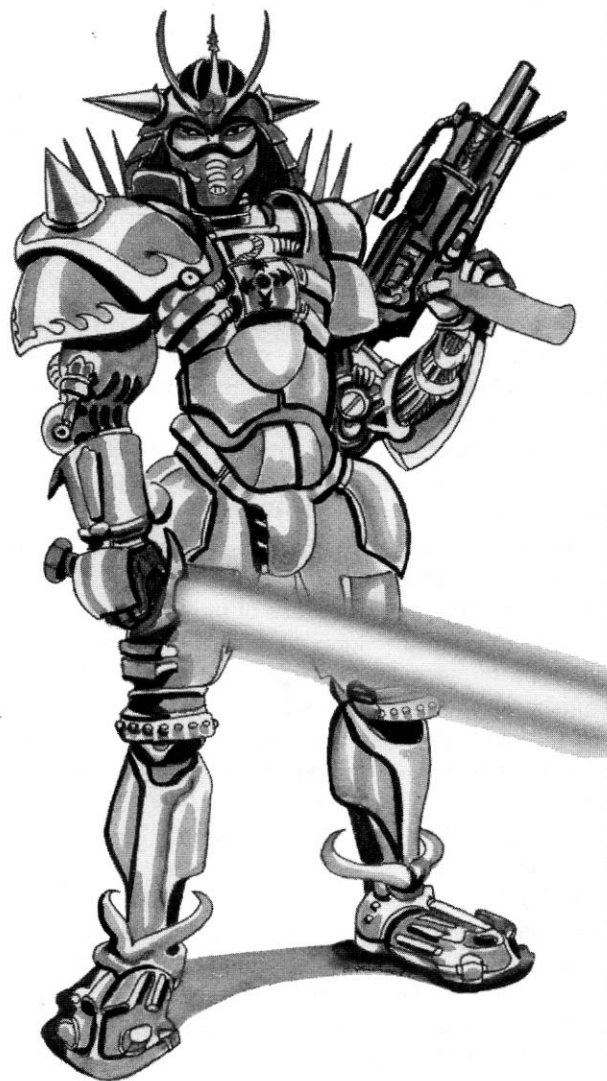
One of the worst penalties to befall a ronin is that he is stripped of his Karmachip and, in effect, becomes a mere mortal. He must then seek black-market body brokers, or die the True Death.

BODY BROKERS

In a society that believes in reincarnation and where the technology is readily available, there are bound to be those who seek to cheat the system and achieve immortality. Those who have been denied reincarnation often seek out the body brokers, sorcerers who will, for a price, or so they claim, provide you with a new life. Of course, many are con men who will take your money and murder you. Some are agents of the Shogunate's secret police, but a few really can do what they say.

THE TRUE DEATH

There is, of course, death, final and true. This is most often the sentence passed on criminals who are to be denied any form of rebirth and may not even enter into the Hall of Ghosts. All records of such an individual's existence are destroyed, and no one is allowed to even mention his name. To have someone sentenced to the True Death brings shame and dishonor on the whole clan.



Inevitably, in combat Karmachips get damaged beyond repair or reuse; when this happens, the True Death comes to a samurai at last. It is considered very bad form, punishable by becoming a ronin, to deliberately destroy another samurai's Karmachip.

THE HALL OF GHOSTS

This is where all of those who are not reborn end up, disembodied memories stored in the datacores of the Ultramundae. These ghosts do not have lives. They are frozen in time and brought into being by the request of anyone who wishes to consult them. They can be consulted by the police forces when their knowledge is needed, or by their descendants if their wisdom is required. Sometimes, those who are tired of living will commit seppuku and request that they be left undisturbed in the Hall Of Ghosts.

SEPPUKU

In a society where you can be almost immediately reborn with all of your memories intact, the act of seppuku or ritual suicide takes on a new meaning. When you commit seppuku, you write your death poem and end your life. You can be ordered to commit seppuku by your liege lord. When you do this, you will not be reborn, but your memories will be stored in the Hall of Ghosts.

ECONOMY

The Shogunate is vast and occupies lands rich in natural resources. The metrozone is surrounded by extensive Drakonium fields. It is the only place on Waste World that currently has enough Drakonium within easy reach to meet its needs. Indeed, the Shogunate is Waste World's only regular exporter of Drakonium. This is the foundation of its enormous wealth.

Needless to say, each of the great Drakonium fields is claimed by one of the clans or by the Shogun himself. In theory, one of the major sources of the Shogun's power is his ability to grant the rights to mine a Drakonium field to anyone as he sees fit. Such grants are worth a fortune. Naturally, all the major clans have been given dispensations to hold their fields in perpetuity. This is a right they maintain by force of arms and by the fact that each has built an enormous fortress in the center of its grantlands. The Clanlords dispense their own grants to their minions, which basically entitle them to a tithe of the revenues generated by the Drakonium fields. In addition to its own Drakonium fields, the Shogunate maintains a huge sand-fleet that scours the Wastes for the energy crystal.

The envy caused by the Shogunate's riches is one of the major causes of Promethean enmity. Promethean Guard forces often raid the Shogunate's colonies and outlying installations. Both sides know that one day soon, before Drakonium becomes truly scarce, Prometheus must make a lunge for the Drakonium fields, or it will be outlasted by its rival when its own Drakonium runs out.

The folk of the Shogunate are very good at producing weapons, including forceblades, which are the badge of samurai status.

The Shogunate's main exports are raw materials, low-cost plastic goods and weapons.

Within the Shogunate, the ruling classes are very wealthy, and the commoners are extremely poor. The rulers consume many foreign-made luxury imports. The commoners live lives of drudgery.

LAW AND ORDER

Law and order is maintained by the samurai, who are also the soldiers of the Shogunate. What constitutes a crime and its punishment is very much at the whim of the local lords. They have total power of life and death within their domains.

Crimes such as theft are not tolerated, nor is anything that disturbs the harmony of the community. One of the major problems of the Shogunate are the bands of ronin, masterless warriors who have taken to banditry and who roam the metrozone, attacking travelers.

Another problem is the corruption of many of the nobles who extort unfair and arbitrary taxes from all within or passing through their realms.

Despite the enormous number of samurai, whole sectors of the Shogunate are in a constant state of uprising as rebels, ronin and others inspire locals to take up arms against their brutal samurai overlords. Thus, there can be hundreds of battles fought in any one day all over the seven provinces as the samurai struggle to maintain order in a society that teeters on the verge of anarchy.

The most fiercely applied law is the one related to thinking machines. Robots and positronic machines in general are banned, as are all forms of artificial intelligence. These laws date back to the anti-machine jihads at the end of the Armageddon Wars. The folk of the Shogunate suffered more than most metrozones from the aftereffects of the Apocalypse Virus, and robots and Demons are equally feared and hated.

NINJA

Ninja are another problem. These stealthy assassins are everywhere, committing acts of murder and sabotage, often at the behest of the very samurai who should be most committed to stamping them out. Ninja bases are hidden throughout the Shogunate, and their services are available to any who can pay the price. Despite the Shogun's edict prohibiting any dealings with them, they are used by many samurai lords in the constant internecine warfare within the Shogunate. There are hundreds of different ninja ryu within the Shogunate. Each of these schools of assassins produces killers of great potency. Most have their own distinguishing feature. Some are masters of poison. Others use cybernetic systems. Still others specialize in the martial arts or the various forms of magic.

Of all of these hired murderers, the Steel Claw Ryu are the most feared. They consist entirely of robots, the forbidden race of the Shogunate. Some of these robots are thousands of years old and incredibly skilled. All have been affected by the Apocalypse Virus and exist only to cause havoc and mayhem. They are capable of disguising themselves in flesh sheathes, all-over body coverings of natural-looking organic tissue, which make them appear totally human.



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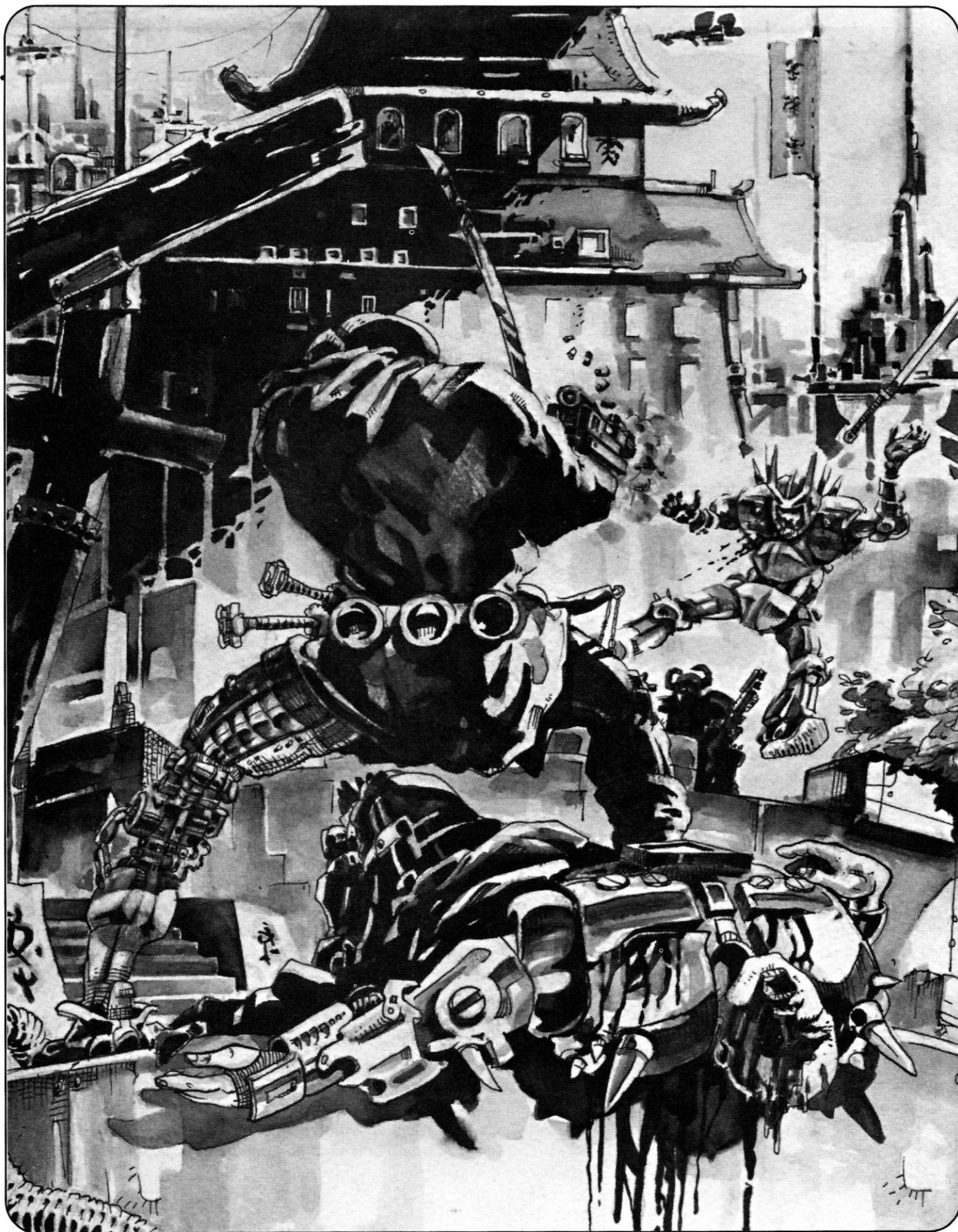


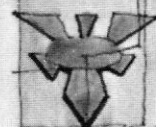
ALL SYSTEMS GO

INFODUMP WARNING

FLOWLINK INTENSITY 7

SHOGUNATE





The Shogunate's military uses many huge bipedal war machines. These giant wastewalkers are the monstrous spearheads of Shogunate offensives.

The social fabric of the Shogunate is based on people living multiple lives and eventually being promoted to a new level in society. This happens very slowly, but it still happens. And, of course, there are only a finite number of positions of power and influence available. Generally speaking, these only become open when someone in them dies the True Death or is demoted due to some action.



The Shogun long ago realized that this could lead eventually to tension and instability within society, as worthy and ambitious people became tired of waiting for their just rewards. This led to the Doctrine of Conquest. Those who are found worthy of promotion but for whom there is no readily available position can be sent out into the Darkzone or into the Wastes themselves to found colonies and carve out new fiefs. They are given all the material support needed to achieve that goal: workers, warriors and weapons, and thus does the Shogunate slowly grow.

Of course, most such colonies fail, but that is hardly the point. There is no shame or dishonor in this, and the real purpose of focusing the energies and drives of ambitious people in such a way as to preserve the fabric of society is achieved.

DRAGON TIGERS

These gigantic genetically engineered cats are one of the sacred symbols of the Shogunate. It is forbidden for anyone except a samurai to even touch one, and they can be killed only on the strongest of provocations, during battles and wars, or if they turn into man-eaters. They resemble ancient tigers but are much larger. They can grow to be over five meters long and weigh in at over two tons. Many of them are specially modified for battle with cybernetic implants such as steel-trap jaws and retractable duralloy claw sheaths. Dragon tigers are clever, some have almost human intelligence and cunning, and they are fierce and terrible hunters.

ARCHITECTURE

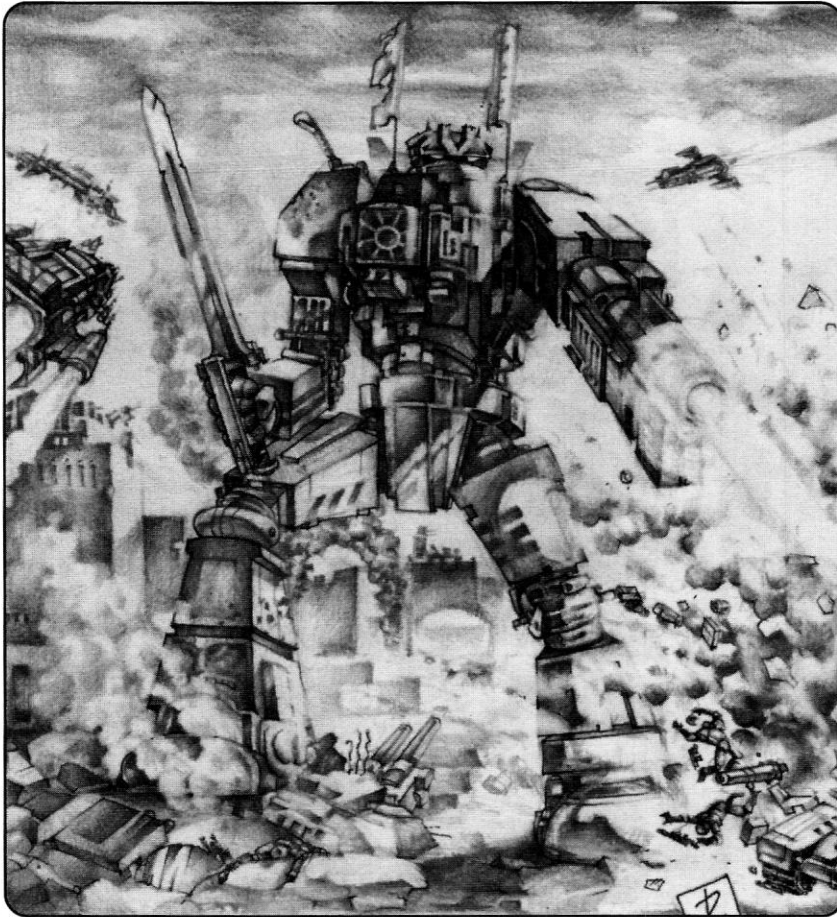
The Shogunate favors massive pagodas with sloping winged roofs topped by huge armored ziggurats for its starscrapers. Habitations are usually built around these massive white-walled fortresses, which bristle with weapons and provide a secure base from which the samurai can oppress the populations. Many of the commoners dwell in huge underground warrens and never see the light of day. Still others dwell in the massive agri-domes that rise like blisters around the fortresses.



THE BLACK PAGODA

The Black Pagoda is the official residence of the Shogun, a gigantic fortress-palace that towers over the metrozone. It is forbidden by Imperial Edict to build any tower higher than the Black Pagoda in the city, although it is unlikely that anybody could. The tip of the communicator antenna atop its spire is 5,000 meters above ground level. It is also forbidden for any vehicle within the city to fly higher than this. It would be a sign of incredible disrespect for anybody to look down on the Shogun. Such disrespect is punished by immediate death, usually in the form of ground-to-air missiles launched from the Black Pagoda itself or from one of the thousands of Shogunate military installations scattered throughout the city.

There are many stories surrounding the building of the Black Pagoda. Some say that twenty million commoners labored for over a thousand years to build it. When a worker died, others fought to take his place in the ranks of the builders, for in doing so they ensured that their souls would be preserved in the Karma Machines and that their children would enjoy the blessing of the Shogun. Others claim that the Black Pagoda is the work of the Ancients, and was created in a single day by nano-demons. That story is considered treasonous by most people. Still others contend that the Black Pagoda is older than the Shogunate itself, and is a relic of the ancients from the time before the Armageddon Wars.



CLOTHING

The most common form of clothing for all classes in the Shogunate is the kimono. For the ruling class it can be vastly elaborate, finely tailored from the most expensive synthisilk. For commoners it can be a roughly cut mass-produced cotton item. When forced to travel beyond the city, the ruling class always wears battlesuits, which grant protection in the hostile environments of the Wastes. Commoners are not allowed to travel beyond their home cities, so they rarely have this problem.

TRANSPORT

Vehicles are common among the samurai. The ruling classes have access to all forms of transport. Warriors favor large powerful skimmer bikes, often equipped with auto-weapons. Those who can afford them use luxuriously appointed wastekrawlers. The Shogunate also excels in the production of bipedal walkers, which form the backbone of its armies.

It is illegal for a commoner to own any vehicle not powered by his own muscles. Within the megacities, balloon-tired, pedal-powered rickshaws and bicycles are common.

WEAPONS

It is an offense punishable by instant death for anyone other than a samurai or a person licensed by a local overlord to carry a weapon of any sort in the cities of the Shogunate. On the other hand, for a samurai to be seen in public any other way than fully armed would be considered a disgrace. Most samurai carry their weapons at all times and in all places, and only their own overlord can order them not to.

The traditional weapon of the samurai is the forceblade. All samurai carry at least one of these and are trained in its use from the age they can walk. Those samurai trained in the mysterious power arts can actually parry bullets and energy beams with their weapons.

By far the most formidable of the Shogunate's war machines are their huge strider wastewalkers. These huge humanoid war machines bristle with weapons and are used as mobile artillery and for armored strikes.

One thing is certain. No one knows how many chambers are within the Black Pagoda, although it must number in the hundreds of thousands. The palace is a city in itself and is the home to several hundred thousand samurai, their vassals, families and retainers, as well as tens of thousands of the civil servants and administrators who perform the Shogun's will. It is counted as one of the seven wonders of Waste World, and few who have ever gazed upon it can think of it with anything but awe.

FOOD

The staple foodstuffs of the Shogunate are soy meat and synthirice. Synthirice is a genetically engineered crop grown in vast lakes in the agri-domes. It is force-fed with nutrient chemicals and grows to ripeness within a day. Given the huge population of the Shogunate, uninterrupted production of synthirice is one of the cornerstones of the Shogun's government.

MEDICINE

The healers of the Shogunate are famed throughout Waste World. They use their immense psionic powers to exorcise disease and regenerate lost limbs and nerve endings. There are few forms of damage that cannot be cured by them, which is just as well because the folk of the Shogunate deplore the use of bionics and prosthetics of any sort, seeing them as disruptive to the body's inner harmony. They also make it difficult to adjust to a new body when you are reincarnated, since the body is unlikely to have similar prosthetics. The real reason may be because the samurai, like many Posthumans, suffer from a mild form of Rejection Syndrome, that makes it difficult for their bodies and nervous systems to integrate bionics and symbionics.

PSIONICS

Psionics are encouraged among the general population, provided they are oath-bound to one of the seven great Psyche Temples, that swears allegiance to the Shogun himself. Any citizen, even a commoner, is automatically raised to samurai status if he shows any sign of psychic potential and inducted into the Psyche Temple.

Here he will learn to discipline his immense power and feed a portion of it in tithe to the Shogun. In return, he will be protected from demonic possession. Psionics have been refined to a high art within the Shogunate. Sensei teach all young samurai with the Gift the Seven Disciplines that will enable them to master their power. Psychic powers can greatly enhance their user's martial arts ability and thus are highly prized in the realms.

THE PSYCHER TEMPLES

Each of the great provinces has its own psyche orders, who dwell in their own monasteries. These are ruled by the sensei overlords in the name of the Shogun and are the home of all the provinces' psychers. Within their armored walls, newcomers are taught to discipline their powers and learn all the secrets of the martial arts. Once they complete their training, samurai psychers are returned to their families. Commoners remain within the temple until they can be attached to the a samurai overlord or until they are sworn into the service of the Shogun himself. These mighty warriors form the spearhead of the Shogunate's armies; they are divided into two types.

Budoka are those who learn to focus their power in warlike ways. They learn the secret fighting techniques that have been passed down through the ages to warriors of the Shogunate.

Mystics learn the use of the other psychic arts such as telepathy, precognition, healing and teleportation. Those who show aptitude are inducted into the white-robed Healers, who cure the sick and injured of the realms.



All pupils of the Temple are graded and granted a headscarf based on their ability. From lowest to highest these are: white, crimson and black.

Until they reach black, they must keep their heads shaved. Each samurai of a psychic house has the symbol of his house tattooed on his forehead and also on each forearm.

VIRUS DETECTION PROGRAM : ON
FLOW LINK QUASI-PROTOCOL: INITIATED
FILE SUB-PROTOL: STANDARD
NANOMECHANICAL INTERFACE:
VALIDATE SIMULATION

INITIATE SEQUENCE
NON-BIOLOGICAL RAW MATERIAL:
INTERNAL DATA CORRUPTION:
LINGUISTIC MARKUP DIRECTORY
MOLECULAR BINARY:

GUNSTBERG OVERDRIVE
MICRO-OPTICAL MODULATOR: ON
SILICONE SYNAPTIC SIMULATOR
DYSFUNCTION
Z HORMONE DETECTED

CORTICO QUASI-DEGRADATION
GANGLIAL ELECTRO-IMPLANT
SMART CHIP INSTALLED
METHANE IMPULSE CATHETER
OCCIPITAL FLOW MODULATION: SINE

JANUS

LOGIN:

PASSWORD:

ACCESS GRANTED

SECURITY CLEARANCE LEVEL:

EXCESS GENETIC VARIATION:

SUB system COORDINATES

X1:132.00.3 X2:307.00.7

Y1:468.33.3 Y2:645.34.5

Z2: 24.99.3 Z1: 64.66.6

ABBERANT CHROMA LEVELS:

SEROTONERGIC OVERLOAD

AMYGDALPTIC OVERWRITE

SMART CHIP INSTALLED

BIOMECH AUGMENTATION:

NANOCCIPITAL DRIVER

BIOFEEDBACK MATRIX: XO

NEUROMANGA OAV AVAILABLE

AMOEBOID DRONE: PRESENT

GYROSCOPIC NOISE LOOP:

STORYMODE INITIATING

Marzel moved through the streets of the Grand Bazaar. A thousand scents assaulted his nostrils. He smelled ozone as a nearby trader demonstrated a forceblade to a pair of Wastelanders. He smelled the narcotic perfumes of Ikarus and the leathery scent of Hydran carapace armor. He catalogued the scents and smells just as he had been taught to by Ganini all those years ago. He could still hear the old man's voice in his head, the words he had spoken when Marzel had complained about the pointlessness of the exercise.

A thief can never know too much about his environment, lad. Who knows, one day your life might depend on being able to identify one of those scents. Marzel had asked him how that might be, and the old man had simply chuckled and told him he would know when the time came. Marzel smiled bitterly; if ever that time had come, it was now. And he wished the old man were here to advise him, but Ganini had gone to a robber's grave a long time ago, like so many of the others that Marzel had known in his youth.

Janus was not kind to its outsiders. You needed nerves of steel and wits as sharp as a duralloy blade just to get by in this seething cauldron of intrigue and racial tension.

It was strange. To most folk in the Grand Bazaar, this was a day just like any other. The people of half the world came here to buy goods and take them home. From where he stood, Marzel could see a group of jaded Ikarean nobles bartering listlessly with a dealer in animated paintings. Two brawny Promethean mercenaries inspected cybernetics with expert eyes. A group of samurai gazed at the huge tanks of mutant carp in front of the Jade Pagoda restaurant. Krok mercenaries, hired to police the bazaar, watched everybody with their small, reptilian eyes.

Marzel glanced warily around him and pushed deeper into the bazaar, hoping to find refuge from his pursuers in the teeming throngs flooding the bazaar. A group of Wastelanders gaped upward through the armored crystal roof, eyes locked on the Startower, as if they feared the sky-piercing structure was going to topple on their heads. That, more than anything, marked them as newcomers, as rubes. No local would ever give the tower a second glance. It was as much part of the environment as the air and the ancient, eroded buildings and deserved about as much conscious thought. Marzel picked one of their pockets, more from force of habit than because he needed the money. In Janus, you never passed up the easy opportunity when it presented itself. "When Fortune smiles, kiss her," as the saying went.

He skirted the Xenogen quarter where the aliens waited in their warren of carefully controlled environments. A spider-faced Arakanid peered at him through the porthole of its shop and Marzel looked away. He had once witnessed an Arakanid birthing, where the young had eaten their way out of the mother's flesh. He could never stand the creatures after that.

He had another hour to kill before his meeting with Greyson. The merchant had promised to smuggle him out of the city in one of his Kombine's konvoys. All Marzel had to do was keep himself alive for another 60 minutes, and he would be home free.

He stopped and examined a group of porcelain cougars displayed on a nearby stall. The trader looked at him warily. Marzel saw his own concealed features reflected in the trader's mirrored mask. The man was suspicious and at the same time hopeful of a sale.

"Aye, sirrah, finest Wastelander ceramics, brought from the lost habzones of the east, at considerable risk. Two of my sons died guarding the konvoy that brought them here."

Marzel allowed himself a snigger while he surveyed his surroundings in the reflective surface of the merchant's mask.



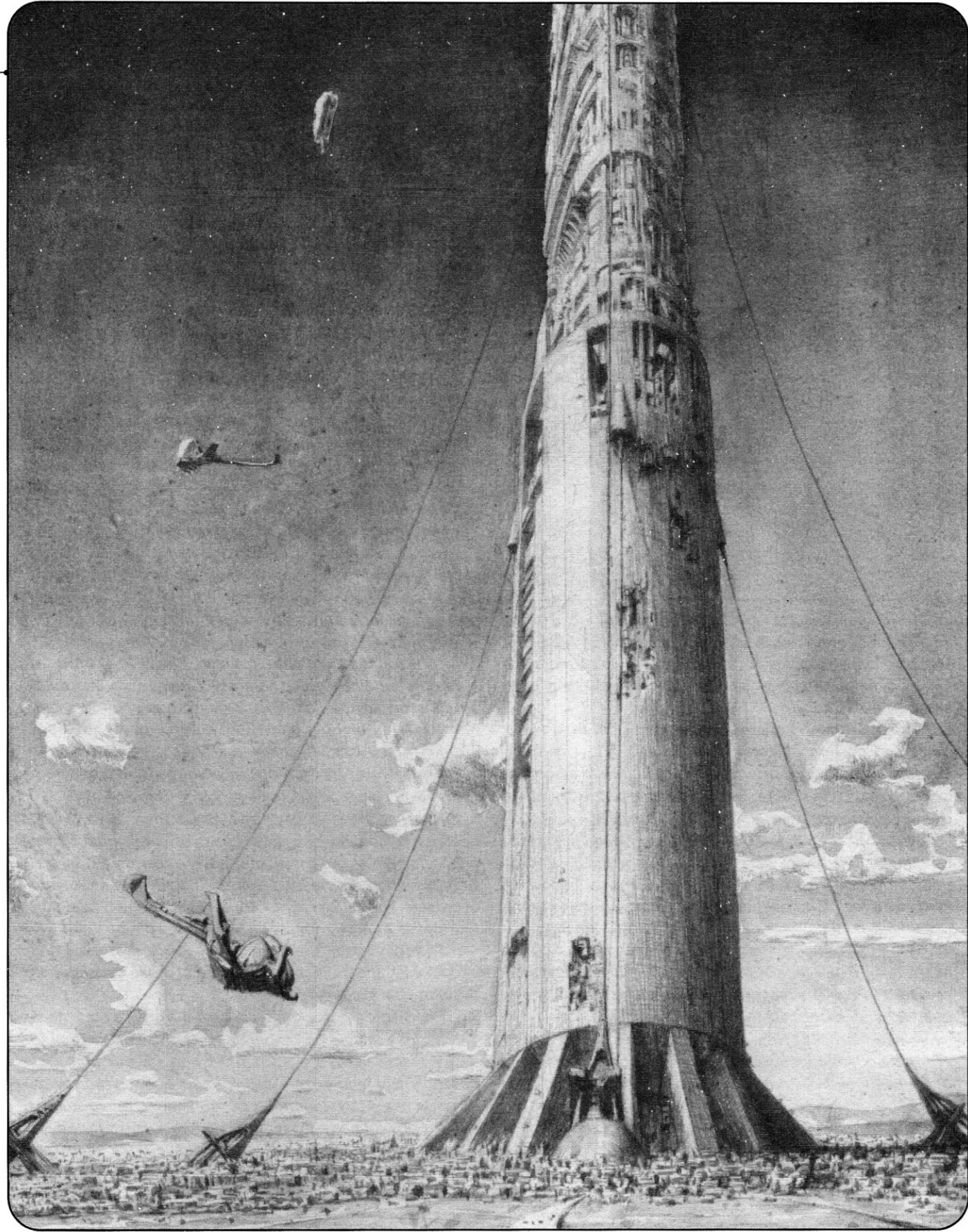
DATA CORE ACCESS
ALL SYSTEMS GO



SECURITY RISK ALERT
STORY MODE ACTIVE
PERSONA: MARZEL

985.0300.2233.666.957.000.000.1

JANUS





"Brought at no risk at all from the factory of Abdal the Menorite two streets away," he sneered. "Two of your sons ran away with shame at seeing their father selling such shoddy merchandise."

The merchant spread his hands wide in a well-rehearsed gesture of horror and disgust. "How can you suggest such a thing, sirrah? All know that I am as honest as the Waste is dry. This is finest greybone porcelain, made from clay salvaged from the ruins of Kronus."

At any other time, Marzel might have enjoyed this game. Both he and the trader were Janusians born and bred. They both understood the rules of bargaining. It was a sport for them, as it was for all of their fellow citizens. But the game Marzel played today was deadlier and more distracting.

He caught sight of the pursuing Stygian in the trader's mask. It loomed large as life and twice as ugly. Marzel suppressed a shiver. He had grown up right next to the Stygian quarter, and all his life had seen hard evidence of the squidfaces' cruelty. Now one was after him, and there seemed nothing he could do but run and pray to the gods of chance that it did not catch him. It would flay him alive and drip beads of acid venom onto his exposed nerve endings if it caught him - that, or something worse. When it came to torture, there was no end to the sadistic inventiveness of Stygians.

He was thankful that he had had enough time for the quick change. That alone kept him alive right now; of that he was certain. He was still not sure how they had found the safehouse that morning. He was only glad that the sensor he had set out in the corridor had given him sufficient warning to be up and away before his pursuer broke through the door. It had been touch and go.

Not for the first time, he wondered who had betrayed him. Was it old Gingarik the Fence, or Alys, most beautiful and mercenary of all his many lady friends, or was it any one of a dozen old comrades from the Street of Thieves? He liked to think that one day he would find out and take his vengeance on them, but somehow, he doubted it. There were too many people who might be responsible, and most of them had powerful friends.

The Stygian looked left and right. A group of Skavengers glanced up at its huge muscular form, then gave it a wide berth. Its fish eyes tracked across the crowd, seeking prey. Marzel wished that he had powerful friends right now. He stifled a shrug. He doubted he could ever make friends powerful enough to get him out of this one, not even if he became the best buddy of the Imperator of Prometheus.

How had his life become such a mess?

He did not know, but he suspected it had all started when he and Melana had robbed that Tremont Tower. It should have been a simple snatch. Break in, grab any portable valuables and sell it to their patron, Gavin of Tor.

Of course, it had all gone wrong.

Marzel and Melana had overheard the Lord of Tremont Kombine making a pact with what appeared to be an emissary of the Ikareans. A guard had spotted them. Marzel had bludgeoned the guard, grabbed Lord Tremont's data amulet, and he and Melana had fled out the window and over the rooftops, heading for one of the neutral trading zones on the boundaries of Kombine turf.

That had been a week ago. Since then, Melana had been found floating face down in a hydroponic pool. Gavin of Tor had died in an extremely showy aircar crash. Jurgen Kraft, who had planned the robbery, had died of a skulmag overdose. Their driver, Fat Loh, had tripped and fallen off the top of a starscraper. Marzel did not doubt that if he wasn't very careful indeed, he, too would have a sudden and fatal accident. Such was the fate of those caught up in the Kombine Wars.

The Stygian was looking directly at Marzel's back now. The trader watched him expectantly. Just before he turned away, Marzel saw the Stygian moving toward him purposefully. Somehow, the creature knew where he was. Was it a psyker, Marzel wondered? He knew it could not be that the amulet had a tracer in it. He had stashed it away in a shielded lokbox in the Universal Trading Bank almost as soon as he had gotten it.

Maybe the creature had a psycher partner, Marzel thought, looking around to see if he could spot anything suspicious.

A strange fishy scent filled his nostrils. He stepped forward just before a huge webbed hand could fall on his shoulder. He turned, looked up at the predator, and felt a chill as he gazed into its fish eyes.

The Stygian's translator was pitched low, and Marzel knew he was the only one who could hear the words.

"Quarg venom tips my claws. I close my hand and you die a thousand painful deaths," the Stygian said. "Come with me."

Marzel believed it. A Stygian would enjoy killing him on the spot and watching him writhe in poisoned agony. Perhaps it would enjoy it enough to forego whatever fee was offered for taking him wherever they wanted him to go.

"Seeing that you put it that way," Marzel said. "I'll do it."

Even as he spoke, he let his holdout blaster fall from its sheath in his wrist. He swept the weapon up and placed a bolt right through the Stygian's left eye. The eye exploded but the Stygian did not even slow. It slashed downward with its claw. Marzel sprang to one side as the Stygian moved forward, blundering into the trader's stall. There was a tinkle of breaking porcelain as the little panthers fell onto the ground.

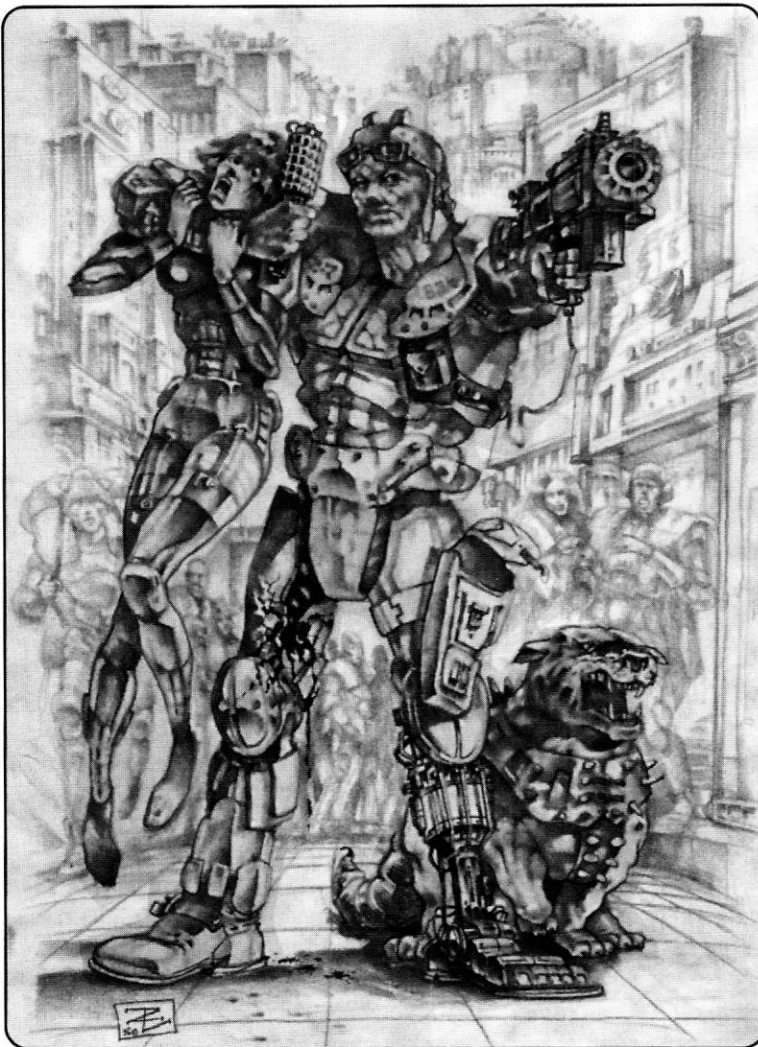
Marzel turned to fire again, but the Stygian batted the gun from his hand with contemptuous ease. The force of the blow sent Marzel spinning to the ground. He rolled away, hoping to vanish in the crowd.



A hand grabbed his cloak, and he felt himself being tugged back toward the Stygian. He hit the quick-release catch of the cloak and fell forward, tumbling to avoid falling flat on his face. The crowd began to part and scream. Human and Xenogen alike reached for weapons. The specter of erupting racial violence was making them doubly cautious.

Marzel reached into his pocket and found a flash grenade. He lobbed it at the ground in front of the Stygian and closed his eyes. Even through his closed lids, he saw the glare. The unprepared crowd howled. The Stygian belled. Marzel drew his sword and ran forward, beheading the creature with one blow. It fell to the ground, green blood gushing from its neck. Its head rolled away into a gutter. Marzel turned to flee, as a crowd of Krok peacekeepers raced toward the disturbance. He ran toward them, shouting, "A Stygian tried to rob that poor merchant of his precious pottery."

One of the Kroks opened its jaws and let out a warning bellow. Its kindred roared back in kind. Huge muscular tails lashed, giant teeth were bared. There had never been any love lost between the Stygians and the Kroks. It was something to be grateful for.



As the peacekeepers ran by, Marzel headed off in the opposite direction. He knew that this Stygian was the first of many, and that he was going to have to find out some answers soon, if he was going to survive.

JANUS

Janus is a trading city. Konvoys come here from all over Waste World, bringing goods from every metrozone to the city's markets. Its lifeblood is commerce, and its merchants have long plied the dangerous routes between the metrozones.

Before the Armageddon Wars, Janus was Waste World's main starport. All off-world trade flowed through the metrozone. Most Xenogen races and nations had their embassies, and most off-world corporations their headquarters there. Even today, Janus has the largest population of Xenogens anywhere in Waste World.

Janus suffered more than most places during the Armageddon Wars. It was the primary battlefield that many stronger states fought to control. Then came the Interdict, when Galactic Compact forces destroyed the space port and left many of the Xenogens stranded. This led to many parts of the city being reduced to rubble, a condition in which they remain to the present day.

Despite all that, the eternally flexible Janusians were swift to recover and continued with their normal way of life. Many conquerors have left their mark on the metrozone, but the soul of the city has remained unchanged; the Janusians remain a nation of flamboyant merchants and traders.

During the Armageddon Wars, the Janusian Ultramundae was corrupted by the Apocalypse Virus and terminated by the natives. It was replaced by hundreds of competing sub-systems, each under the control of one of many Kombines, the great corporations.

Janus is an open city and has welcomed colonists from all the other major metrozones who have helped rebuild its shattered streets and establish a worldwide system of trade links. Janus welcomes immigrants and refugees of all kinds, even mutants, providing they are willing to work and pay their way.

POLITICS

The Kombines rule Janus. Each of these vast mercantile corporations controls its own sector of the city and some portion of the metrozone's Ultramundae. No one rules the Kombines, although they have a council that makes the laws, arbitrates disputes, and sees that some semblance of peace is maintained in the city. Each Combine has one seat on the council.

The council is broken into two powerful groups, the natives and the Xenogens. The natives include humans and Posthumans alike. The Xenogens represent all the aliens, such as the Kroks and the Stygians. Although far less numerous than the humans and made up of countless different races, the Xenogens have always showed a unified front to outsiders, perhaps because they know they would be swamped by the humans if they did not.

XENOGENS

There are hundreds of different types of Xenogens scattered throughout the metrozone. The Kroks and the Stygians are two of the most famous types.



KROKS

The Kroks are a race of carnivorous reptilian warriors left stranded on Waste World after the outbreak of the Armageddon Wars. They have adapted well to their new home world and can be found within most human cities except Prometheus and Kimera. They work as mercenaries and bodyguards, putting their prodigious strength and toughness to good use. All Kroks can regenerate lost limbs in a matter of days. A side effect of this is that they suffer from Rejection Syndrome.

STYGIANS

The Stygians are one of the vilest races humanity has ever encountered and are numbered among Waste World's most feared inhabitants. They are cruel, sadistic and deadly, and those are their good points. Like the Kroks, the Stygians were stranded on Waste World by the outbreak of the Armageddon Wars and the subsequent Interdict. They have made the best of their situation, finding employment and amusement as best their new situation allowed.

Humans find the appearance of the Stygians quite horrifying. They are muscular, green-skinned humanoids standing over two meters tall and weighing about 150 kilograms. Their clawed fingers are webbed, and their unblinking eyes are cold and fish-like. A mass of wriggling tentacles hangs from the lower part of their face, obscuring a gaping, leech-like mouth. When not wearing sealed armor, they give out a strange, fishy odor. In order not to frighten potential human employers too much, they usually conceal their faces behind blank masks. Stygian mind drainers prefer heavy, cowled robes. Stygian warriors utilize camo-derm-surfaced sealed battlesuits.

Stygians are very strong, very fast and very smart. They are a predatory and carnivorous race. In ancient times, their greatest joy was in the hunt, and many of them still respond to this genetic urge by taking jobs as bounty hunters.

By nature, most Stygians are solitary, preferring to work on their own and only banding together with others when their survival depends on it. They are treacherous, calculating and callous, capable of changing sides in a moment if they see any advantage to it.

Some Stygians are powerful psychers; all are predatory and dangerous. They communicate with each other in their own tongues and with humanity by means of universal-translator amulets.

ECONOMY

The Janusians are traders. Anything is for sale here. Their merchants scour the planet looking for new wares. Their factories knock off copies of anything their traders bring home. This is the only place in the world where goods manufactured by certain Xenogen tribes can be purchased.

Lacking any nearby Drakonium fields, Janus maintains the largest number of sandfleets of all the metrozones. These scour the continent in search of Drakonium. Most of these fleets are maintained by the great trading Kombines, or are in themselves trading Kombines. When they have collected sufficient Drakonium they return to their home city and sell their precious cargo on the open market to the highest bidder. Because of this, sometimes the Drakonium goes to the other metrozones, for all of the great city-states have their agents at the Janusian Drakonium Exchange. Most of the Drakonium is bought by the local Kombines to power their sectors or to sell in turn to others.

Janus acts as a clearing house between rival states such as the Shogunate and Prometheus, allowing goods to flow back and forth even when the two are at war. Less scrupulous Janusian merchants supply arms and equipment to the mutants of Kimera. Because it is a nexus for essential trade, few of the other metrozones have any wish to see Janus destroyed. This situation is likely to change as Drakonium becomes scarcer.

Janus is famous for its service economy. Taverns, joy-malls and bawdy houses line every street. Casinos and gambling dens are everywhere. This is a city where chance is worshipped as a god, and folk will gamble on the speed of an insect crawling up a wall. Janus is the home of the Universal Trading Bank and the main cathedral of the Temple of Lazarus. Janus is also home to over 3,000 cults and other religious groupings, making it a major pilgrimage site.

The mightiest structure in Janus is, by far, the Startower. This vast structure used to run all the way up to the abandoned Janusian spaceport in orbit over Waste World. The spaceport was destroyed when the Interdict was declared, but the tower remains. Tourists come from across Waste World simply to view it.

The other conspicuous structure is the huge diamond pyramid of the Universal Trading Bank (UTB), located at the Startower's base, a throwback to the old days of space-faring when the Bank was part of the galaxy-wide credit network.

The Bank still maintains a host of branches in every metrozone. They are considered neutral territory and are held inviolate, since they do so much to facilitate intercity trade. UTB credits are the most commonly accepted currency on Waste World. They are manufactured by the Bank using lost technologies that can no longer be duplicated. Each contains a holographic representation. On denominations of one to 1,000 credits, one side contains a representation of a planet, the other contains the amount. On denominations between a megacredit and a gigacredit, the hologram is of a star. Gigacredit tokens show a hologram of a galaxy.



Several other multi-state organizations make their headquarters here. The Hunters Guild is one example. This huge fortified tower is a clearing agency for bounty hunters and other mercenary types. It keeps extensive records on all posted bounties. These are updated regularly and sent by sealed data kernel to all the guild's outlying stations. Folk often come here when seeking a hired gun to rid them of some particularly vicious criminal.

Less well-liked are the members of the Assassins Guild. This secret organization of hired killers can only be contacted by those in the know. It has a network of agents and sealed data terminals through which such approaches can be made. The guild hires out many freelance killers and assassins for almost any purpose, legal or illegal, and its members pursue their profession all over Waste World.

Janus is also the home of the Mercenaries Guild. From the towering fortified Guild Hall, free companies can be hired for almost any purpose, from fighting a war in some remote sector to guarding caravans. Over 150 of these free companies can be found within the Guild Hall at any one time. They are drawn from almost all races and all nations, from the Stygian predators to the cyborg warriors of Prometheus.

LAW AND ORDER

Merchant Law is the common law of Janus. Originally, it covered rules for trading and the enforcement of contracts, but over the long centuries, virtually everything, including basic law enforcement, has become subject to it. The Justiciars, the judicial Overminds of the Janus Ultramundae, can issue warrants and decide the fates of those who commit crimes. Criminals are hunted down by guild hunters or the paid mercenaries of the Kombines. Normally, criminals have bounties placed on their heads by those they have harmed. That bounty is collected by those who capture them.

For most crimes, the Justiciars assess a criminal's debt to society. This is given an actual commercial value. When captured, most criminals are sentenced to hard labor in the metrozone's factories, mines or prison colonies. There they are paid a low wage, from which the cost of their food, shelter and guarding is subtracted. What remains is used to pay off their debt to society.

The hunter who captures a criminal receives 10 percent of the criminal's wage while he is imprisoned. These are known as residual bounties or simply residuals. This wage is normally about 100 credits per month. This means capturing criminals can result in a steady stream of wealth for the hunter. If the criminal escapes or dies, that is lost, and so there is considerable incentive to bring criminals in alive. Some hunters retire on the residuals they have collected. Only the most dangerous criminals are subject to the death penalty. Most criminals who die when being apprehended usually do so by accident.

Peace is maintained in most sectors of the city by the dominant Kombine because, let's face it, crime is bad for business. The quality of this law enforcement varies from sector to sector, and in many areas the guards are eminently bribable. Warfare between the Kombines occasionally breaks out, but there are webs of treaties and agreements to stop that sort of thing. Anyway, why bother? In a war, nobody makes a profit except the weapons makers.

WARFARE

Each Kombine has a huge reserve of trained warriors to draw on, and there are many private mercenary companies, known as Janissaries, who will fight for pay. Indeed, most mercenary companies are registered in Janus as Kombines.

The Kombines' private armies all have their own uniforms and weapons provided by their employers, as well as private health care and resurrection contracts. Some of the Kombine armies rival the Prometheans in their efficiency. Others are little more than glorified police forces.

Because of Janus's heritage as an open trading city, many strange and unusual industries have taken root there. Janus is the place to hire mercenaries. Indeed, it is the base for many freelance mercenary companies, which go by the name of Janissaries, or free companies.

The Janissaries contain some of the most famous fighting units on Waste World. They will fight any time, anywhere, for anybody, as long as the pay is right. Under Merchant Law, anyone who wants to hire a company must post a bond with the UTB or another trustworthy brokerage house. That bond will be paid on completion of the contract. In the case of dispute, the matter will be adjudicated under Merchant Law. Most Janissary companies fight for this bond, plus daily expenses.

Free companies come in many sizes. Some are tiny, just a group of friends and comrades who hire themselves out to all comers. Some are huge, private armies available for pay only to the largest organizations on Waste World. Most fall somewhere in between. Their membership ranges between 100 and 1,000 warriors who are normally hired as components in larger fighting forces.

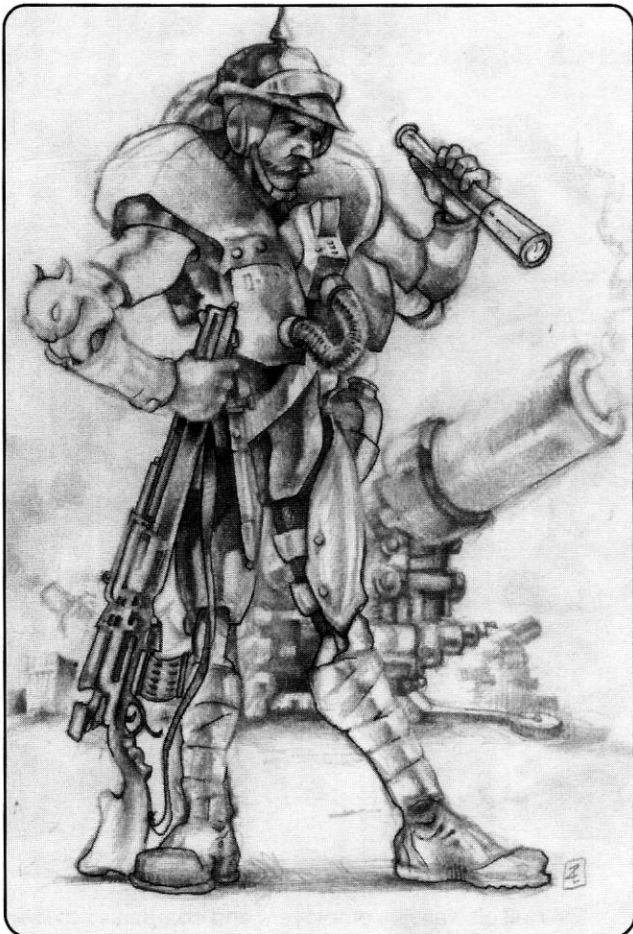
Anyone can set up a free company in Janus. Most choose to be registered in the Hall of Janissaries so that potential employers can find them easily, simply by making enquiries with the record keepers there. When registered, details of the company's charter, which states the basic principles on which the company is run, are lodged there, too. Every company is identified by its own distinct registration number. Mercenaries looking for work can check in the Hall to see if any company is recruiting, and employers can make inquiries there to see if any available company meets their needs.



The Hall also allows employers and companies to lodge contracts with the Hall so that there is no possibility of dispute over what the company's duties were and how much payment was agreed upon. Although there are no legal sanctions for breaking contracts in Janus, few mercenary companies would choose to do so, because their reputations would be damaged. Many strange and nasty things have happened to employers who welched on contracts.

There is no legal requirement to register with the Hall, and many free companies have neither charter nor registration number.

Most free companies have colorful names, usually derived either from their function or from the name of their founders. Quarrel's Raiders are named after Eugene Quarrel, who founded the company over 600 years ago. The Shocktroopers do exactly what their name suggests; they are front-line assault troops. Some free companies have histories that stretch back over centuries. They have their own bases within the city and trophy rooms where the honors collected in many battles are stored. Others are simply collections of fighters assembled by a successful leader or agent who may disband tomorrow if the pickings are not good.



Some companies are organized along racial lines. Some are open only to Kroks or Prometheans or Posthumans or ronin. A few are open to people of any race or city. Some demand specialist skills from their applicants. Some will take anybody who can hold a gun. In general, the older, better established, more professional companies are pickier about their recruits. New companies often scrape the bottom of the barrel in their search for cannon fodder.

Many companies are fighters, pure and simple. They sign on to fight in wars, guard convoys or to provide security for installations or people. Some of those companies are more or less permanently on retainer from large institutions such as trading houses or assorted guilds, and as such are really best considered as simple extensions of those organisations. For example, the Grand Bazaar in Janus has had a policing contract with the same clan of Krok mercenaries for over 300 years. Warriors of that clan have grown old and died doing this job and have never known any other type of service. Many free companies dream of the security that such institutional contracts provide. Others would never stoop to giving up their freedom and independence for mere job security.

Some free companies specialize in certain sorts of work. The Raptor Legion is famous for its airborne commando raids. The Heavy Metal Division has used its massive cybertanks in over a hundred conflicts. The Mad Bombers are masters of demolition. The Special Executives are assassins, pure and simple. Naturally, those companies with the skills that are most in demand can command premium rates for their services.

The longer-established free companies can almost be regarded as a career. They will carefully select recruits, provide equipment and training, and require long-term commitment for those who serve within their ranks. They do their best to inculcate an esprit de corps in every serving soldier, drumming in tales of their proud traditions and high standards of conduct. The lesser and newer free companies require that their recruits even provide their own weapons and armor.

Some companies have an ad hoc structure. In lean times, they consist only of their commanding officers and a core of officers and NCOs, with maybe a bare minimum of soldiers. When a contract comes in, the word is sent out to former members that work is available. New recruits are hired to fill out any gaps in the ranks. For such companies, it is a soldier's responsibility to look after himself in the lean times, and the company takes no interest in what happens until the call goes out. Other companies look after their members, paying a half wage when there is no work available and providing homes and welfare benefits for retired members. Naturally, only the oldest and most successful of companies can do this. By some estimates, there are well over 10,000 registered Free Companies in Janus. Below is a very limited selection of them:

THE RAPTOR LEGION

The Raptor Legion consists entirely of renegade Ikareans. It will not recruit from any other nation or race. To join the free company, you must provide your own Ikarean battlesuit and weapons. It goes without saying that you need to be proficient in their use.

Most Raptors are criminals or political renegades. They are ruthless, bitter people with chips on their shoulders and grudges in their hearts. As such, they are even more cruel, decadent and amoral than most Ikareans, which means that by most people's standards they are simply scum. The Raptor Legion's name is a byword for cruelty and evil, even among the hard-bitten mercenary community. There is no outrage to which they will not stoop in the pursuit of their objectives, and they are terror troopers without equal.



As a force, they are highly mobile. Their preferred modus operandi is the lightning raid against lightly defended installations, but they are also available for long-range commando work behind enemy lines. They have been known to perform acts of kidnapping and sabotage as well.

The Raptor Legion is an old, well-established free company. It has been a haven for renegades from Ikarus for centuries, and the spoils of battle have provided a luxurious base right in the center of Janus. The eyrie contains every luxury the most depraved Ikarean could hope to possess. Its members all have their own private chambers within this towering structure, and rumor has it that the screams often keep their neighbors awake at nights.

On the field of battle, the Legion is as well-disciplined as it is anarchic off it. It normally has between 1,000 and 2,000 members divided into companies of 100 warriors, each under the command of a centurion. Rank within the Legion is based on merit and length of service. Each centurion is appointed by the supreme commander. The supreme commander is selected by single combat among all the centurions who wish to apply for the post, upon the death of the previous supreme commander. At any time, any centurion, with a majority of the other centurions behind him, can challenge the supreme commander to a duel to the death.

STYGIAN LEGION

In the stakes of terror and evil, the Raptor Legion has only one real rival: the Stygian Legion. Based in the Stygian enclaves of Janus, this force's name is a byword for fear in every corner of Avernus and beyond. Naughty children are scared into silence by the mere mention of their name. Adults who know about such things talk in hushed whispers about the Legion's exploits. There are few who can recall the Great Orphanage Massacre without blanching. Most people would prefer to forget the Baby Feast at Borakador. And no one who knows about it ever dares mention the...but no, there are somethings that are just too unspeakable to be mentioned.

Despite its name, the Stygian Legion will take anyone who can earn the wholehearted respect of its members. Anyone who is suitably tough and depraved can join. Few people even attempt to do so, since failed candidates for membership are tortured and eaten. The Stygian Legionnaires are often hired by dictators in out of the way habs who want to rule their domains with fists of iron. They are also hired by evil psychomagi, rogue robomancers and others who have some reason to want highly effective protection and have trouble recruiting more scrupulous bodyguards. On the battlefield, the Stygian Legion are tough, and in the jungles they are without peer. This is one free company that never lacks offers of work.

The exact numbers and command structure of the Legion are shrouded in mystery, but independant observers have put the number of combat troops between 5,000 and 10,000 warriors. The Legion is rarely deployed in its entirety. Its members are usually hired by the company. Thirteen Company of the Stygian Legion is one of the most terrifying forces on the planet.

THE NINE DOZEN RONIN COMPANY

This company recruits exclusively from ronin from the Shogunate. Its name is taken from the number of its original founders, but over the years, its membership has grown to over 3,000. The Nine Dozen Ronin Company exemplifies samurai virtues. For its members, duty is its own reward, and laying down your life in the service of your employer is an obligation that is never shirked. For many ronin, service in the company provides a new home and a new master, and all the feudal obligations that one had as a samurai are simply transferred to whomever has hired the company. The company always contains 96 members, and a new member is recruited whenever an old member dies.

All are equal within the company, since all have lost face since becoming ronin. It does not matter what your previous status was in the service of the Shogunate - all members of the company are held to be of equal rank. Naturally there has to be some leadership in such a group. This usually goes to the longest-serving member of a team, although some warriors, realizing that they are not good leaders, will ask the best leader within the group to replace them. The Nine Dozen are led by a leader chosen by a vote of all 96 members. This leader is in charge until he dies.

The Nine Dozen Ronin Company is divided into bands of one dozen. Each is a team with a wide range of skill divided between its members. Warriors choose which band to belong to and which leader to follow.

As a unit, the Nine Dozen Ronin have a very good reputation among the free companies. They are great warriors and honorable foes and employees. They never break a contract once it has been accepted.

THE GREEN KROKS

Janus is the home to one of the largest Krok nests in Avernus. The adult males of this nest are famously stupid, belligerent and merciless. They are also constantly hungry and completely incorruptable. That means their services are always in demand as guards and warriors. Due to their diligence and lack of tactical acumen, they often suffer huge casualties. So it is probably very fortunate that the Queen Krok lays many eggs in each year's cluster.

The warriors of this hive can be recognized by their bright, shiny green scales and their deep, rumbling voices.

MOGAL'S FREE COMPANY

This proud, old unit takes its name from its original founder, Colonel Ram Mogal, and it is still led by one of his descendants. The unit accepts warriors of any nation or race, providing they are willing to put aside all former allegiances and prejudices and treat all members of the unit as their brothers. Naturally, this means there are very few Prometheans or Ikareans in its ranks, but those who remain are surprisingly open-minded and loyal to their fellows.

The company operates on a buddy system, which means that the basic unit is a pair, usually chosen for mutually complimentary skills or temperaments. Due to casualties or the open recruitment policy, that means that you could be paired with someone of a hostile power, so you'd better be prepared to bury the hatchet, since your life will often depend on your buddy. This system builds strong ties of loyalty between the warriors that run right up through the unit.

Mogal's Free Company looks after its members, paying for medical treatment, or even bionics if the funds are available. In return, the unit expects and usually gets total loyalty. If anybody lets the unit or their comrades down, they are dishonourably discharged. If they show cowardice in the face of the enemy or abandon a comrade, they may well be executed on the spot by their fellows. If they betray the unit and are not immediately apprehended, then they will be hunted down ruthlessly. In all the unit's long history, there have only been 29 instances of betrayal, and in each case but one, the traitor came to a sticky end. Only one man, the infamous Kezare Saben, is still at large. But he since went on to become public enemy number one with the highest guild bounty in history on his head. That is hardly surprising.

ARCHITECTURE

The dominant architectural feature of Janus is the Startower, the gigantic space elevator running from the city's center all the way up to geostationary orbit. It is anchored by the spiderweb of giant hawsers that fill the city's sky.

The space station at the top of this enormous tower was destroyed by the Galactic Compact, but the tower itself still stands as a monument to the Ancients' engineering. Its lower levels are still occupied by many Xenogens, each of whom has the environment of his home world recreated within his section of the tower. This may account for why the Galactic Compact did not destroy the tower completely.

Around the Startower's base lies the so-called Xenogen ring, where most of the city's alien races huddle in the tower's gigantic shadow. Beyond this walled and fortified inner enclave are thousands of small sectors dominated by the Kombines.

Nothing is certain in Janus except that everything will be different. Janus is a mishmash of hundreds of different styles. Every conqueror has left his mark on the city, and hundreds of Xenogen races have contributed their own building styles.

Hundreds of different sectors, each controlled by a different Kombe and each built in a different style, form the main city. In addition, there are dozens of ghettos, where Xenogen races and outlanders have their homes. The Stygian sector is a zone of vast gloomy caverns beneath the city, the Kroks live in a huge towering nest, the Venturi have a bubble tent encampment at the city's edge. Each of the other metrozones maintains its own embassy sector in Janus, where its goods are warehoused and can be traded with anybody, even age-old enemies.

Each of the Kombines has its own starscraper built in a range of different styles. Monuments of a dozen metrozones litter the streets. Temples and cathedrals of every sect and denomination compete in every sector. The metrozone is a huge jumble built on many levels and linked with a complex webwork of roads, aerial tubesystems and monorails. Huge neon and holographic signs dominate the skyline, so that even by night, the streets are bathed in a light.

FOOD

The food of every nation can be found in Janus, in all shapes and forms. The Janusians are great drinkers. Their breweries and distilleries and vineyard domes are a constant source of revenue for their owners. Janusian wines are prized throughout Waste World.

CLOTHING

Janus is most famous as the City of Masks. Here, the people have taken that most practical necessity of Waste World, the rebreather mask, and turned it into a work of art. Janusian masks are complex baroque artifacts, sometimes inlaid with jewels, sometimes molded from precious metals. They are worked into the most amazing styles; some resemble the heads of beasts or monsters. Often their eyepieces are wafer-thin slivers of translucent gemstone. Some see these masks as symbolic of the Janusians, who keep their true selves private behind an ostentatious exterior.

Given the number of Xenogens and mutants in the city, it is perhaps not surprising that masks are so common. They provide a protective camouflage for folk of all races and types, allowing life to proceed normally.

Janusians have adapted the styles and fashions of all Waste World to their needs. They usually give them their own flamboyant piratical touch. Scarves, cummerbunds and earrings are common, as are showy displays of jewelry. These are usually used to conceal a plethora of sensors and protective devices.



TRANSPORT

Janus is most famous for its sandfleets, the enormous collections of megakrawlers maintained by the Kombines. It is also a city where people favor skimmerbikes and fast and flamboyant forms of personal transport. The wealthy flaunt their wealth with expensive aircars. Several huge dockyards ring the city. In these vast fortified craters, new megakrawlers are built and outfitted for their voyages. Giant airships drift between the skyscrapers at all hours of the day and night.

WEAPONS

All weapons are for sale in Janus, and everyone can own one. Janusians tend to favor light, portable weapons and personal protectors such as forcefields and distortion-field generators. The quality of equipment used by Combine guards is of variable quality. Some field units are every bit as well-armed as the Prometheans. Others are fairly shoddily equipped.

MEDICINE

Every form of treatment is available in Janus, for a price. You can buy Promethean bionics, Hydran symbionics or the services of Kondrean or Shogunate healers. You can purchase anti-agathics or any form of nekrochip contract. If you have the money, it's yours.

PSIONICS

The attitude toward psychers varies from sector to sector. In a Promethean sector, just being a psyker is illegal. In an Ikarean sector, no one cares. The Psychers Guild actually controls one entire sector of the city. This is known as Seerhaven and is filled with well-regulated psychomagii going about their business. In most places psychers are not persecuted. Neither are mutants, providing they keep to their own ghettos.

VIRUS DETECTION PROGRAM : ON	INITIATE SEQUENCE	GUNSTBERG OVERDRIVE	CORTICO QUASI-DEGRADATION
FLOW LINK QUASI-PROTOCOL : INITIATED	NON-BIOLOGICAL RAW MATERIAL:	MICRO-OPTICAL MODULATOR: ON	GANGLIAL ELECTRO-IMPLANT
FILE SUB-PROTOL: STANDARD	INTERNAL DATA CORRUPTION:	SILICONE SYNAPTIC SIMULATOR	SMART CHIP INSTALLED
NANOMECHANICAL INTERFACE:	LINGUISTIC MARKUP DIRECTORY	DYSFUNCTION	METHANE IMPULSE CATHETER
VALIDATE SIMULATION	MOLECULAR BINARY:	ALPHA BLOCKER ENGAGED	OCCIPITAL FLOW MODULATION: SINE

SKAVENGERS

LOGIN:	SUB system COORDINATES	SEROTONERGIC OVERLOAD	BIOFEEDBACK MATRIX: XO
PASSWORD:	X1:343.00.5 X2:196.00.6	AMYGDALPTIC OVERWRITE	ORIKASMATRON ACTIVE
ACCESS GRANTED	Y1:512.25.4 Y2:924.34.8	SMART CHIP INSTALLED	AMOEBOID DRONE: PRESENT
SECURITY CLEARANCE LEVEL:	Z2: 21.44.2 Z1: 56.62.4	BIOMECH AUGMENTATION:	GYROSCOPIC NOISE LOOP:
EXCESS GENETIC VARIATION:	ABBERANT CHIROMA LEVELS:	NANOCCIPITAL DRIVER	STORYMODE INITIATING

The stench was vile. It emerged from the eroded archway and spoke of foul things waiting at the foot of the crumbling stairwell. Rutger squinted warily into the gloom. He did not like this at all. He sensed danger here.

He slid his rebreather mask back into place. It didn't help. The smell did not go away. He wished he were back outside this tumbled-down building, racing away from this accursed place, his hands clenched firmly on the handlebars of his skimmerbike. He wanted to feel the wind lash his face, and watch the multicolored dunes crumble in the bow wave of his motion. He could not do it. He was chief-tain. He had certain responsibilities.

He slid his night visor into place and pushed deeper into the abandoned chambers until he stood at the foot of the stairwell. He hoped that the others would follow him. He didn't look back to make sure. That would be a sign of weakness, and Jonas was already showing signs that he was willing to challenge for the leadership.

His booted feet squelched as he raised them from the floor. Mucus, he thought, some sort of glowing greenish slime. Here and there he could see traces of the old stonework from before the Great Disaster. It carried the strange runes of the Ancients and many of their glittering incomprehensible symbols.

Briefly, Rutger wondered what this place had been in the old times, before the Armageddon Wars had scoured the earth. A bunker, perhaps. Maybe some sort of arsenal. He unbuckled his holster and drew his pistol. All around him, he heard the rest of his men do the same. They were all as nervous as he. He knew the only difference was that he did not show it.

"Don't like this, Chief," muttered Sidra. "Swarm lair. Recent too."

"You don't say," said Rutger, staring at the tall woman balefully. She adjusted her ragged cloak nervously. Her face was obscured by her rebreather mask, but the eyes he could see behind the lenses of her mask were wide and scared. Justifiably so, Rutger thought. The thought of being trapped in a lair filled his heart with fear. "Like I needed a skout to tell me that."

"If the others were taken..." Sidra let her voice trail away. She needed to say nothing more. Both of them understood. If their friends and kinfolk had been taken by the Swarm then there was nothing left to do but put them out of their misery. That was assuming Rutger and his people had the firepower to survive the experience. The thought had been on all their minds since they had returned to camp and found it in ruins.

"Klift, come here!" Rutger barked. The tall psycher ambled over. His mask dangled down around his neck, his cowl was thrown back to reveal his pockmarked face. He alone in his band showed no sign of fear or discomfort at their surroundings. He breathed deep lungfuls of the polluted air, apparently oblivious to the stink.

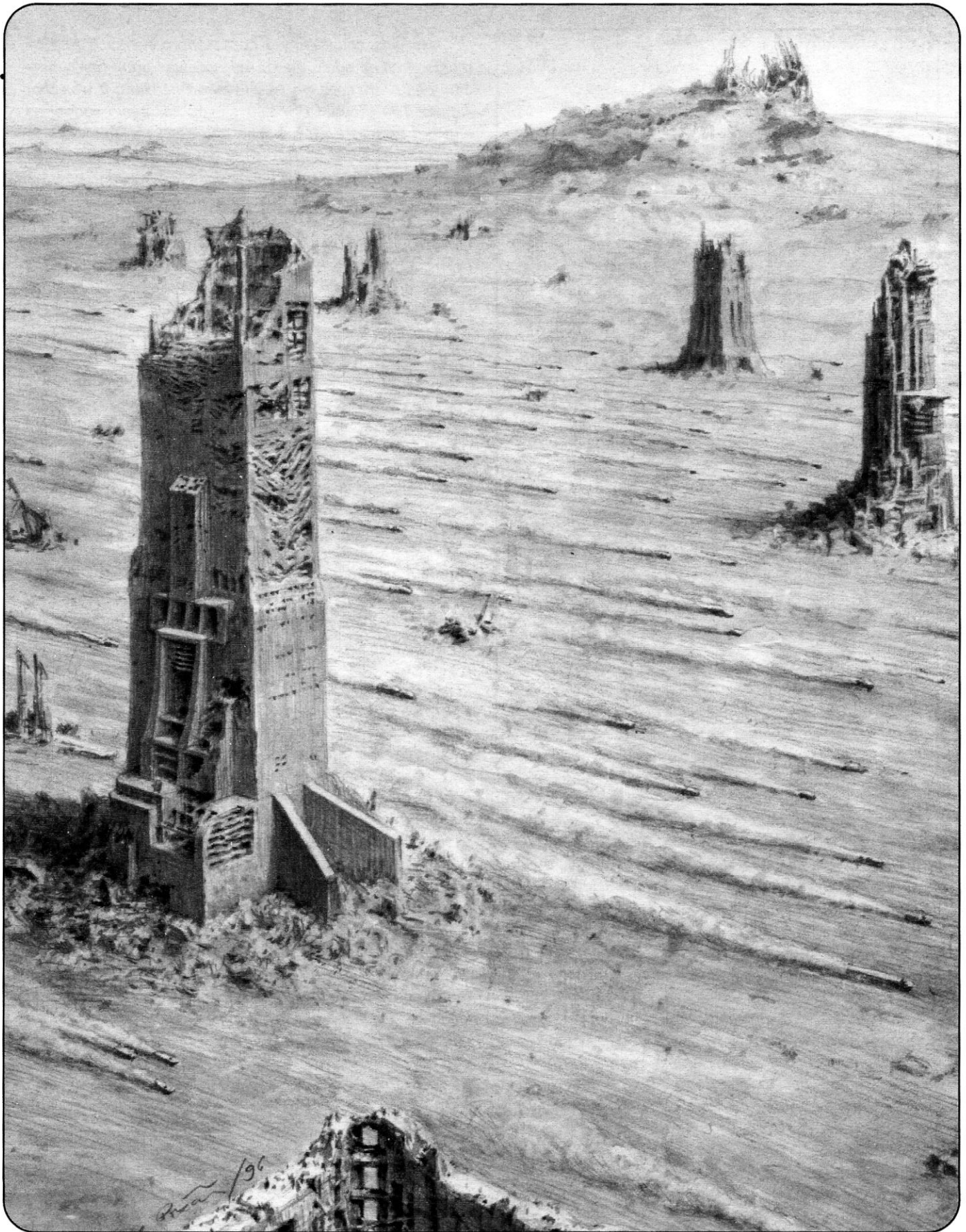
"Yo, chief, wot can I do for yer?" Rutger felt uneasy staring into the psycher's bright, crazed eyes. He wondered how long it would be before the madness took Klift as it had taken his three brothers. Ikie had killed 10 men before Rutger had chopped him down with his forceblade. That had been a rough night.

"Scan!" Rutger snarled.

Klift smiled his lopsided smile, revealing yellowish, rotten teeth and the beginnings of prominent fangs. He bowed his head and muttered something. His eyes glowed red like molten coals. The whites disappeared. The pupils became pinpricks, bright as laser beams. His face contorted in a ghastly rictus. He threw back his head and howled. Sweat beaded his forehead. his breathing came labored as if he had just run 10 miles over soft sand.

"They're...still...alive...but...in...great...pain. Wait...I.....sense...another...presence.....evil.....terrible...evil..."

Klift screamed and flopped forward like a puppet with his strings cut. Rutger caught him one-handed and lowered him gently to the floor. He saw that all the Skavengers present were silent. All looked at him for guidance.





Part of Rutger wanted to turn and run. Down here in the dark, something old and wicked lurked. It waited for prey like a spider in the center of a great web. He thought of all the times he had fought the Swarm. He thought of their strange insect eyes, their poison saliva, their chitinous armored skins. They were as hard to kill as anything he had ever fought. Their lust for human flesh was insatiable. Yes, part of him wanted to turn and flee, all right. But he couldn't do it.

Hana was down there, and she was his woman. He wanted her to live, too. He wanted to see her smile and watch the sunset light splinter and refract in the polluted air. He wanted her to share his survival tent and...he squashed the thoughts ruthlessly.

He was chieftain. He could afford no such attachments. If all he could do for her now was grant her a merciful death, then he would. He owed her that. It was that simple. The thought of never seeing her again saddened him but he had lived too long and seen too many die to delude himself that he would not get over her. There would be other women - if he lived.

There was another consideration. They could not leave this lair untouched. Given time, it might grow to be a full-blown Demon hive, and the Swarm would take this land from the people as it has done so many others. He reached a decision.

"Cleanse this place. Maximum overkill."

The light in the tunnels was fitful and greenish; the bright, ever-burning glowglobes of the Ancients had been coated with the ever-present slime. Rutger didn't want to think about what was so big that its slime could smear the ceiling.

He held his pistol in one hand and his forceblade in the other. His gauntleted finger rested on the contact switch in the hilt. He was ready to activate the weapon at a moment's notice. The stink was getting worse. They came to a branch in the tunnels.

"Left," said Klift. His ordeal had left marks. His voice sounded high-pitched and nervous and he was making constant attempts to swallow. The psyker would not have come down here if Rutger had not held his blade to his throat and threatened to throw the switch.

They pushed on until they arrived in the cavern. When they did, Rutger wished they hadn't. It was like a scene from hell. All around, the walls were covered in swarm cocoons. Some were new, their human occupants still visible within their transparent membranes. Others were older and darker, their leathery sides ridged and mottled. Everything was smeared with slime. In the center of the chamber was a huge pile of shed cocoons. They had burst to release whatever evil thing was within them.

Rutger moved cautiously into the center of the chamber, clicking the switch of his forceblade. Its clean blue glow cut through the gloom and gave him more light to see by. The low hum of its forcefield generator reassured Rutger.

He looked up at the ceiling, where a bunch of recent cocoons hung like a cluster of over-sized grapes. Within them he could see the forms and figures of old friends and kinsmen. Their mouths were open. Expressions of horror marred their faces. He knew they had been poisoned with paralytic venom. He wondered whether they were still aware of their fates.

A faint scraping and rustling sound broke the appalled silence. Rutger scanned around, looking for the source of the disturbance. As he watched, one of the older cocoons pulsed and writhed, and split, sending a foul broth of nutrient slime spilling out onto the floor. A claw emerged, splitting the leathery chrysalis, then an arm, then a head, then a torso.

The hatchling emerged slowly into the light. It looked vaguely human. It had no tail yet, and the horns had still to fully emerge. Its skin was gleaming green and glistened with venomous slime. The chitin had not had time to harden yet. Its glowing eyes were hidden in dark cave sockets. When it smiled it revealed sharklike teeth. Long, wicked talons emerged from its fingers. Its naked body looked lean and gaunt and muscular and showed no signs of sex.

It sprang. Its movements were so eye-blurringly swift that Rutger almost failed to react. Almost. At the last second, the forceblade swept round, parting flesh like it was nonexistent. The hatchling flopped to the ground, cut neatly in two. Suddenly, there was a sound of splintering and gunfire. Many of the cocoons were opening, giving birth to their infernal contents. They emerged like swimmers surfacing from below a sea of slime.

From other entrances, many more of the creatures entered. At their heads were mighty Swarmers: huge and muscular, their chitinous armor many layers deep, their poison stingers arching over their heads like scorpion tails, their horned heads, huge and inhuman. Without thinking, Rutger aimed and fired, his bullet ricocheted off one monster and before he knew it, it was upon him. He ducked the swing of a claw that would have beheaded him, then dropped the beast with his forceblade.

Suddenly a wave of searing agony passed through him. He felt like his brain was exploding and his body was on fire. He was dimly aware that nothing had laid a hand on him and he scoured the room for the source of his pain. He saw it: a huge thing, bigger than a Swarmer, its head so massive that it bowed forward under the weight and had to extend its huge tail to maintain its balance. Its eyes glowed evilly green. A nimbus of light played round its head, and tendrils of foul ectoplasm reached out to stroke Rutger's head. Desperately he resisted, knowing that to give in to the pain was to die. All around he heard the roar of weapons and the screams of the dying.

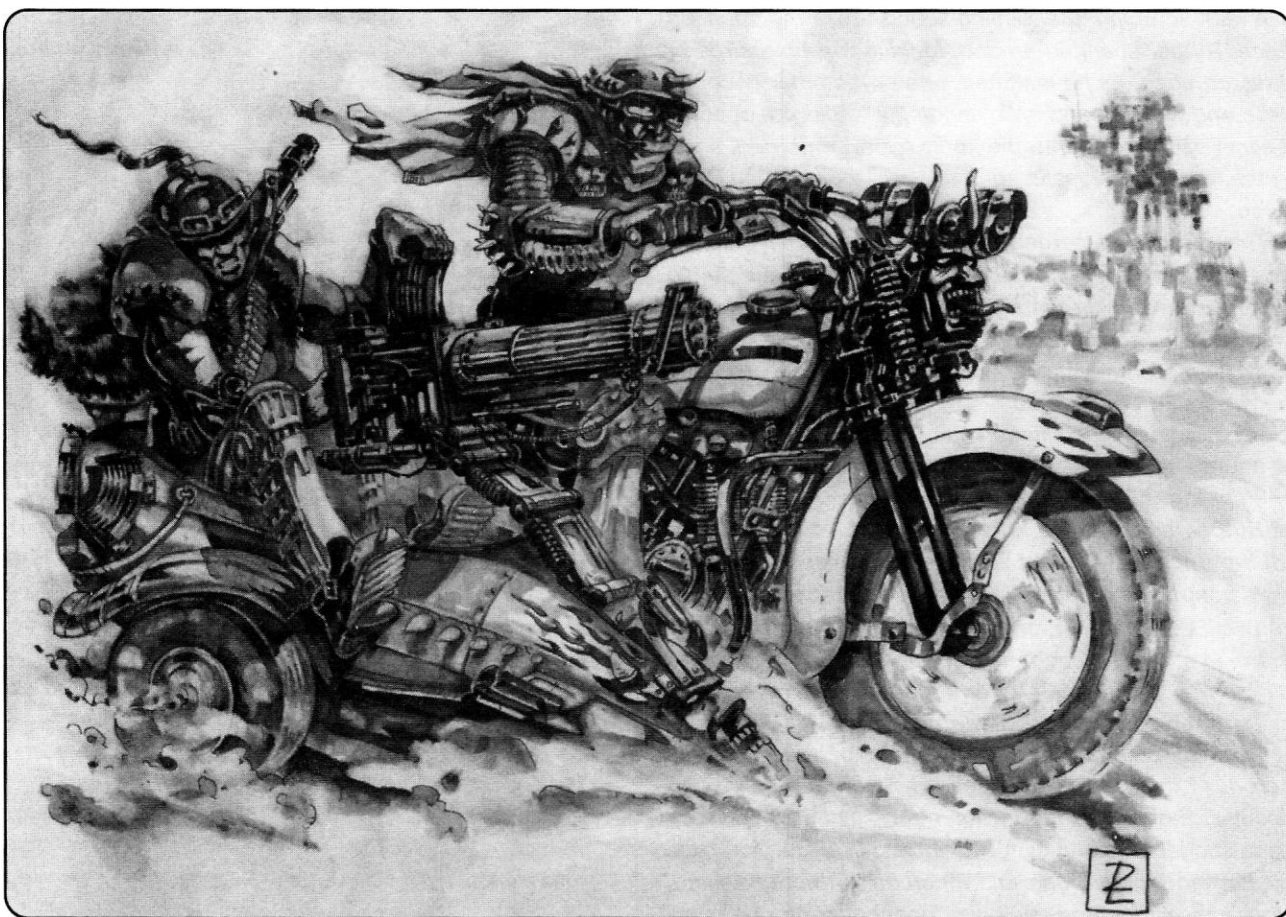
Another battle in the long war between man and Swarm had begun.



SKAVENGERS

Few peoples are more feared than the Skavengers. Their barbaric hosts roam the wilderness attacking outlying settlements, warring with the other Wastelanders, and searching for ancient caches of fuel and ammunition. Skavengers are nomads and wanderers drawn from those who have chosen to live, or who were born, outside the great city-states. They roam the Wastelands in convoys of ill-assorted vehicles, plundering, trading, killing and looting as they see fit. They owe allegiance to no homeland. They are bound together only by fear and need.

They fear being abandoned by their kind, for they know that no unprotected human can survive in the Wastes. They know they need each other to survive. Often they are bound by such heinous crimes that they know that if they do not stand together, they will be hunted down and destroyed.



Skavengers recruit from the desperate and the demented. They often give the survivors of their raids a choice: join them or die. Many join, intending to desert at the first opportunity, but are swiftly sucked into the Skavenger lifestyle, finding that it is easier by far to be victimizer than victim and better to raid than be raided. Soon they have prices on their heads. Few communities in the Wastes accept strangers, anyway. The Skavenger horde becomes their new home.

APPEARANCE

Skavengers wear a motley assortment of gear and costumes. All are battered but serviceable. Some own Hydran symbiontsuits. Most wear tattered rags of leather or thick cloth. All possess goggles and rebreather masks to protect their eyes and lungs from the dust. All cover themselves in as many layers of clothing as possible to keep a barrier between their skins and the poison dust and ash. Skavengers arm themselves with the best weapons they can find and cover themselves in bullet belts and ammo pods.

A Skavenger's favorite possession is his vehicle. They lavish enormous care on their maintenance, and no matter how beaten up a Skavenger vehicle seems, it is always functional. Without it, a Skavenger will be abandoned by his horde or forced to hitch a ride with another Skavenger. Few are willing to do others such a favor, fearing that their throats might be slit and their vehicles taken. For most Skavengers, life becomes an endless quest for food and go-juice and ammunition and spare parts. When they cannot find towns and convoys to victimize, they turn on each other.

ORGANIZATION

Most Skavengers are organized in gangs of 40-200. These roam the Wastes, seeking victims. They raid convoys and smaller settlements, sometimes taking them over and plundering them until the settlements are stripped and abandoned.

Sometimes a warlord arises who can band together a few gangs. These warlords carve out territories in the Wastes, ruling isolated trade towns until some stronger power displaces them or their small empires fly apart on the warlord's death.

Occasionally a mighty Khan arises and welds a number of warlords into a mighty motorized horde. This horde ram-pages across the Wastes until its energies are spent, its leaders have a falling out or it is smashed by some greater military power such as a city-state's army. Some of these hordes hold together for generations and terrorize all they encounter. In the east, the lands of the Shogunate are troubled by several such hordes.

Within the hordes, wealth is measured by possession of go-juice and ammunition. A leader's worth is measured by his ability to provide his followers with such stuff.

ECONOMY

Skavengers are raiders and bandits. They manufacture nothing and take what they want. Some of the more sophisticated warlords exact tribute from konvoys passing through their territories, reasoning that it is better to get a percentage of stuff without fighting than take everything but suffer many casualties. Sometimes Skavengers show up in the tradetowns and seek to barter away the goods they have taken from merchants and travelers. They descend upon newly discovered Drakonium fields and attempt to carry off what they can before the forces of the metrozones arrive.

SKAVENGER BANDS

There are many types of Skavenger bands. The most common are the marauders, who roam the Wastes in search of prey. These lawless bands are the scourge of the konvoys and any weakly defended habtowns. They simply slaughter any who cross their paths, taking their goods. Most Skavenger bands do not care about such things as mutations, just so long as they make you tough and help you fight. Their ranks are open to anyone who can join them, and they accept many Hydran renegades, exiled Prometheans and ronin who can pass their initiation rituals.

INITIATION

To join a Skavenger band, you normally must have someone to speak for you who is already a member of the band. If you have such a friend and he vouches for your trustworthiness, then you will be allowed to join. No one cares about your past, or any crimes you may have committed or any laws you may have broken. Everybody else in the band will have blackened their souls with crimes beyond counting.

What is important is that you must join in wholeheartedly with the band, taking part in their criminal acts. Anyone who stands apart is automatically suspect, for bounty hunters are many, and often they try to infiltrate the outlaw bands. If you fall under such suspicion, then punishment will be swift and inevitable.

You must stand by your comrades, aiding them when they are in need, just as they will aid you in turn. You must at least try to help your wounded and evacuate them if need be. You must share food and fuel with those who have none. You must never betray them to the law.

You must obey orders given by the leader or his chosen henchmen. If you don't, they will normally try to punish you on the spot. If you are truly unhappy with the leader, you can challenge him when the time is right. That is never when the band is in battle or in immediate danger. If you choose such a path then be careful. If a leader suspects you of plotting to usurp his place, then he will most likely see to it that you have an accident or are shot in the back by a stray bullet. Powerful men do not like to be challenged.

THE CHALLENGE

When you want to challenge for the leadership, it is quite simple. You simply pick a fight with the current leader. There are many ways to do this. The most common method is to question an order given to you. You can also insult him or simply challenge him. The challenge must be fair and open and given in front of other members of the band. The leader will most likely try to intimidate you or belittle your prowess or talk you out of the challenge. If you are sure of yourself, do not let him. Insist on the challenge going forward. If you do, one of the leader's henchmen may challenge you in turn. You must accept this to prove your worthiness.

Since all challenges are to the death, the henchman must be truly loyal to the leader to do this. If a leader is weak or unpopular, no henchman will step forward and you may proceed directly to the combat. If a henchman challenges you, you must defeat him or die, then you must fight the leader, probably immediately afterward. If this seems unfair, then do not make the challenge. The ways of the Skavenger are not fair, they are brutal, and power is wielded by those bold enough to seize it and ruthless enough to hang onto it.

Challenges are simple. They are fought out in a circle made by the rest of the band. Once the circle is closed, only one will walk away from it. The band members are armed and will strike at any who come within their reach. The challenge is fought with any close-combat weapons the challengers wish, and there is only one rule: there are no rules. Any and all dirty tricks are not only allowed, they are encouraged. Such things are seen as proof of cunning and worthiness.

If your opponent falls unconscious, slit his throat. Remember, only one of you can leave the circle alive. Best it be you.



Challenges are not only used to resolve leadership disputes. Sometimes Skavengers fall out over spoils or a woman or just out of hatred and enmity. When that happens, a challenge may be the only way to solve a festering quarrel that threatens the unity and safety of the band. Indeed, when such quarrels arise sometimes the leader or the band will insist on a challenge circle to settle the dispute. It will either be that or one of the two parties will have to voluntarily leave the band and go their own way.

Aside from the Law of the Circle of Challenge, there are no other laws in Skavenger society other than those that each individual band or its leader enforces on its members. Thus, customs can vary from group to group. Some leaders lead by consent of the band. Others rule with an iron fist and enforce their will with gun and blade.

WASTELANDERS

Wastelanders are the people who dwell beyond the great metrozones, clinging to a precarious existence in their habtowns and settlements. They owe allegiance to no city-state and seek only to live in freedom. Every Wastelander town is different bound by its own laws and rules. A few still have links to the datawebs, most are completely isolated and terribly vulnerable to all the perils of the Wastes. There are literally tens of thousands of Wastelander communities scattered throughout the deserts, ranging in size from near ghost towns of a dozen people to thriving settlements containing tens of thousands.

There are places where mutants live side by side with folk of the Old Race, and places where all strangers are summarily executed. In the isolation of the vast deserts, all sorts of strange beliefs can come to be held. There are habtowns where no outsider has been seen in a thousand years and whose residents believe themselves to be the last survivors in all the world.

Most habtowns are fortified with their own water supplies and energy sources. Most have huge stockpiles of ammo and many defensive weapons and are designed to resist a siege for months. Those that are not don't survive.

APPEARANCE

Most Wastelanders dress according to the codes and origins of their habs. Those founded by Prometheans tend to look and dress like Prometheans. Those close to the Shogunate tend to ape the look of its citizens. Few Wastelanders look rich, and most of their clothing is modified by the dictates of surviving in the wilderness. Much of their gear is old and patched and looks like it has been handed down from generation to generation, which it probably has.

ECONOMY

One thing is certain about any Wastelander hab. It is there for a reason, and that reason usually has something to do with money. Most habtowns are found along konvoy trade routes where they can supply services to the traveling merchants. Others are near mines or deep uncontaminated artesian wells. Others can be found near ancient ruins that can be plundered by the local population. Whatever the reason, you can bet it will be central to the local economy.

Of course, it is possible that whatever was the economic reason for the hab's original existence, it has long gone. It is equally possible that the hab was set up as a refuge for political or religious exiles. In that case, the locals may be desperate and dangerous folk indeed, preying on passing travelers and seeking to conceal the evidence of their crimes.

A few of the greater habtowns have their own Drakonium fields. These tend to be mighty citadels, fortresses, strong even against attacks by the metrozone armies. They keep themselves alive by selling their Drakonium to traders and buying weapons in return. Some of these places have huge populations.

WASTE WORLD



QUICK START

VIRUS DETECTION PROGRAM: ON	INITIATE SEQUENCE	GUNSTBERG OVERDRIVE	CORTICO QUASI-DEGRADATION
FLOW LINK QUASI PROTOCOL: INITIATED	NON-BIOLOGICAL RAW MATERIAL:	MICRO-OPTICAL MODULATOR: ON	GANGLIAL ELECTRO-IMPLANT
FILE SUB-PROTOL: STANDARD	INTERNAL DATA CORRUPTION:	SILICONE SYNAPTIC SIMULATOR	SMART CHIP INSTALLED
NANOMECHANICAL INTERFACE:	LINGUISTIC MARKUP DIRECTORY	DYSFUNCTION	METHANE IMPULSE CATHETER
VALIDATE SIMULATION	MOLECULAR BINARY:	ALPHA BLOCKER ENGAGED	OCCIPITAL FLOW MODULATION: SINE

QUICK START

LOGIN:	SUB system COORDINATES	SEROTONERGIC OVERLOAD	BIOFEEDBACK MATRIX: XO
PASSWORD:	X1:343.40.5 X2:196.10.6	AMYGDALICPTIC OVERWRITE	ORKASMATRON ACTIVE
ACCESS GRANTED	Y1:612.25.4 Y2:924.34.8	SMART CHIP INSTALLED	AMOEBOID DRONE: PRESENT
SECURITY CLEARANCE LEVEL:	Z2: 21.44.2 Z1: 56.62.3	BIOMECH AUGMENTATION:	TRANSLINK FORMATED:
EXCESS GENETIC VARIATION:	ABBERANT CHROMA LEVELS:	NANOCCIPITAL DRIVER	INFODUMP INITIATING

WHAT IS A ROLE-PLAYING GAME (RPG)?

Role-playing games are storytelling games in which a group of people get together and take part in the telling of a tale. One player, the Narrator, is responsible for describing the world and outlining the basic story. He plays the part of all the minor characters the players encounter, describing their actions and talking with their voices.

All of the other players have a single character whom they control. The players are really the stars of the story. They control their character's actions within the guidelines laid down by the rules and the Narrator. They respond to the situations the Narrator creates while acting out the part of their own special characters.

THE NARRATOR

As Narrator, you have a special responsibility. You must be familiar with the rules. You must create the characters and situations the players encounter. You are the players' eyes and ears in the world, describing what they see and hear and smell and feel. You oversee any combat, using the rules given in this book to do so. You make sure the game runs smoothly. You tell the stories that the players will star in. It is your job to see that everyone has a good time and to resolve any arguments that might arise during the course of play. In the end, your decision is final, overriding any of the rules in this book.

THE PLAYERS

As a player, you will play only a single role. You will have one Player Character (PC) who is your alter ego in Waste World, and who will live or die, fail or succeed based on your decisions. Your character is defined on paper using the rules in this book. Even if this character should die, you do not lose. You can simply choose to create another character, using the rules and continue to play.

NARRATOR CHARACTERS

In play, the Narrator takes on the role of many different people, acting out their parts in the ongoing drama. Any character controlled by the Narrator is referred to as a narrator character (NC), to distinguish them from the PCs.

DICE

In Waste World, dice are referred to by a simple abbreviation. A twenty-sided die is a d20. A four-sided die is a d4. A normal six-sided die is a d6, and so on. So whenever you see one of these abbreviations you will know that this is the kind of dice to which we refer.

Specialized dice should be available at the store in which you purchased this game.

THE CORE RULES

For those of you who are keen to get right into the game, here is a basic overview of the way the rules work. This section gives the basic mechanics of the game. Almost every rule in the rest of this book is derived in some way from these basic rules.

SUCCESS ROLLS

Generally speaking, your character will be able to do what you want under normal circumstances. If you want your character to walk across a room and switch on a light, you simply tell the Narrator that, and it will happen. But when the result is in doubt or when there is a chance of failure, the Narrator may call on you to make a success roll.

Almost every important die roll in the game is called a success roll. Success rolls are always d20 rolls and they all operate in pretty much the same way. You roll a d20, and if the result is greater than 10, you have succeeded. If the result is 10 or less, you have failed.

Sometimes there are modifiers to success rolls. Those can be either positive or negative modifiers. Positive modifiers can be things like an high level of skill in what you are doing, or great natural ability. Negative modifiers can be things like trying to operate under difficult circumstances or great stress.

Positive modifiers are added to your die roll. Negative modifiers are subtracted. In these rules, positive modifiers are written as +1 or +2 or +whatever. Negative modifiers are expressed as -1 or -3 or -whatever.



For example, your character might have a strength rating of +2, which indicates that your PC is particularly strong. That would be added to any success roll you have to make that involves using strength. Or your character might have a strength of -1, which indicates that he is fairly weak. This would be subtracted from any die rolls you have to make that involve strength.

SUCCESS AND FAILURE LEVELS

The amount your die roll was greater than 10 is your success level. If you rolled less than 10, then the amount you got less than 10 is your failure level. Under certain circumstances, the exact level of your success or failure can be important.

When making a success roll, it is easiest to roll a d20, taking into account all modifiers, then subtract 10 from the final total.

If the result is positive, that gives you your success level. If the result is zero or negative, that gives you your failure level. And that's it. Basically almost every rule in this book is a variant of these rules. Now it's time for you to choose a character.

QUICK START

For those of you who want to plunge right into the game, we've provided the following section. If you want to get started as a player just read through this section to give you some idea of what is going on, choose one of the character templates we have thoughtfully provided and get stuck in. Your Narrator will tell you anything else you need to know.

If you want to play as a Narrator you're going to have to read the whole book. Sorry but that's the way it is. Good luck to you whatever role you choose to play.

CHARACTER SELECT

SLIP STREAM 1.9

PARIETAL NOISE TIC

SELECT NOW



DV 108

Occupation: Panzer

Metrozone: None

ST DX IN PW

+4 0 -1 0

LF: 18

MR: 8

**Advantages:** Ambidextrous, Innate Sense Of Direction.**Special Powers:** Armor (AR:5), Giant.**Skills:** Blade (chainsword), Dodge +1, Heavy Weapon (HMG), Mek, Robomancy.**Equipment:** Giant Size Light Ceramic Armor (AR: 8 in combination with the Armor special power), Chainsword, HMG with 10 reloads, 100 credits.**Disadvantages:** Positronic Brain (Prime Directive: Protect Human Civilians), Robotic Body, Overconfidence (Mild).

Description: Panzer Model DV 108 was christened Dave by his comrades in the Promethean Cyber Legions. That was before a glitch worked its way into his neural network, and he began to question his first Prime Directive which was to obey his brutal officers. After a bitter firefight at the battle of Jagga Pass, Panzer Dave became separated from his force and wandered off into the Wastelands. He fell in with a Skavenger band and, eventually, he made his way to Janus. He decided not to return to active service and since he is presumed missing in action no one has come looking for him. He now works as a freelance mercenary and nightclub bouncer. He will not allow human non-combatants to be harmed. To this extent, his second Prime Directive still holds.

BASIC CHARACTER TEMPLATE

All character templates are laid out in the following format:

NAME

This gives the character's name.

OCCUPATION

This gives the character's profession.

METROZONE

This gives the character's homeland, if any.

CHARACTERISTICS

There are six major characteristics. These measure your character's ability in six general areas. The higher or lower the score, the better or worse your character is.

Strength (ST) tells you how physically strong and tough the character is.

Dexterity (DX) tells you how quick and well-coordinated the character is.

Intelligence (IN) tells you how smart the character is.

Power (PW) tells you how much psychic energy the character possesses.

Life force (LF) is a measure of how much damage the character can take. Movement Rate (MR) tells you how fast the character moves.

ADVANTAGES

This section tells you about any advantages the character has. It includes the things that set your character apart from the average person in the street. It can include things like being ambidextrous or physically hardy.

SPECIAL POWERS

This section will tell you of any superhuman, special powers the character may possess. These are things that are not generally available to normal people, like armored skin, wings, or psychic powers.

SKILLS

All PCs have skills. These are areas in which your character possesses special knowledge that helps him survive in the world. The skill names are given in this section. Where a skill name has a plus sign and a number after it, this represents the number of levels your character has with the skill. Any proficiency slots are given in brackets.

EQUIPMENT

This section of your template will tell you what useful gear the character possesses. In addition to any equipment listed, all characters possess a rebreather mask, a suit of clothing that is normal in their culture, and a basic survival and first aid kit.

DISADVANTAGES

This section will tell you about any disadvantages the character may possess. These are things that work against your character, and which the Narrator might use to make its life miserable. The level of disadvantage is given in brackets.

DESCRIPTION

This tells you a little about the character's background. Feel free to customize this in any way you wish.

CHARACTER SELECT



MAGDA STERN

- Occupation: Bounty Hunter
- Metrozone: Prometheus



BOHOSH

- Occupation: Enforcer
- Metrozone: Hydra



iKARINA

- Occupation: Courier
- Metrozone: Ikarus



SHANTAX

- Occupation: Warrior
- Metrozone: Janus



iKHiA

- Occupation: Samurai
- Metrozone: Shogunate



DV 108

- Occupation: Panzer
- Metrozone: None



CHARACTER SELECT

CHARACTER SELECT

SLIP STREAM 1.9

PARIETAL NOISE TIC



MAGDA STERN

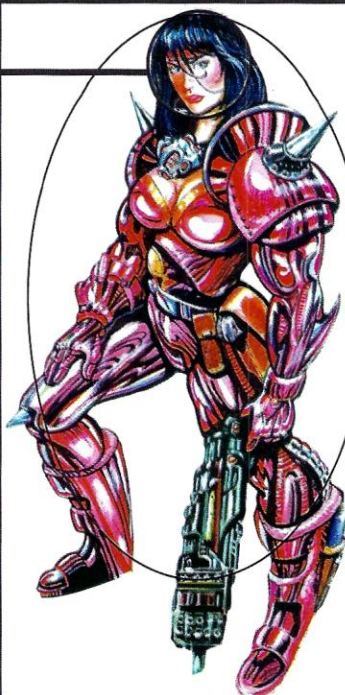
Occupation: Bounty Hunter

Metrozone: Prometheus

ST	DX	IN	PW
0	+2	0	0

LF: 10

MR: 6

**Advantages:** Ambidextrous, Beautiful, Hardy.**Special Powers:** None.**Skills:** Dodge +3, Handgun (Auto pistol, Blaster) +4, Shadowing, Streetwise, Survival, Tracking, Unarmed Combat (Claws, Unarmed) +4.**Equipment:** Autopistol, Blaster Pistol, Light Ceramic Armor (AR:3), 2 Bionic Arms (ST +3, Right arm contains Razor Sharp Claws), 2 Bionic Legs (ST+2 Superleap), Neurojak.**Disadvantages:** Exotic Appearance (Beautiful Cyborg), Vengeance Seeker (Total), Hunted (Strong).**Description:** A former sergeant in the Promethean Levies, Magda lost both arms and both legs when the patrol she was leading was ambushed by Skavenger Raiders. Her limbs were replaced with bionic systems but she never got over the psychological scarring caused by the ambush. Eventually, obsessed with finding the men who had crippled her and killed all her troopers, she deserted from the Levies just short one year of Citizenship. Now she works as a bounty hunter. She spends every waking moment looking for clues that will lead her to her prey. She herself is hunted as a deserter by the Military Sekutors.

IGOR JUNG

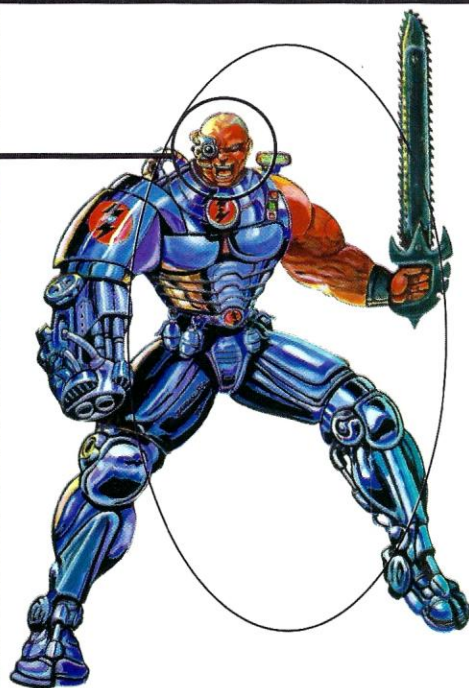
Occupation: Mercenary

Metrozone: Prometheus

ST	DX	IN	PW
+1	+1	0	0

LF: 12

MR: 5

**Advantages:** Unique Background: (Total Cyborg). (This allows Igor to ignore normal limits on equipment spending.)**Special Powers:** None.**Skills:** Blade, Dodge +1, Weapon Implant, Survival.**Equipment:** Bionic Eye (Iris, Targeting, Telescopic), Weapon Implant Arm, (ST+3, Heavy Blaster Implanted), 2 Bionic Legs (+1 ST, Superleap), chainsword, 5 HEX grenades, Medium Ceramic Armor (AR:6).**Disadvantages:** Bad Reputation, Exotic Appearance (Cyborg), Unusable Arm, Obsession (Killing Deviants, Total).**Description:** Igor Jung believed in the Machine Gods. He was totally dedicated to his city and way of life. He was a fanatic who served with distinction in the Cyber Legions, until the fifth battle of Darekum, when he had the misfortune to be standing under a Shogunate Warwalker when it toppled and exploded. Amazingly, part of Igor survived and was taken off by the Machine Priests of Talus to be rebuilt into a total cyborg. His missing limbs were replaced with prosthetics. Unfortunately, the whole experience drove Igor mad, and he fled from Prometheus into the Wastes, to purge mutants and other deviants. He eventually wound up in Janus, and now works as a mercenary, taking contracts against anybody except his former home city.

The eon's old artificial intelligences known as the Machine Gods rule Prometheus. Their robotic priests fill the folk with hatred for mutants and aliens, and all others they deem deviant. Prometheus's Cyber Legions, consisting of disciplined cohorts of Panzer robots and heavily cyborgized infantry, are among the most feared fighting forces in the world. They are the best equipped and most disciplined of all the megacity armies.



REACTIVE MATRIX: ON



ENTRY FUNCTION C0X

985.0300.2233.666.957.000.000.7



PARIETAL NODE CLIPPING

METROZONE

PROMETHEUS

ENVIRON SELECT



CHARACTER SELECT



LARA

Occupation: Mercenary

Metrozone: Hydra

ST	DX	IN	PW
+1	+2	0	0

LF: 12

MR: 5

**Advantages:** Fasthealing, Hardy, Lightsleep.**Special Powers:** Darksight.**Skills:** Awareness +1, Climbing, Dodge +4, Leadership, Rifle (Assault Rifle) +3, Stealth +1, Survival, Unarmed Combat (Brawling, Claws) +4.**Equipment:** Heavy Carapace Symbysuit (suit has poison claw implants with Kill (2) Poison and spines), Assault Rifle with 10 clips.**Disadvantages:** Dark Secret, Exotic Appearance, Prejudiced Against, Code of Honor (Total).

Description: Lara Na Valka was born into the House of Valka. She followed their discipline of the warrior ideal to perfection. However, after killing her brother on the orders of her genclan's Lord, she began doubt the Valkan way. She left Hydra and made her way to Janus, where she poses as a Valkan mercenary, despite having left her genclan's service. She still follows something similar to the Valkan Code of Honor. She will always honor a mercenary contract to the letter. She will always aid a Hydran in need of help, and she will never desert a comrade. She is currently wanted for questioning by her former genclan, who feel that her desertion and her brother's treason may indicate some new flaw in the genclan's genetic matrix. They want her brought back in chains to their Tower, to experiment on her and discover what this flaw might be.



BOHOSH

Occupation: Enforcer

Metrozone: Hydra

ST	DX	IN	PW
+4	+1	-2	0

LF: 18

MR: 8

**Advantages:** Berserk.**Special Powers:** Armor (AR:4), Giant, Redeye, Spines.**Skills:** Bludgeon (2H Axe) +5, Dodge +2, Gambling, Unarmed Combat (Brawling) +3.**Equipment:** Two Handed Axe, 4 doses of the combat drug Rage. 100 credits.**Disadvantages:** Negative Appearance: Monstrous.

Description: Bohosh was a normal labor Brute, until the last Drakonium War. He was peaceful and placid and content with his lot, using his enormous strength in the service of his city. However, when he was conscripted, he was injected with experimental hormones that changed him. His skin thickened, and became covered in spikes, and he found himself prone to bouts of savage rage. This was useful during the war, but made him miserable afterwards. He could not return to his old way of life, or visit his old friends. He fled across the Wastes to Janus, where he now earns a living as a mercenary and mob leg-breaker in the wilder sectors. He is not happy, and in his dim, brutish way longs for the peace he once knew.

Hydra is a splintered city, a seething cauldron of factional strife, ruled by the genclans. These ancient bloodlines, part clan, part corporation, are all adapted to perform one specific function. They use advanced biotechnology to grant their people superhuman powers. Hydran biotechnology also creates organic machines, making Hydra the least dependant on Drakonium of all the great megacities for energy and food.



CHARACTER SELECT

SLIP STREAM 1.9

PARIETAL NOISE TIC



KARINA

Occupation: Courier

Metrozone: Ikarus

ST DX IN PW

+1 +3 0 0

LF: 12

MR: 5

**Advantages:** None.**Special Powers:** Blue Eye.**Skills:** Aerobatics +1, Courtier, Dodge +3, Ikarean Battlesuit+3, Interogation, Poison Lore, Resistance, Savoire Fair, Seduction.**Equipment:** Ikarean Battlesuit (AR:6).**Disadvantages:** Personal Code of Honor (Strong), Exotic Appearance, Overconfidence (Mild), Prejudiced Against, Hunted (level 2),

Description: Karina is an Ikarean, the daughter of the insane Lord Vathek. Unfortunately for her, she is also a mutant. When the stigmata started to show and her eyes began to film over, she stole a battlesuit and departed from the sky city. Since that time Lord Vathek has dispatched assassins to slay his errant daughter and obliterate the shame she has brought on his line. She has taken up residence in Janus and works as a courier carrying packages across the city. She knows she is feared and distrusted by others because she is an Ikarean, but she also has an Ikarean's natural pride. This causes her to behave in an arrogant and over-confident way that can get her into trouble.



TORAZEK

Occupation: Psychomagus

Metrozone: Ikarus

ST DX IN PW

0 0 +1 +2

LF: 10

MR: 4

**Advantages:** None.**Special Powers:** Mindspeech, Psyker, Psi Powers: Domination +2, Healing +2, Pyrokinesis +2.**Skills:** Ancient Lore, Courtier, Dodge +1, Resistance, Savoire Fair, Staff (Ripstaff).**Equipment:** Ripstaff, Medium Ceramic Armor (AR: 6).**Disadvantages:** Exotic Appearance, Prejudiced Against, Obsession (Finding Immortality, Total), Phobia (Flying, Mild).

Description: Torazek is one of the rarest of people, an Ikarean who is scared of flying. This dates from the time when the skyship that was carrying him to Janus was shot from the sky by a Skavenger missile. He was the only survivor of the attack. It was at that time his psionic powers manifested themselves, allowing him to survive the blazing wreck. All of this has made him a fanatic: He now desperately seeks the secret of immortality. He is convinced that one day he will find it. At this moment he is in exile, since he refuses to return to Ikarus. He earns his living as a healer, but has few customers, since few people will entrust themselves to an Ikarean.

The flying city of Ikarus is ruled by the decadent aristocracy of the Celestial Court. The Ikareans are proud, malicious and spiteful. They dedicate their lives to honing their psychic powers and their skills with their razor-winged battlesuits. They regard all of those who dwell on the surface of the planet as their natural prey. Nothing that dwells on the ground below them is safe from their marauding.



REACTIVE MATRIX: ON



ENTRY FUNCTION CCIX

985.0300.2233.666.957.000.000.7



PARIETAL NODE CLIPPING



METROZONE



IKARUS

ENVIRON SELECT



CHARACTER SELECT

SLIP STREAM 1.9
PARIETAL NOISE TIC

92029504809721007404610983081720
967290188194787238791528098150800
988796798798812417999915886777

KHIA

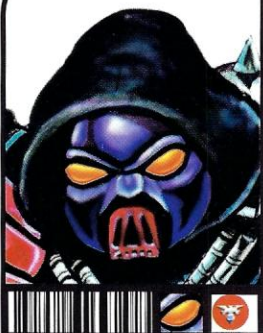
Occupation: Samurai

Metrozone: Shogunate

ST	DX	IN	PW
+1	+2	0	0
LF: 12			
MR: 5			

**Advantages:** Ambidextrous, Karmachip.**Special Powers:** None.**Skills:** Blade +3, Courtier, Dodge +3, Driving (Skimmer; Bike)+1, Forceblade +3, Martial Arts, Resistance, Rifle: (Blaster), +1, Savoir Fair, Survival, Unarmed Combat (Brawling) +1.**Equipment:** Blaster, Forceblade, Medium Ceramic Armor (AR.6).**Disadvantages:** Code of Honor (Samurai, Total), Obligation. Phobia (Lords of Karma, Mild), Overconfidence (Mild).

Description: Khia is a samurai in her second incarnation. She is a trusted servant of Lord Miika of the Tora Clan, and is one of his most senior agents. She travels across the Wastes disguised as a ronin mercenary, seeking out information for her master. Lately she has found she rather likes this freedom from the stifling codes of the Shogunate, and she undertakes her allocated missions with more and more reluctance. She still feels her obligations, and acts in accordance with the samurai code of honor, but she fears that her dishonorable thoughts will show up on her karmic record and that, eventually, she will bring disgrace on herself and her clan. She has no great desire to face the Lords of Karma any time soon.



NOI

Occupation: Ninja

Metrozone: Shogunate

ST	DX	IN	PW
0	+3	0	0
LF: 10			
MR: 4			

**Advantages:** Ambidextrous.**Special Powers:** None.**Skills:** Blade, Climbing, Dodge, Rifle (Blaster), Security Systems, Shadowing, Stealth, Streetwise, Unarmed Combat (Claws, Razor Wheels) +6.**Equipment:** Bionic Arm (ST +2, Ultrastrong Claws) Blaster, Razor Wheel, 2 Swords, 10 HEX Grenades, Light Ceramic Armor (AR.3).**Disadvantages:** Hunted (Chang Clan, Strong), Dark Secret (Ninja), Obligation (Mantis Ryu), Paranoia (Strong).

Description: Noi is a ninja in the service of the Mantis Ryu, one of the oldest and most feared assassin schools in the Shogunate. Early in his career he lost his arm during the mission when he slew Lord Chang. His ryu sent him to Janus to have his arm replaced, and since that time he has been based there, performing contract killings and the occasional piece of freelance work. He lives in the Shogunate-dominated sector of Janus, only occasionally being smuggled back to his homeland for special missions. Most of the time he poses as an out-of-luck mercenary, only donning his ceremonial armor to perform his secret missions.

The immortal Shogun rules a land riddled with hidden factions, psychic sorcerers and stealthy ninja, all of whom covet the great reincarnation machines that make the samurai virtually immortal. He is served by the samurai clans, masters of the forceblade and the martial arts. These clans scheme against each other as they struggle to maintain their place in the Shogun's favor and outdo in each other in power and influence.



REACTIVE MATRIX: ON



ENTRY FUNCTION CCIX

985.0300.2233.666.957.000.000.7



PARIETAL NODE CLIPPING



METROZONE

THE SHOGUNATE

ENVIRON SELECT



CHARACTER SELECT

SLIP STREAM 1.9

PARIETAL NOISE TIC

SELECT NOW



SHANTACH

Occupation: Warrior

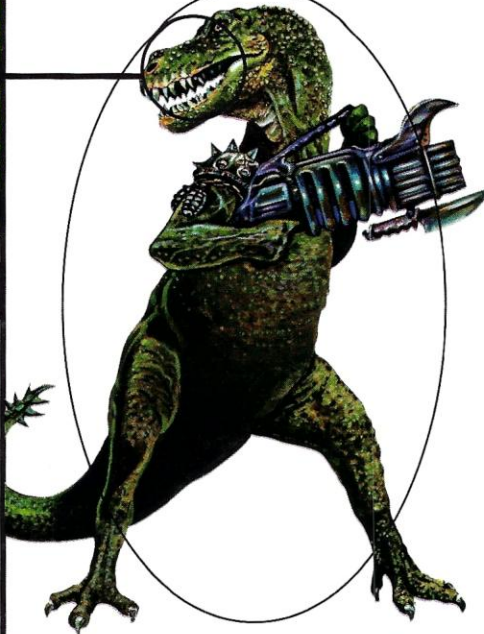
Metrozone: Janus

ST DX IN PW

+2 +2 -2 0

LF: 14

MR: 6

**Advantages:** Hardy.**Special Powers:** Armor (AR:5), Bloodhound Scent, Claws, Fangs, Regeneration, Spiked Tail.**Skills:** Unarmed Combat (Claws, Fangs, Tail)+3, Dodge +1, Heavy Weapon (HMG), Survival.**Equipment:** HMG with 10 reloads, 10 HEX grenades.**Disadvantages:** Negative Appearance (Hideous), Overconfidence (Mild).**Description:** Shantach is a Krok. That means he is not the brightest of warriors, but he is one of the fiercest. He fears nothing. He will die in the service of his clutch-brethren or comrades. He lives to kill and eat. He prefers, when possible, to dispatch a foe with his formidable natural weaponry, but when that is impossible he will use his trusty heavy machine gun. He doesn't like doing this, however. He finds that lead pellets in flesh spoil the taste of the red, raw meat.

SADIZORE

Occupation: Bounty Hunter

Metrozone: Janus

ST DX IN PW

+2 +2 0 0

LF: 14

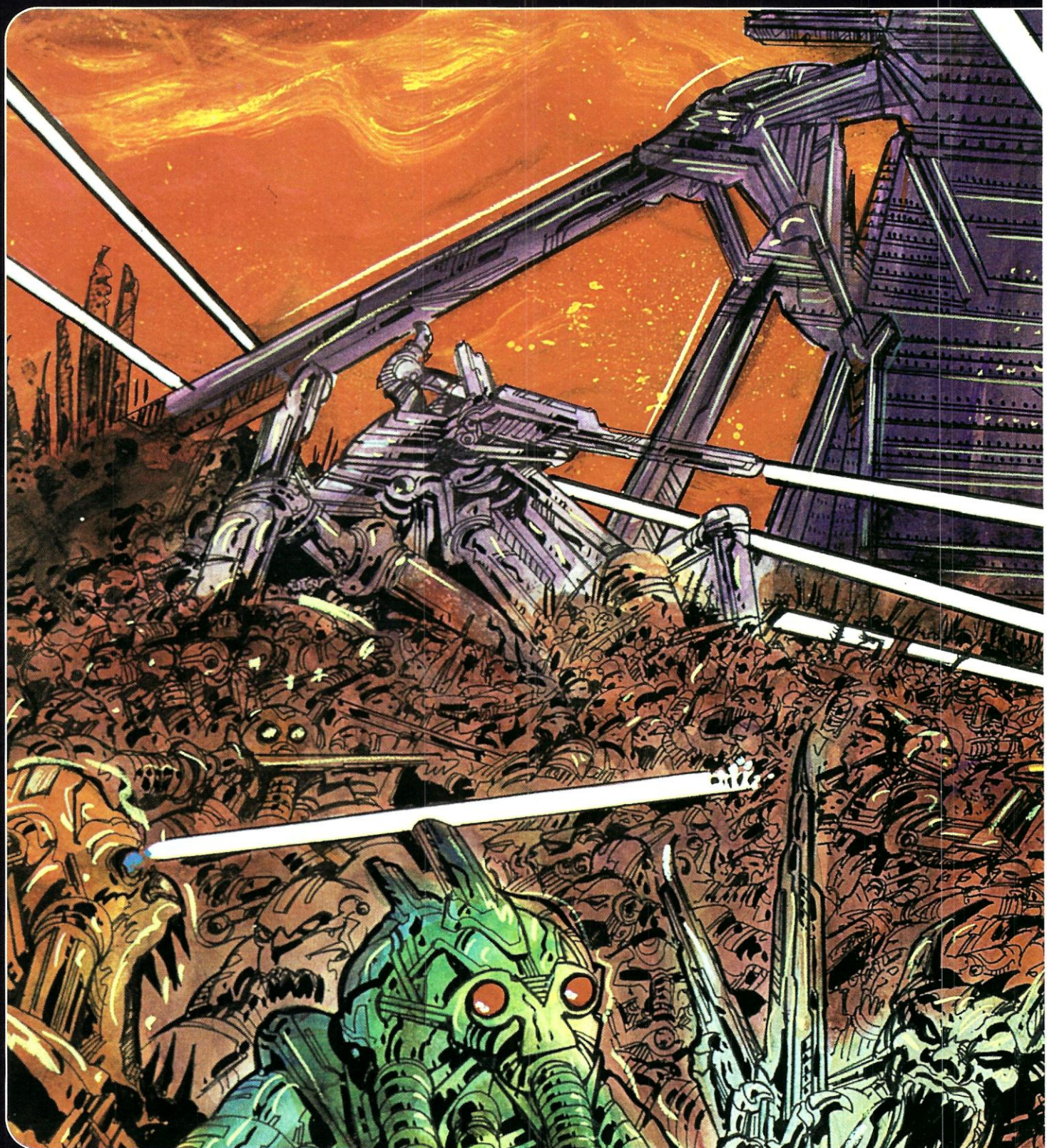
MR: 6

**Advantages:** None.**Special Powers:** Two Stinger symbiotic grafts (Spiked Tails) with Kill (1) poison generation, Claws.**Skills:** Dodge +1, Handgun (laser pistol) +3, Intimidation +1, Interrogation, Security Systems, Stealth, Unarmed Combat (brawling, claws, spiked tails) +3.**Equipment:** Heavy Carapace Symsuit (AR:6), Laser Pistol, Universal Translator.**Disadvantages:** Bad Reputation, Negative Appearance (Monstrous), Psychopathic (Strong).**Description:** Sadazore is a Stygian, one of the most justly feared races on Waste World. He knows people are repulsed and terrified by his hideous appearance, and enjoys it. His natural instinct is to hunt his prey and play with it before making a kill. This has made him a very successful bounty hunter, although not a popular one. Few want to work with a Stygian, so he mostly works alone, occasionally teaming up with others in short alliances of convenience, when the situation requires it. He works mostly out of Janus, but will travel wherever the hunting is good.

Amid the rubble of Janus, the last remnants of the alien Xenogen races dream of their days of glory. They dwell in the shadow of the Startower, a titanic elevator that rises into the darkness of outer space. Janus is the home to merchants and mercenaries, and many others who have come here seeking their fortune in the world's last open trading city. It is a place where everything has its price, even the human soul.



ROLEPLAYING IN A SAVAGE FUTURE



DATACORE TWO



SYSTEMS

PREPARE TO DOWNLOAD

VIRUS DETECTION PROGRAM : ON
FLOW LINK QUASI-PROTOCOL: INITIATED
FILE SUB-PROTOL: STANDARD
NANOMECHANICAL INTERFACE:
VALIDATE SIMULATION

INITIATE SEQUENCE
NON-BIOLOGICAL RAW MATERIAL:
INTERNAL DATA CORRUPTION:
LINGUISTIC MARKUP DIRECTORY
MOLECULAR BINARY:

GUNSTBERG OVERDRIVE
MICRO-OPTICAL MODULATOR: ON
SILICONE SYNAPTIC SIMULATOR
DYSFUNCTION
ARTIFICIAL NUEROSYTHESIS

CORTICO QUASI-DEGRADATION
GANGLIAL ELECTRO-IMPLANT
SMART CHIP INSTALLED
METHANE IMPULSE CATHETER
OCCIPITAL FLOW MODULATION: SINE

CHARACTER GENERATION

LOGIN:
PASSWORD:
ACCESS GRANTED
SECURITY CLEARANCE LEVEL:
EXCESS GENETIC VARIATION:

SUB system COORDINATES
X1:467.60.5 X2:166.05.4
Y1:612.33.1 Y2:929.34.0
Z2: 21.12.2 Z1: 65.54.8
ABBERANT CHROMA LEVELS:

SEROTONERGIC OVERLOAD
AMYGDALPTIC OVERWRITE
SMART CHIP INSTALLED
BIOMECH AUGMENTATION:
NANOCCIPITAL DRIVER

BIOFEEDBACK MATRIX: XO
NEUROCIRCUIT FEEDBACK
AMOEBOID DRONE: PRESENT
FRACTAL FEEDBACK LOOP:
STORYMODE INITIATING

The skimmer gondola cut through the canals of Hydra. The boatman was quiet as the ferryman on the river of the dead. A huge cowl hid his features. He made no sound as he worked the vehicle's controls.

Sabrina looked out on the darkening jetties. Down here, along the canals, it was cold and gloomy. Green-tainted mist rolled in from the Sea of Slime and obscured the looming outlines of the Towers. Overhead, the great platforms and bridgeways blocked out the last light of the dying sun.

Hovering glowglobes flickered wanly and drifted slightly from their assigned patterns. The few that worked were flyspecked where insects had committed suicide. The others were shattered bits of broken crystal that gave no light at all. Trash and layers of pollutant scum parted in front of the gondola's prow.

Sabrina fumbled with the hilt of her forceblade. This was a bad neighborhood. There could be anything down here: rogue mutants, bodysnatchers, plain old-fashioned muggers. Every patch of shadow, every doorway could hold a potential killer.

Why did Marilyne have to choose this area for her home? It was so seedy. But then again, she had always been a bit of a lowlife, even for a psycher.

With a thought, Sabrina extended her symsuit cowl. The organic tissue flowed across her face and settled on her features like a second skin. The symbiote's photoreceptors took over from her eyes, automatically enhancing her perception deeper into the infrared and higher into the ultraviolet. Her surroundings leapt into clarity. She could even see the beggar lying in the shadow archway of a sewer entrance. He looked harmless.

She felt better now. Not an inch of her flesh was exposed; the symbiote obscured her features. She had deliberately chosen a basic model symsuit rather than the custom job she could afford. She didn't want to stand out in the crowd. Someone was trying to kill her. In fact, they had done it once already.

She had seen the reports submitted by the House Valka troops, along with her resurrection contract. Someone had shot her from behind and was standing over the body trying to dig out her nekrochip when the Valkan patrol had stumbled upon him. The assassin had killed two troopers with a forceblade before the rest had managed to subdue him. Even then, he had died before interrogation. Poison implants had exploded in his brain, and his body had contained mortuary enzymes. Nothing had been left of his corpse except a pool of protoplasmic slime.

Sabrina shuddered. She knew what that meant. The man had been a Spydran assassin. Perhaps he had been specially tailored to kill her and only her. Hypno-conditioned so that he would never stop until she was dead. If that were the case, there would be plenty more where he came from. It was common knowledge that the Spydrans took derelicts from the streets and rebuilt and reprogrammed them to suit their purposes. She could soon be dead again.

Dead!

She tried not to think of the flash of pain and darkness that had preceded her last death. She offered up a prayer of thanks to the Earth Mother that her last trip had left her with enough money to take out a contract with the body-brokers.

The worst of it was she had no idea who could want her dead. One of her former lovers? It seemed unlikely. Those partings, though often painful, had never been potentially murderous. Her ex-partners? No. Most of the people she had adventured with were dead or long gone. All of them, in fact, except Marilyne. She had never betrayed any of them, or given them cause to want her dead.

Perhaps it was Marilyne herself. She had been expelled from the Guild. Sabrina had no idea why. Perhaps she was going mad, as psychers sometimes did in the Wastelands. Perhaps she had become the host of a demon. That thought was terrifying. She clasped the hilt of the forceblade tighter and hoped that the psi-shield of this symbiote was a good one. She wondered if she could even bring herself to kill Marilyne if she was behind this.



DATA CORE ACCESS



SECURITY RISK ALERT

985.0300.2233.666.957.000.000.2



ALL SYSTEMS GO

STORY MODE ACTIVE

PERSONA SABRINA

CHARACTER GENERATION



She pushed that thought aside as well. The psyker could not be behind this. She was an old and trusted friend. She had saved Sabrina's life on many occasions, and Sabrina had saved hers in turn. She was seeking out Marilyne for help, that was all. She had no intention of killing her. It would never come to that.

She saw the hand of a drowned man emerge from the water. It was blue and bloated and ugly. The skimmer gave a slight shiver as it bumped over the obstruction.

Dead!

She tried not to think of herself as she had emerged naked and fully grown from the Lazarus pod, her lungs coughing forth nutrient fluids, the shriveled brown umbilical dragging down from her belly. She tried not to think of how soft her skin was, how untanned. She had none of the scars of her life in the Wastelands and her time as a warrior. She lacked the familiar lines about the eyes, and all the little marks of aging.

The new clone body was about 17 subjective years of age. She was not the same person. She looked different even to her own eyes. She felt different too and in many ways better. The aches of old wounds were gone, the wear and tear of her 40-odd years had vanished. She was healthier and fitter than she had been in a long time. If it had not been for the fear, she might well have been happy.

Who could want to kill her? She racked her brain. Some random serial killer? No. Random serial killers did not hire Spydran assassins.

Who could profit from her death? Virtually no one. She was an orphaned Wastelander adventurer, resident of the city-state of Hydra. She was rich, but she had no heirs, no spouse. No one had anything to gain from her death.

Untrue, she corrected herself. Someone must have. They had already murdered her once.

Perhaps it was something to do with her last trip. She had gone east to the Shogunate as part of a convoy of vehicles carrying biotech artifacts to trade for blades and powered armor and electronic components. She had sold her entire consignment to a merchant prince of the Shogunate. Both had seemed happy with the deal. There was nothing there that she could see.

The gondola came to rest in front of the address she had given. She passed over a few credits to the boatman and stepped out onto the jetty. The gondola wobbled slightly on its skimmer field as she disembarked, just like a normal ship would. She strode up the jetty and studied her surroundings.

The flickering bioluminescence of a tavern sign announced the presence of a hostelry. Crowds of day laborers from the docks were already staggering out, their pittance wages spent on a couple of glasses of gin. She saw the massive forms of two Brutes carrying the palanquin of some slumming nobles between them. And over there in the shadows, what was that? Even as she watched, the figure seemed to fade from view.

She made her way across the alleyway and began to climb the old crumbling flight of stone stairs that wound itself up round the skyscraper. Behind her, she thought she heard soft stealthy footsteps. Not a Spydran, she thought. They would make no sound at all. Perhaps just a normal mugger. She drew the forceblade but did not activate it. She extended the claws of the symsuit silently from their finger sheaths. She increased the length of her stride and took the stairs two at a time until she reached the level where her friend lived.

The door to Marilyne's chamber swung open - without her touching it. She looked up, but there was no sign of a sensor eye above the doorway. She flicked the forceblade on and stepped within. Behind her the footsteps stopped.

The psyker was waiting inside.

The chamber was cluttered and smelled of narcotic incense. Marilyne lounged on a floating suspensor chair. A crystal orb hovered just in front of her. Strange colors swirled within it. Marilyne's familiar little weasel-monkey scampered up onto her shoulder.

She took a long drag from the hookah that rested on the table beside her. "I've been expecting you," she said. "It's about the murder, isn't it?"

Sabrina nodded.

"They're going to kill us all, you know. They've already killed Michael and Darien and Kim - irrevocably. No Lazarus pod for them."

Sabrina nodded. All her old adventuring companions were dead, then. She thought of the names. All of them had been together when they had scoured the ruins of Megatropolis. When they had found those ancient crystals.

Marilyne seemed to read her thoughts. "Yes, the crystals. The Cult of the Old Ones want them back. And those who took them must die."

A strange glow appeared in the psyker's eyes. It occurred to Sabrina that the smell of the incense covered another smell, the smell of something long dead. As the dark aurora danced around Marilyne's head, it occurred to her that the Cult of the Old Ones had taken vengeance on the psyker long ago. There was nothing left of her friend behind those eyes, save some memories. The rest belonged to a Demon.

Sabrina leapt forward, forceblade flashing, blow aimed at Marilyne's neck. She prayed she could strike before the psibolt was unleashed.

CHARACTERS

Before attempting to create your first character you should read the Quick Start rules found in the color section of this book. This will give you an overview of how the system works and explain some basic concepts.

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

Waste World RPG uses the metric system for all weights and measures. Distances are given in meters and kilometers (KM). Weights are given in kilograms (KG). For those people who live in countries that don't use the metric system, it's probably easiest to convert meters into yards and assume that a kilogram equals two pounds.

COSTS AND PRICES

In Waste World, the basic unit of currency is the credit issued by the Universal Trading Bank. It is universally honored across the world. Although many places have their own currencies and trading systems, prices throughout this book are given in credits.

Credits are normally written in units between one and 1,000. The normal format for prices in credits is 100C or 345C. If there is no letter at the end of a price, you can always assume that it is in credits.

MEGACREDITS

Megacredits are units of 1,000 credits. Prices in megacredits are written with a decimal point between the thousands and the hundreds. So 1.2 megacredits is 1,200C. It would be written: 1.2M.

GIGACREDITS

Gigacredits are only used for large transactions. They are units of a million credits. Prices in gigacredits are written with a decimal point between the millions and the thousands. So, 4.5 gigacredits is 4,500 megacredits or 4.5 million credits. It is written: 4.5G.

CREATING A CHARACTER

There are two methods of creating a PC: the template method and the design method. The template method is intended to let you begin playing quickly and is recommended for those who are either new to role-playing games or who simply want to get into action as quickly as possible. This method involves simply choosing one of the pre-generated templates you will find in the color section of this book. They tell you everything you need to know to play that PC. They tell you its strengths and weaknesses, as well as about any special abilities and equipment. Just choose a template, name your character and come up with a description, and you are ready to start play.



Once you are familiar with the PC design process, you can customize these templates to suit yourself. The design method is slightly more complex and demands familiarity with the character creation process covered in this chapter. To create a PC, you should follow these simple steps:

CHOOSE A CONCEPT

The concept is the basic idea behind the character. It is best to come up with a fairly simple concept. You should be able to sum it up in a few words. You should consider the sort of role you would enjoy playing.

For example, you might choose to play an aging Scavenger bounty hunter or a runaway Promethean Panzer. In either case, the basic concept will suggest something about the way the character should be designed.

The aging Scavenger bounty hunter might have low physical characteristics but high skills and many advantages. The former would represent the deleterious effects of aging; the latter would reflect the benefits of his great experience.

The second example is a little more complicated. Did the Panzer run away because it wanted its freedom or because it ran amok and killed some citizens? In the latter case, it might have the psychopathic mental disadvantage. In any case, the Panzer would definitely have a robotic body and positronic brain.

Once you have come up with the basic concept, you should move on to the following steps, which might also suggest other skills, advantages and disadvantages.

CHOOSE A PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

You can describe your character's appearance in as much detail as you like. The easiest way is simply to pick three short words and phrases and apply them to your PC. These should be the first things that people usually notice about your character.

You could say your PC is short, broad and has a shaven head. Alternatively, your PC can be tall, lean and scruffy looking. You do not need to limit yourself to simple descriptions of height, weight and physique. Your PC can be described as having piercing blue eyes, a permanently cynical expression, and an air of world-weariness, if you want. What you're really describing is what other people notice about him or her.

CHOOSE PERSONALITY TRAITS

This is a role-playing game. That means you are playing a part in the game. While it is possible to play a PC that is simply an extension of your own personality, you will miss out on half the fun. What makes role-playing games so exciting is that you can play characters who are radically different from yourself.

In this section, you are describing what makes your PC tick. You can choose to go into as much detail as you like, but it's probably best to simply sketch in this section and flesh out the finer details during play. Simply pick three words that best describe your PC's personality. If he is sullen, vicious and greedy, this is the place to note it. If she is fair, honest and self-righteous, write it down now. These dominant traits are what usually guide your characters' actions.

CHOOSE STORY HOOKS

In this section, you leave some hostages to fortune. A story hook is something about your PC that the Narrator will be able to use to construct ongoing story lines. This should be a simple, obvious statement that describes something important that is going on in your life and affects how you interact with the world.

It could be that you are hunted by a Demon cult for interrupting one of their rituals. You could be searching for your long-lost brother kidnapped by Skavengers long ago. You could be looking for a cure for a terminal disease from which you suffer. You could be madly and unrequitedly in love. Whatever it is, your story hook should be something that you are comfortable with. After all it is a story line that will unfold over many playing sessions.

A story hook does not have to be gone into in too much depth. Sometimes it is better just to leave it vague so that the Narrator can fine tune it in the light of events in the game. If you wish, you can even leave this section blank, and leave your story hook up to the Narrator. He can come up with something suitable as the game sessions unfold.

When designing a character, you should jot down your rough notes and concepts on a piece of paper. Once you have a character you and your Narrator are happy with, you can transfer all the details to a character sheet. One of these is provided at the back of this book.

CHARACTER POINTS

Using the design method you have a number of character points to spend on your PC. These can be used to increase characteristics or to buy skills, advantages, equipment, psionics and other things. Normally, you start with 100 points to spend on your PC, although the Narrator can change that at his discretion.

In a way, PC points are like money: once you spend them, they are gone, so you should give careful consideration to what it is you want to buy.

ABBREVIATIONS

In the section that follows, the standard abbreviation used in the game is given directly after its description. For example, when you see strength (ST), that is telling you that the usual abbreviation for strength is ST.

CHARACTERISTICS (CST)

Characteristics are measures of your character's inherent abilities in a range of areas. They are broad measures of your PC's physical and mental capabilities. There are four basic characteristics in Waste World RPG: dexterity, strength, intelligence and psychic power. These help define how good your PC is in these areas.

Most characteristics are rated on a scale from minus three to plus nine, with negative scores being very poor and positive scores being very good. In the case of these characteristics, zero is the norm for all average humans. Two would be about the normal human maximum for our world.

Of course, the super-powered inhabitants of the deadly Wastelands are not limited as we would be. They are the products of millennia of mutation, genetic engineering and exposure to entropic radiation. They can be implanted with cybernetic systems and injected with combat drugs that boost their abilities far beyond those of normal people.

Purchasing characteristics is simple. Unless you spend points on them, all your characteristics start at zero. If you wish to increase a characteristic, you spend points on it according to the Characteristic Cost Table below. On the other hand, if you decrease a characteristic to below zero, you gain points that you can spend. For example, you wish to have ST -1. You check the Characteristic Cost Table and discover that the cost is -10 points. This means you gain 10 points.

You cannot spend more than 50 percent of your character points on any one characteristic unless you take a unique background, which explains how you managed to acquire such a high characteristic. For example, if you have a 150 points to spend (including disadvantages - see below), you cannot spend more than 75 points on a single characteristic without some sort of explanation. If you wanted a dexterity (DX) of four (Cost: 100 points), you might decide that your character had been used as a guinea pig for an experimental combat drug, which boosted his reflexes to superhuman levels. Or if you wanted a power (PW) of four, you could say that your character was descended from a long line of potent psychers. It goes without saying that all unique backgrounds must be approved by the Narrator.

It is perfectly permissible to spend more than 50 percent of your points on characteristics, providing you spend them on more than one characteristic. In the example given above, you could spend 75 points on DX, 10 points on ST and 30 points on PW, if you wished.

DEXTERITY (DX)

This is a measure of how well coordinated your PC is and how fast his or her reflexes are. It is also used as a bonus to many skill rolls and increases your chances of hitting in combat.

STRENGTH (ST)

This is a measure of how strong your PC is and how much damage he can do in close combat. It also determines whether your PC is sufficiently strong to use certain weapons. Strength also tells you how much your PC can carry without suffering an encumbrance penalty (see below). Your strength is added to any damage you do in close combat. If your strength is negative, it is subtracted from such damage.

CHARACTERISTIC COSTS

CST	COST
-3	-60 points.
-2	-30 points.
-1	-10 points.
0	0 points.
+1	10 points.
+2	30 points.
+3	60 points.
+4	100 points.
+5	150 points.

INTELLIGENCE (IN)

This is a measure of how clever and quick-witted your PC is. It also determines how quickly he learns and how well he solves puzzles.

POWER (PW)

Some claim power is the basic life force of the universe. Others claim that is an attunement to extra-dimensional energy sources. Still others say it is merely a measure of will power and luck. The truth is, nobody knows what it really is. They only know that it is essential if you intend to use psionic powers.

NEGATIVE CHARACTERISTICS

Negative characteristics give you back points and count towards your total of disadvantages. For more on disadvantages, see the section on them later in this chapter.

SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS

As well as the four basic characteristics, there are several special characteristics. These tell you many important facts about your PC.

MOVEMENT RATE (MR)

Movement rate is a measure of how fast your PC can move. That is partly accounted for by your physical condition and partially by your strength.

Your MR is equal to four plus your ST. If your ST is negative, you subtract it from four. This basic movement rate is also known as your BMR. It is possible to increase your MR by spending points (see below) but your BMR always stays the same.

WALKING

In combat, you can cover your MR in meters per combat round at a cautious walk.

Multiply your MR by two for a rough approximation of how fast you can travel at a brisk walk in kilometers each hour. Of course, this latter speed will be affected by terrain. Halve this speed for rough or hilly terrain, or if you are moving cautiously.

RUNNING

In combat, you can jog along at three times your MR in meters per combat round. Running flat out (and doing nothing else), you can move at six times your MR.

JUMPING

You can make a long jump of half your MR without a run up. If you make a run up, you can jump your full MR.

You can jump up to your MR divided by four in height.

CLIMBING

You can climb at half your MR per turn if you make a successful climbing roll. If you fail this roll, you can't move. If you fumble, you will fall unless you make a successful DX roll.

SWIMMING

If you possess the swimming skill, you can swim at half your MR per turn.

FLYING

If you possess wings, you can fly at 50 times your MR.

ENCUMBRANCE

Obviously, carrying heavy weights reduces your ability to move quickly. We use a simple encumbrance system to simulate this. Your Carrying Capacity (CC) is based on your ST. See the table below.

If you are carrying weight up to 25 percent of your carrying capacity (CC), there is no penalty. If you are carrying from 26 to 50 percent of your CC, you are encumbered. You should then halve your MR. If you are carrying from 51 to 100 percent of your CC, you are heavily encumbered. Divide your MR by four. If you are carrying more than your CC, then you cannot move at all except to stagger a few short steps.

You suffer a penalty of -2 on all your DX based skills when encumbered. When heavily encumbered, you suffer a -4 penalty on all your DX based skills.

For more information on how such penalties apply, see the section on how skills work.

To be absolutely honest, these rules are designed to stop PCs from toting around a ton of equipment. Normally, as long as what the PC is carrying seems reasonable, we don't bother with the encumbrance rules.

INCREASING MR

You can increase your character's basic MR by paying points. It costs two points per extra point of MR to increase your MR up to twice your BMR. It costs three points per extra point of MR to increase your MR up to twice your BMR and so on.

It is impossible for humanoid bipeds to increase their MRs to more than twice their BMRs without cybernetics, special powers, or some other form of augmentation. It is impossible for quadrupeds to increase their MRs to more than four times their BMRs without cybernetics, special powers, or some other form of augmentation.

**CARRYING
CAPACITY**

ST	(CC)
-3 or less	10 Kilos
-2	15 Kilos
-1	25 Kilos
0	50 Kilos
1	100 Kilos
2	200 Kilos
3	400 Kilos

For every +1 ST after 3 you double your carrying capacity.

LIFE FORCE (LF)

Life force is a measure of how much damage your PC can take. It is a measure of how tough and lucky your PC is. It is the thing that will keep you alive when the bullets start flying. When your LF rating reaches zero, you are in big trouble.

Your LF is calculated by a simple formula. Every humanoid or near humanoid PC has $10 + (ST \times 2)$. This means that you start with 10 LF and add twice your strength to that total. Of course, if your ST is negative, that can reduce your LF. If, for example, you had ST of -2, you would have 6LF.



The LF you start with is known as your basic life force (BLF). It is important because it affects the way you can purchase more LF. If your ST is ever permanently changed, not through the use of drugs or technology or the effects of some psychic power, then both your LF and BLF are recalculated on the basis of the new characteristics.

For example; if you permanently lost a point of ST through the effects of some attack, then both your LF and BLF would also be permanently reduced. Alternatively, if you gained a point of ST, then both your LF and BLF would be increased.

INCREASING LF

You can choose to increase your character's LF. The cost is based on multiples of your PC's BLF.

This costs two per additional LF up to twice your PC's BLF, three points per LF up to three times your PC's BLF, four points per LF up to four times your PC's BLF, and so on.

The only way you can increase BLF is to increase your ST.

BUYING SKILLS

Skills are forms of knowledge that your PC possesses that allow you to do certain things. You can purchase any skills you wish, although there are certain limits.

ADVANTAGES

You can spend points on advantages if you wish. You should read these carefully, as some of them are limited to members of particular groups. Where this is the case, it will say so in the text.

PSIONIC POWERS

You can give your character psionic powers if you wish. There are certain prerequisites for that. In order to have psionic powers, you must have a PW of at least +1, and you must pay 20 points to become a Psyker. Once you have done that you can purchase Psionic Powers..

SPECIAL POWERS

You can purchase any special powers you wish, provided you are prepared to face the consequences of being a mutant, a Hydran or an alien.

DISADVANTAGES

Disadvantages are things that work against your PC and make its life on Waste World harder. You may choose up to one-half the number of points you start with in disadvantages. You round that number down to the nearest five points. Any points you gain from disadvantages may be spent just like other character points.



For example, if your Narrator says you can spend 100 points designing your PC, you can take up to 50 points of disadvantages. If he says you can spend up to 150 points on your character, you can take 75 points of disadvantages. By taking disadvantages, you gain extra points to spend elsewhere.

EQUIPMENT

Equipment consists of all the gadgets and widgets and gear your PC starts out with. It includes stuff like cybernetics, symbionics and vehicles. Every PC starts with the following equipment: a rebreather mask, standard clothing, knife, rations for d20 days, 1,000 credits.

Any additional equipment must be paid for. You can get 100 credits worth of equipment for each point you spend. You do not have to worry about the availability of this equipment, providing your Narrator says it's OK for you to have the equipment. You PC may keep any credits left over once you have purchased all your equipment. You cannot spend more than 50 percent of your initial points on equipment.

Certain types of equipment are restricted. Rather than give a huge list of restrictions on who can possess what, we leave it up to individual Narrators.



The simplest rules of thumb are that only the people with the skill to use something can start play with it, and only people who belonged to the appropriate military can start play with military equipment.

For example, only Ikareans can start play with an Ikarean battlesuit. Only Prometheans can start with powered armor, and only if they have the battlesuit skill and a neurojak to interface with it. On the other hand, if the players can come up with good stories to justify letting their PCs have certain equipment, you should let them have it.

Equipment is generally good value for the points paid, but bear in mind it can always be lost, stolen or destroyed.

You get 1,000 credits to start with in a campaign where the players start with 100 points plus disadvantages. If the Narrator chooses to allow you to start with characters created with more points, then your starting cash should increase accordingly. You should get 10 credits per point your character is based on. So, for example, in a game where the players start by designing characters with 200 points plus disadvantages, they should start with 2,000 credits.

CYBERNETICS

You can choose to give your PC cybernetic systems if you wish. Only PCs who do not suffer from the Rejection Syndrome disadvantage can begin play with cybernetics without the Narrator's express permission, or the unique background advantage. You simply pay the credit price for the cybernetic systems.

SYMBIONICS

You can choose to give your PC symbionics if you wish. Only Hydran characters may start play with symbionics without the Narrator's express permission or the unique background advantage.

PURCHASING

When purchasing cybernetics, symbionics, special powers or psionic powers during character creation, you do not need to worry about any of the normal disadvantages that might ensue from gaining new powers. There is no chance of madness, mutation or rejection syndrome setting in when you buy these powers or forms of equipment. These only come into effect on purchases made during play.

CUMULATIVE COSTS TABLE

Level	Easy	Nml	Hard	x2	x3	x4	x5
1	1	1	2	2	3	4	5
2	2	3	5	6	9	12	15
3	3	6	9	12	18	24	30
4	5	10	15	20	30	40	50
5	8	15	23	30	45	60	75
6	11	21	32	42	63	84	105
7	14	28	42	56	84	104	140
8	18	36	54	72	108	144	180
9	23	45	68	90	135	180	225

COSTS PER LEVEL

This table gives you the cost of skills and powers at each level.

With skills in addition to the cost per level, you must pay the cost to have the skill at level zero. For easy skills this is 1 point. For normal skills, this is two points. For hard skills this is three points.

Psionic powers work in a similar way, except to purchase them at level zero, you must pay the base cost which is equivalent to their cost multiplier. This means you pay 3 points for a x3 power, 4 points for a x4 multiplier and so on.

CUMULATIVE COSTS

When designing a character, one very important concept to keep in mind is cumulative cost. When buying skills and powers, almost all costs are cumulative. This means that when you buy something at a given level, you must pay all the point costs in between the level you want and the level where you are. Let us say for example, that a certain skill costs its level in character points to buy. You already have the skill at level zero but decide that you want it at level 3. Cumulative cost means that you must not only pay for the skill at level 3 but also at level 2 and level 1 as well. That means it will cost you 6 points to buy. (1+2+3 points.)

Sometimes there will be cost multipliers as well. Astonishingly enough, the basic cost in pointsper level is multiplied by the cost multiplier to find out how much the final cost is. Normally when something has a cost multiplier, the cost is written as *x cost multiplier*. So when something has a cost of x 5, this means it costs 5 points per level and that this is a cumulative cost. Therefor level 1 would cost 5 points. Level 2 would cost 15 points, level 3 would cost 30 points etc.

You don't have to worry about all the math here, because we have provided this handy-dandy cost calculation table that has already done the work for you. When you want to find out how much a psi power is going to cost, you simply look at the level you want to buy and cross index it with the cost multiplier.

Not all powers use a cost multiplier. Only those with x before the number. For things without cost multipliers, you simply pay the cost given.

SKILLS

This is a list of all the skills mentioned in the Waste World rules. It gives a brief description of each skill and how and when it works. It is far from exhaustive; if you or your Narrator want to add any skill that is not here to the list, feel free.

PURCHASING SKILLS

Some skills are easy to learn, some skills are hard to learn, some skills are just average. In this section you will find such skills referred to as easy, normal or hard. This is known as the skill type. This will tell you how many points it costs to buy and increase them.

It costs one point to purchase an easy skill. It costs two points to purchase a normal skill. It costs three points to purchase a hard skill.

CHARACTERISTICS

Some skills are based on DX, and some skills are based on IN. When using these skills, you get to use the appropriate characteristic as a positive modifier.

NON-PROFICIENCY PENALTY

There will surely come a time when you will want to use a skill you do not possess. It may be firing a weapon you were not trained to use. It may be trying to drive a vehicle you have only seen someone else drive. If you do not possess a skill you want to use, there is a -8 penalty when trying to perform actions involving the skill.

Almost anyone can fire a gun even if they do not possess the skill. No one can perform complex operations in ultramancy without possessing the basic training. Where this is the case, you will be told that this skill cannot be used by non-proficient characters.

There are certain skills everyone has because they are so simple. These are: thrown weapons, unarmed combat, bludgeon.

SKILL LEVELS

It's all very well having a skill, but what if you want to improve it beyond the basic level of proficiency? Simple just buy skill levels. These are used as positive modifiers whenever you use the skill. Skills Levels are rated between one and nine.

One is the lowest skill rating above simply having the skill, and nine is the maximum. If you possess a skill without having any skill levels, then you have only the barest knowledge needed to make the skill work. If you possess a skill rated at nine then you are a master of it.

Normally when you have levels of a skill you simply write +whatever skill level you have on your character sheet after the name of the skill. If you have three levels with handgun, for example, you would write handgun +3 on your character sheet.

INCREASING SKILL LEVELS

As stated above, some skills are easy to learn, some are much harder. An easy skill costs 50 percent as many points to learn as normal, round up. A hard skill costs 50 percent more points as normal to learn (round up).

For example, to increase an easy skill from level four to level five would cost three points (five divided by two is 2.5 rounded up to three). To increase a hard skill from level four to level five would cost eight points (five plus 50 percent is 7.5 rounded up to eight).

SKILL DESCRIPTIONS

In the skill descriptions below, any skill with brackets in the title, such as religious lore (faith), indicates that when you buy the skill, you are buying it as it applies to the subject in brackets. In this case, you would choose the faith you had knowledge of. If you had city lore (metrozone), you would choose which metrozone you have knowledge of, etc. These different subjects are not proficiency slots (see below) of the same skill. You must buy two separate skills if you want to acquire city lore (Hydra) and city lore (Prometheus).

LIMITERS

Some skills are limited either by other skills or a characteristic. That means your rating in that skill cannot exceed the limit set by that other skill or characteristic. For example, forceblade is limited by your blade skill. This means that your rating with forceblade can never be greater than your blade skill. So, if your blade skill was three, then your forceblade rating could never be greater than three until your blade skill increased. Skills that limit other skills in this way, are amazingly enough called limiters.

PREREQUISITES

Certain skills have prerequisite skills. That means you must possess certain other skills or abilities to be able to use them at all. One example of this is aerobatics. In order to be able to use it, you must possess either a skill with a flying vehicle or with a flying battlesuit. Obviously, you cannot perform aerobatics unless you know how to get into the air in the first place. Where a skill has prerequisites, it will be mentioned in the text.

In order to purchase a skill that has a prerequisite, you must first possess that prerequisite. Unless it says differently in the skill description, prerequisites act as limiters on any skills that require them.

PROFICIENCY SLOTS

If you already know how to use an autopistol, chances are you will find it a lot easier to learn how to use a laser pistol. If you already know how to drive a car, it will take less effort for you to learn how to drive a truck. To simulate this, we have the concept of proficiency slots. Those are really subdivisions of a skill. When you buy a skill, you get one proficiency slot free and may purchase as many more as you like. Proficiency slots cost two points each.

When performing a skill that is a proficiency slot of a skill you already possess, even if you do not possess the slot, you do not suffer a non-proficiency penalty. It is as if you possess the skill at level zero. If you purchase a new proficiency slot within play (see the section on experience points), you automatically gain the same skill level with the proficiency as you have with the original skill.

For example: You have handgun skill at level five with the slug pistol proficiency slot. In a firefight, your pistol runs out of ammo and you have no more bullets. You snatch up a laser pistol. Since this is a proficiency slot of the pistol skill, you can use the laser pistol as level zero, without any non-proficiency penalty. After the firefight, you keep the laser pistol and spend a few days practicing with it. You also spend two experience points on the laser pistol slot. After you have done that, you can use the laser pistol at level five.

You get one proficiency slot free when you purchase a skill. If you purchase a special power such as claws or fangs, you automatically get a free unarmed combat proficiency slot with it.

DEXTERITY SKILLS

ACROBATICS

Type: Hard.

You know how to perform cartwheels, handsprings, tightrope walking and all sorts of other feats of agility and dexterity. Acrobatics can also increase your dodge by allowing you to perform superb evasive maneuvers. Acrobatics one to three allows you to add +1 to your dodge roll when making a dodge. Acrobatics four to six allows you to add +2, acrobatics seven and higher allows you to add +3. This is in addition to any bonus conferred by your dodge skill.

AEROBATICS

Type: Normal.

Prerequisite: Ikorean battlesuit or pilot

You know how to perform complex and impressive aerial maneuvers when you are piloting an aircraft or flying battlesuit of any sort. This can be particularly useful in a dogfight. It acts like acrobatics to improve your dodge under these circumstances.

BATTLESUIT

Type: Hard.

This skill is a measure of how well you can handle and repair a cybernetic battlesuit, such as those used by the Prometheans. When you are wearing a battlesuit, your other DX based skills are limited to your battlesuit level. So, if you have Rifle 6 and battlesuit 3, you will only be able to use your rifle at 3 while you are wearing the battlesuit. This skill cannot be used by non-proficient characters.

BLADE

Type: Normal.

Slots: sword, dagger, two-handed sword, chainsword.

This skill is a measure of how good you are with swords and daggers.

BLUDGEON

Type: Easy.

Slots: ax, club, mace, megamace, two-handed ax, two-handed mace.

This is a measure of how good you are with clubs, maces, axes and other impact weapons of this type.

BOW

Type: Normal

Slots: bow, crossbow

This skill tells you how good you are with these primitive, muscle-powered ranged weapons.

CLIMBING

Type: Easy.

This skill is a measure of how well you can climb up walls, cliffs and other vertical or near-vertical surfaces.

DODGE

Type: Hard.

This skill shows how good you are at dodging. It is used as a modifier against ranged attacks whenever you are aware of an incoming attack. It can be used as a modifier in place of your weapon skill in hand to hand combat, if it is greater. Dodge is limited by your DX+3. There is no non-proficiency penalty for not having this skill.

DRIVING (HOVER)

Type: Normal.

Slots: bike, car, truck, hauler.

This skill shows how good you are at driving ground-effect style ground vehicles.

DRIVING (SKIMMER)

Type: Normal.

Slots: bike, car, truck, hauler.

This skill shows how good you are at driving skimmer vehicles.

**FORCEBLADE****Type:** Easy.**Prerequisite:** blade

This is a measure of your proficiency with the deadly close-combat weapon known as a forceblade. It is limited by your Blade skill.

HANDGUN**Type:** Easy.**Slots:** autopistol, blaster pistol, holdout pistol, laser pistol, machine pistol.

This skill is a measure of how good you are with all pistols.

HEAVY WEAPON**Type:** Normal.**Slots:** autocannon, heavy blaster, heavy laser, heavy shredder, heavy machine-gun, megablaster.

This is a measure of how good you are with machine guns and other heavy automatic-fire weapons.

IKAREAN BATTLESUIT**Type:** Hard.

You know how to wear and use the potent flying battlesuits of the Ikareans. They cannot be used by anyone who doesn't have this skill. You also know how to perform basic repairs and maintenance on them. When wearing a battlesuit your other DX-based skills are limited to your battlesuit level. So if you have rifle six and battlesuit three, you will only be able to use your rifle at three while you are wearing the battlesuit. This skill cannot be used by non-proficient characters.

MARTIAL ARTS**Type:** Normal.**Prerequisite:** unarmed combat with brawling slot.

This is the highly sophisticated form of unarmed-combat training originally perfected in the Shogunate. This skill gives you a basic damage multiplier of one in hand to hand combat rather than the usual 0.5 that most people get when fighting with their bare hands. It is limited by your unarmed combat skill.

PICKPOCKET**Type:** Normal.

This skill measures your ability to pick pockets without being noticed. It is resisted with your victim's intelligence.

PLAY INSTRUMENT**Type:** Normal.**Slots:** by instrument type.

You know how to play a musical instrument and entertain people.

DRIVING (SUSPENSOR)**Type:** Normal.**Slots:** bike, car, truk, hauler.

This skill shows how good you are at driving suspensor vehicles.

DRIVING (TRACKED)**Type:** Normal.**Slots:** bike, car, truk, hauler.

This skill shows how good you are at driving tracked-ground vehicles.

DRIVING (WALKER)**Type:** Normal.**Slots:** bike, car, truk, hauler.

This skill shows how good you are at driving walking ground vehicles.

DRIVING (WHEELED)**Type:** Normal.**Slots:** bike, car, truk, hauler.

This skill shows how good you are with wheeled ground vehicles.

QUICK DRAW (WEAPON TYPE)

Type: Easy.

Slots: as for weapon type.

This skill lets you draw a weapon and attack with it in the same action phase, providing you make a successful quick-draw roll. You need a different version of this skill for each weapon you intend to quick draw with. Quick draw can really only be used with handguns and blades.

RIFLE

Type: Normal.

Slots: assault rifle, blaster, laser rifle, railgun, shotgun, shredder, sniper rifle.

This is a measure of how good you are with all rifle-type weapons.

RIDE (BEAST)

Type: Normal.

Slot: per beast.

This tells you how well you ride certain creatures. The name of the creature is given in the brackets. Riding is a limiting skill. When you are riding, your other DX-based skills are limited to your riding. So if you had riding three and sword five, you could only use your sword at level three while you were mounted.

ROCKET LAUNCHER

Type: Normal.

This skill tells you how good you are with rocket launchers and other such heavy weapons.

SHIELD

Type: Easy.

This skill tells you how good you are at parrying with a shield in close combat.

SPEAR

Type: Normal

Slots: one-handed spear, two-handed spear, bayonet

This skill is a measure of your skill in close combat with thrusting weapons like spears and bayonets. If you want to throw a spear, you should use your thrown-weapons skill.

SPECIAL WEAPON (TYPE)

Type: Hard.

Slots: Per weapon type.

This is a catch-all skill description for all those weapons that are so specialized that a special skill is necessary to use them, for example, special weapon (psi-blaster) or special weapon (ice gun). Where a weapon requires a special-weapon skill, that will be stated in the weapons description.



SECURITY SYSTEMS

Type: Normal.

This skill shows your ability at picking locks and overcoming security systems of all sorts.

STAFF

Type: Normal.

Slots: ripstaff, shockstaff, staff.

This skill shows how good you are with quarterstaves and related weapons.

STEALTH

Type: Normal.

This skill shows how good you are at moving quietly, using cover, and generally not being noticed.

SWIMMING**Type:** Normal.

This skill, actually rather rare, tells you how good you are at swimming, if you can ever find any water clean enough to swim in.

THROWN WEAPONS**Type:** Easy.

This skill is a measure of how good you are with thrown weapons such as grenades, stones, shuriken and spears. There are no separate slots for these. They all come under one category.

UNARMED COMBAT**Type:** Easy.

Slots: brawling, claws, fangs, horns, razor wheels, ripper-claw, spiked gauntlet, tail.

This skill is used as a modifier in hand-to-hand combat. The brawling slot is used when you use your bare hands and feet. Proficiency slots of this skill are also used with any form of natural weaponry, such as claws and fangs, and with glove-type close combat weapons such as ripperclaws and razor wheels.

WEAPON IMPLANT**Type:** Easy

Slots: One for each weapon type attached to the weapon implant or for each smart weapon you wish to use.

This skill is a measure of your ability with any smart weapon or with any weapon attached to a weapon implant on a cybernetic arm. Each weapon that can be attached to your weapon implant counts as one slot of this skill, making it very easy to master new weapons attached to it. For more on this, see the chapter on equipment.

WHIP**Type:** Normal.

You know how to use all kinds of whips and lashes.

INTELLIGENCE SKILLS**ACTING****Type:** Normal.

You know how to play a part both on stage and off. This will help you impersonate people when you use the disguise skill.

ALIEN LORE (SPECIES)**Type:** Normal.

You know all about a single alien race such as the Kroks or the Stygians. You understand their history, habits, patterns of behavior and weaknesses. These are not slots of the same skill. You need a different skill for each.

ANCIENT LORE**Type:** Normal.

You are knowledgeable about the history and deeds of the ancients. You can identify some of their artifacts with a successful roll. You will recognize their scripts and their works.

ANIMAL LORE**Type:** Normal.

You know all about the natural creatures of waste world, their history, habits, patterns of behavior and weaknesses.

APPRAISE VALUE**Type:** Hard.

You can usually tell the rough value of something after a careful appraisal. Your knowledge applies to jewels, artifacts and other often-traded commodities. The Narrator should make this roll for you, applying any modifiers he wishes for the rarity or otherwise of the object and your chances of knowing something about it. He is perfectly at liberty to give you a false value if the skill roll fails. Usually you are good at spotting fakes and forgeries. This skill cannot be used by non-proficient characters.

ARMORY**Type:** Normal.

This measures your skill and maintaining and repairing weapons systems of all kinds.

AWARENESS**Type:** Normal.

This is a measure of your awareness of your surroundings and ability to spot unusual things. It is used by the Narrator when someone tries to pick your pocket or ambush you. or in any other circumstances where a perception roll is called for. Awareness is limited by your IN+3. There is no non-proficiency penalty for not having this skill when making awareness rolls.

CITY LORE (METROZONE)**Type:** Normal.

You know all about one particular metrozone (Prometheus, Hydra, etc.). You know who the rulers are. You know who the major players are in its politics. You know about its history and technologies. While an ordinary citizen will be familiar with the main streets and the area in which he lives and other such general details, you know where the real dirt is. You know the city's dark underbelly and the fastest way between two points.

COURTIER

Type: Normal.

You know how to move in high circles. You know how to convey meanings with the flick of an eyelid and the stress on a single word. You know the language of diplomatic protocol, and you know what is and isn't done by the right people. You know how to toady to people and how to flatter them with maximum effect. This skill cannot be used by non-proficient characters.

CYBERSURGERY

Type: Hard.

This measures your ability at building, implanting and repairing cybernetic systems. This skill cannot be used by non-proficient characters.

DEMON LORE

Type: Normal.

You know all about the Demons, their history, habits, patterns of behavior and weaknesses.

DISGUISE

Type: Normal.

This skill enables you to disguise yourself as another person. There are some modifiers. It is very hard to impersonate a specific person unless you bear an uncanny physical resemblance to them. But you can carry yourself differently, alter your mannerisms and behavior in such a way as to make yourself unrecognizable and blend in with your surroundings.

FAST TALK

Type: Normal.

This skill is a measure of your ability to talk people into doing things not always in their best interests. You can con, sell, lie and cheat with the best of them if you have a high rating in this skill.

GAMBLE

Type: Normal.

This shows your knowledge at various forms of gambling for money and measures your skill with them. It is used as a modifier whenever you gamble, whenever you attempt to cheat, or whenever someone attempts to cheat you.

HEALING

Type: Hard.

This measures your skill at patching up and healing wounds and diseases, and of performing first aid on the wounded.

INTERROGATION

Type: Normal.

This skill is a measure of your ability to gain information from an unwilling prisoner or informant.

INTIMIDATE

Type: Normal.

This skill is a measure of your ability to inspire fear and cause people to think twice about crossing you.

LEADERSHIP

Type: Normal.

This skill is a measure of your ability to lead warriors in battle and inspire them to perform acts of heroism and bravery.

LORE: (SUBJECT)

Type: Normal.

This skill measures your knowledge of any particular subject. That can be as esoteric as the customs of ancient cultures or as banal as knowing the location of every illegal ultramancer in Prometheus. You should feel free to invent your own categories of lore for any not covered here.

MACHINE LORE

Type: Normal.

You are familiar with the construction and maintenance of the great machines: autofacs, large engines etc. This ancient knowledge is not common.

MEK

Type: Normal.

This skill is a measure of your ability to build and repair mechanical devices of all sorts. It is sometimes limited by other skills. For example, when repairing a robot, your mek skill would be limited by your robomancy skill.

NAVIGATOR

Type: Normal.

You know how to find your way across the trackless deserts of Waste World. You can tell your position from the stars, the rough lay of the land, etc.

POISON LORE

Type: Normal.

You are familiar with the manufacture and backgrounds of poisons. You will be able to recognize which poison killed someone from the symptoms (although some, of course, will require an autopsy).

You know which ones kill quickly and which ones kill slowly. You know which will paralyze and which will drive mad. You know how to create antidotes and you know the correct dosage to administer to get the desired effect. You may with the Narrator's permission be able to come up with your own poisons.

POSITRONICS

Type: Hard.

You know how to build, repair and reprogram positronic brains. This is a very useful skill when dealing with robots. This skill can only be used by those who know it. This skill cannot be used by non-proficient characters.

RELIGIOUS LORE (FAITH)

Type: Normal.

You are familiar with all the myths and dogmas of one particular faith. You can quote its scripture and sway its believers. You can debate about its mysteries with knowledge.

RESISTANCE

Type: Hard.

This skill enables you to resist any psionic power, such as domination or illusion, which acts directly on your mind. It acts as a negative modifier for any psyker attacking you. It has no effect on powers that manipulate external energies, such as cryokinesis and pyrokinesis. There is no non-proficiency penalty for not having this skill.

ROBOMANCY

Type: Hard.

This skill is a measure of your proficiency at constructing, repairing and programming robots. This skill cannot be used by non-proficient characters.

SAVOIRE FAIRE

Type: Normal.

This skill is a measure of your knowledge of the right clothes to wear, creating a good impression, and generally looking cool and glamorous.

SCHOLAR

Type: Normal.

You know how to study, how to find things and where to look things up in libraries. This skill lets you learn new lore quickly. It halves the experience point cost for learning new lore skills.

SEDUCTION

Type: Normal.

This skill is a measure of your ability to seduce members of the opposite sex or same sexual persuasion.

SHADOWING/ TAILING

Type: Normal.

This measures your ability to follow someone without being noticed in an urban environment. It is also a measure of your ability to spot people when they try to do the same to you.

STREETWISE

Type: Normal.

This is a measure of how you handle situations involving lowlife and street scum. It is an indicator of your "street smarts."

SURVIVAL

Type: Normal.

This is a measure of your ability to survive in the deadly deserts and zones of Waste World. To use this skill properly, you will need the proper equipment: a survival pack and other gear.

SYMBIONICS

Type: Hard.

You are familiar with the creation, growth and implantation of Hydran symbiotic grafts. These powerful living artifacts are used by many Posthumans in place of cybernetics and bionics. This skill allows you to repair and implant them. This skill cannot be used by non-proficient characters.

TRADE

Type: Normal.

You are skilled at bargaining and know how to get a good deal. When it comes to haggling, you use your trade skill as a positive modifier, and your opponent uses his trade skill as a negative modifier. If you are successful, your Narrator may allow you to negotiate discounts of up to your success level x 10 percent or even more in prices.

TRACKING

Type: Normal.

This skill is a measure of how good you are at following tracks and trails in a wilderness situation. If you succeed in your tracking roll by three or more, then you will be able to tell more than the basic details about the direction of the trail. You will be able to make a good rough guess at how many vehicles or individuals there were.

ULTRAMANCY

Type: Hard.

This measures your ability with the ancient art of entering and manipulating the mysterious computer controlled realms known as the Ultramundae. This skill cannot be used by non-proficient characters.



ADVANTAGES

Advantages are special abilities and unusual knacks that your character may possess that don't conveniently fit under any other heading. None of these powers are mutations or psychic abilities, and none of them shows up on any form of detector for such. These are normally only acquired during character creation. The cost given refers to their cost in character points.

AMBIDEXTROUS

You can use either hand just as well, and can carry a weapon in each hand and use both with no penalty for using the off-hand. This can be particularly useful if you lose the use of a hand during combat. **Cost: 10.**

ANIMAL FRIENDSHIP

Normal, unintelligent animals will not attack you unless extremely provoked. You get +4 reaction from such creatures. **Cost: 5.**

BEAST SPEECH

You can communicate in a simple nonverbal manner with all animals more intelligent than an insect. They may not help you or do what you want, but your message will get through. **Cost: 5.**

BERSERK

You are a berserker, often overcome by terrible rage in battle. While in this berserk state you are nearly immune to pain, cannot feel damage and are filled with a near unquenchable lust for battle. Whenever you enter combat, make an IN roll. If you succeed, you are fine, you do not go berserk. If you fail, then you are berserk. If you wish to go berserk, subtract 3 from your roll (increasing your chance of failure.) If your foes are over 50 meters away, then you can add3 to your roll, if you wish.

Once berserk, you will drop any ranged weapon you are carrying and rush to close with your foes, using whatever close-combat weapon you have available, or your bare hands (claws, whatever) if you have no close-combat weapon. While berserk, you will be unaffected by shock or stunning. You still take damage, but you will not stop fighting for anything less than an instantaneously fatal critical hit. You will still suffer the effects but you won't become unconscious. While berserk you will not parry or dodge or take any other defense action.

Once all your foes are down, you must make another IN roll. If you succeed, you calm down. If you fail, you will attack any friends within range. At then end of each combat round in which you are fighting a friend, you get another IN roll. If you succeed, you calm down. If you fail, you keep fighting. Once there is no one left in sight to fight, you will calm down automatically.



Once you calm down, you take the full effect of any critical hits. You start feeling pain again. If you took any critical hits, make a system shock roll at -4. If you fail it, you will fall unconscious. Going berserk leaves you drained, and until you have rested all your skill and characteristic rolls will be at -2. Only a good night's sleep will get rid of this. **Cost: 5.**

CATFALL

You always land on your feet when you fall, enabling you to take no damage from falls of up to 10 meters and half damage from falls greater than that. **Cost: 5.**

CHARISMATIC

You are a natural leader. People listen to what you have to say and are swayed by it. Your impressive personality means that you get +2 on all reaction rolls from NC's. This bonus also applies to all skill rolls in which you interact with other people: seduction, oratory, persuasion, etc.

Cost: 10.

DOUBLE JOINTED

You are amazingly limber and can bend your limbs in directions that they would not normally go. This will enable you to escape from many cuffs and bindings on a successful DX roll. You can also fold yourself up and squeeze yourself through any opening you can get your head through. **Cost: 5.**

HANDSOME/BEAUTIFUL

You are possessed of stunning good looks. Heads turn when you walk into a room. People stare. This confers considerable advantages in social situations where such things matter. It adds 2 to all your reaction rolls and on all skill rolls such as seduction, persuasion, etc. **Cost: 10.**

FAST HEALING

You are very resilient and heal damage at twice the normal rate. **Cost: 10.**

HARDY

You are tougher than most people. You get +3 modifier when making system shock and sudden death rolls. **Cost: 5.**

IMMUNE TO DISEASE

You are extraordinarily resistant to all forms of disease, including radiation sickness. They just don't seem to affect you. **Cost: 10.**

IMMUNE TO MUTATION

You are completely immune to all mutagenic affects. You will never mutate for any reason. You cannot possess or manifest special powers. **Cost: 10.**

IMMUNE TO POISON

You are immune to all forms of poisons. They simply don't affect you. Your ancestors obviously survived in the toxic Wastes. **Cost: 10.**

INNATE SENSE OF DIRECTION

You always know where you are with relation to some landmark: your home, the North Pole, east, west. Once you have followed a route, you can always retrace it. You never get lost. **Cost: 5.**

INVISIBLE TO MACHINES

For some reason, machine brains just don't see you. You don't show up on scanner, psychic detectors, etc. If there is a human watching through a machine, a camera or bionic eye, for example, they will see you and you show up in photographs. It is just that for some reason machine brains don't spot you. If you fire a weapon, they will detect the weapon and respond to the threat, but if you don't draw attention to yourself, you are safe. This may well be some form of psychic power but it doesn't register on any form of detector. **Cost: 20.**

KARMACHIP

Prerequisite: Samurai code of honor.

This advantage is available only to samurai. Once you possess it, you will automatically have the benefit of a resurrection contract, whatever befalls you. You do not have to pay money for this. It is a reward for your faithful discharge of your duties.

Of course, there are some drawbacks to this. You must behave with impeccable loyalty toward your feudal superior and must possess the samurai code of honor and never deviate from it. If the Narrator feels that you have, the Narrator will take away this advantage and you will not be resurrected when next you face the Lords of Karma. **Cost: 30.**

KEEN EYES

Your eyes are amazingly keen. +2 to all sight perception rolls. **Cost: 5.**

KEEN HEARING

Your keen ears grant you a +2 bonus on all hearing perception rolls. **Cost: 5.**

LIGHTSLEEP

You always sleep lightly and are very difficult to come upon unaware. You get your normal perception roll to spot anyone approaching you even when you are asleep. You come awake instantly and can act at once if you make your perception roll. **Cost: 5.**

PET

You have a powerful and unusual pet that you have reared from when it was young. This pet is no brighter than any normal animal, but it is totally dedicated to you, and will give its life to defend you if necessary. Of course, this is not all good news. There are many places which will not let you in if you are accompanied by one of these large animals.

There are more details about these animals in the Bestiary.

King rat **Cost: 5.**

Wastehound **Cost: 5.**

Robohound **Cost: 5.**

Biohound **Cost: 5.**

Deathbird **Cost: 5.**

Dragon tiger **Cost: 10.**

PSISNIFFER

You have a strange gift for knowing when psychic powers are used near you. Whenever a psi power is used within 20 meters of you, or whenever a energy being such as a Demon is within that range, you will know. **Cost:** 10.

PSYCHER

You have the ability to wield psychic powers. For more on this, see the section on psi powers. **Cost: 20.**

PSYCHICALLY INERT

You are completely immune to all forms of psychic power for good or for ill. They just don't affect you. You cannot possess psychic powers, so if you wish to keep any you already have then you must reroll this. You are not immune to psychic bolts or other such powers that work indirectly.

Cost: 15.

SENSE ENEMY

You are extraordinarily sensitive to the presence of certain creatures. You will simply know if one comes within 20 meters of you. You will even wake up if you are sleeping. This warning comes in many forms. You may feel sick or experience overwhelming dread. The hair on the back of your neck may prickle. You may develop a sudden uncontrollable twitch. There are various forms of this ability: sense Swarm, sense robot, sense mutant, sense Psi-Demon, sense psyker. **Cost: 5.**

SIXTH SENSE

By some strange means you can sense danger. Whenever you are about to be ambushed or taken by surprise, your Narrator should roll a d20 and add your IN. If the result is over 10, then he should give you some warning that an attack is coming and let you respond normally. This sense will also give warning of traps. **Cost: 10.**



UNIQUE BACKGROUND

You possess a unique upbringing that allows you to ignore some of the restrictions of character creation. Perhaps you were a non-Hydran who fought as a mercenary for the Hydrans and took your pay in symbionics. This enables you to begin play with symbiotic equipment even though you are not a Hydran. Or perhaps as the daughter of a wealthy Janusian merchant, you had a martial-arts teacher from the Shogunate, which allows you to begin play with knowledge of martial arts and the forceblade even though you are not a samurai.

Unique backgrounds should be negotiated with your Narrator. The ones given above would cost five points, but others that give you greater advantages might cost 15 or even 30 points. For example, being able to spend more than 50 percent of your points on a single characteristic would cost 15 points.

SPECIAL POWERS

Special powers are quite common among the folk of Waste World. They sometimes take the form of mutations; sometimes they are the common gift of alien life forms. They always show up on equipment that detects mutations, for they represent fairly wide deviations from the human genetic norm that such equipment is normally set to process. The cost given in the power descriptions is in character points.

MUTANTS

Mutants commonly possess special powers. These unfortunate also often possess the mutation disadvantage and the social stigma of being mutants. You do not need to take the mutation disadvantage if you possess special powers, but you will be a mutant and will appear as such to any pieces of equipment or special powers which detect mutants.

HYDRANS

The Houses of Hydra have long specialized in manipulation of DNA and the controlled use of mutation. They use these to gain many powers beyond those of normal mortals. Like Xenogens, they may possess mutant powers without the stigma normally attached to being a mutant, at least while they are in Hydra, for as long as they do not mutate. Hydrans who suffer from the stigma of mutation can be just as persecuted in that city as anywhere else. The genesculptors and symbionicists of Hydra are very adept at granting new powers to people.

XENOGENS

Xenogen is the name given to those alien races left stranded on Waste World by the Interdict. Xenogens can have mutant powers. In these cases, the mutant powers simply reflect the natural form of the Xenogen. Usually these powers are common to the entire species of Xenogen listed. Due to the alien's special genetic makeup, they will still show up on devices for detecting mutants. It is important to note that while many people are prejudiced against mutants, fewer are prejudiced against Xenogens. That may be because while people feel a certain amount of disgust when members of their own species deviate from the norm, they realize that an alien appearance is the norm for Xenogens.

SPECIAL POWERS LIST

ARMOR (AR)

Your skin may be scaly and reptilian. It may be thick and rhinoceros-like. It may be covered in a thick insectoid carapace or covered by intermeshing plates of bone or cartilage. It does not matter. You have armor that is cumulative with any other armor you wear.

Cost: x2 per AR. The cost is cumulative, so that AR 1 costs 2 points, AR 2 costs 6 points, AR 5 costs 30 points, and so on.

BAT SONAR

You have huge, bat-like ears and a bat-like pug snout. These allow you to find your way in pitch darkness by sonar location. You can track targets and perceive obstacles up to 100 meters away. You can make out outlines and fight even if you are blinded. **Cost: 10.**

BIG EARS

You have huge mobile ears. These may be pointed. They may flap like an elephant's. They may look unusual in some other way. They mean that you will always hear folk sneaking up on you and can snoop on conversations up to 20 meters away. **Cost: 10.**

BLOODHOUND SCENT

You can track by scent like a bloodhound. You can follow trails that are up to a day old with a simple perception roll. Trails that are over a day old involve a -3 penalty to the roll. Other factors, such as a confusing number of scents or the fact that the people you are tracking passed over or through water, might also increase the difficulty. **Cost: 10.**

BLUE EYE

One or both of your eyes is deep blue. It has no white or pupil or iris. You can see deep into the UV spectrum, and even in pitch darkness you will be able to make out details. **Cost: 10.**

BONELESS

You have a strange, eel-like sinuous appearance and can bend or move your body in any direction. You are not completely boneless, but you may as well be. You can roll up into a tight ball, wriggle out of cuffs and restraints and squeeze through really tight openings. **Cost: 10.**

BUG EYES

You have huge compound insect-like eyes. You can see 360 degrees and are impossible to surprise. **Cost: 10.**

CHAMELEON SKIN

You have a chameleon skin that changes to blend in with your surroundings. Opponents are at -4 to spot you when you remain still and at -2 to spot you when you move. **Cost: 10.**



CLAWS

You possess razor-sharp talons on your hands and feet. Add two to your damage modifier when you use your hands in unarmed combat. To use claws properly you need the claws slot in the unarmed combat skill. Fortunately this is free with this power. **ICost: 10.**

DEMONIC FORM

You are an immortal being of pure energy. Your basic energy form is a glowing translucent echo of what you once looked like, although this may have changed over the long years. You do not need to eat, drink, sleep or breath. You are immune to physical weapons such as swords and bullets, although energy weapons such as blasters, lasers and forceblades will still harm you. Psi powers and martial arts bugei do affect you. You can fly at 20 times your normal MR. You cannot lift things or manipulate material objects but you can burn them with your touch, doing 1M+ST damage in close combat. You cannot pass through forcefields or hermetically sealed doors, but if there is a tiny gap in any barrier, you can flow through it.

This power is available only at the Narrator's discretion. It is usually reserved for NCs. **Cost: 40.**

DARK SIGHT

You can see in the dark like a cat. So long as there is even the faintest hint of illumination, you can see. **Cost: 5.**

DOUGHBOY

Your body is a huge mass of folds of flabby flesh. You can absorb impacts really well and all non-energy weapons do half damage to you after they get through your armor. You move slowly, though. Reduce your MR by half. **Cost: 10.**

ELONGATED

You have extraordinarily long and thin limbs, neck and torso. This increases your height and reach by 50 percent, allowing you to reach past or shoot over the front rank in combat and adding +2 to your initiative in close combat. **Cost: 10.**

EXTRA LIMB

You have an extra limb. While really obvious, these do have the advantage of letting you use an extra weapon. Each time you take this power you gain another limb. If the limb has no real manipulative ability and is something like a tail, it costs 10 points. If you can perform fine acts with it, it costs 15 points. **Cost: 10/15.**

FANGS

Your mouth is filled with sharp and nasty fangs. These can be shark-like or they can be tiger or wolf-like or they can even be tusk-like. They give you an extra damage 1M attack in close combat. Using fangs comes under the unarmed combat skill. You get the fangs slot in this free when you buy this power. **Cost: 10.**

FILTERMOUTH AND EYE MEMBRANES

Your mouth is covered with a thin membranous filter and your eyes have transparent nictating membranes. These allow you to venture out into the Wastes without protective gear. You can keep your eyes open without being irritated in sandstorms. You are immune to flash grenades and gas. **Cost: 10.**

GIANT

This special power gives you ST four and eight to your BLF. It adds two to any attempt to intimidate but gives you a -2 modifier on reaction rolls from normal people. You are 50 percent taller than normal and 4 times normal weight. You have a very definite unusual appearance that cannot be concealed. You may find normal gear too small for you. Armor and similar equipment must be tailored to your greater bulk and costs twice as much as normal. Anyone attacking you with a ranged weapon gets +4 on his chances to hit. Anyone trying to spot you when you are hiding gets +4 to their perception roll. **Cost: 75.**

GILLS

You possess gills, either on your throat or behind your ears. These enable you to breathe normally underwater, even in the polluted rivers, lakes and seas of Waste World. **Cost: 10.**

HIDEOUS STENCH

You constantly emit an overpowering stench that is repulsive to all within 10 meters. You may smell of corruption, of rotting meat or just be terribly malodorous. You are at -2 on all reaction rolls from intelligent beings. On the other hand, all combatants within 10 feet of you are at -2 to all attacks and skills. **Cost: 10.**

HORNS

Large horns jut from your head. These can be curved or straight. They can be vestigial. Any but the vestigial sort give you an extra close combat attack at damage 1M. You may have to modify most sorts of head gear to let you wear it. In close combat, horns use in the unarmed combat skill. You get the horns slot in the unarmed combat skill free when you buy this power. **Cost: 10.**



HYPNOTIC GAZE

Your strange serpentlike eyes have pupils like those of a cat. When you gaze into somebody's eyes they have to make a PW roll (negative modifier equal to your own PW). If they fail this, then they stand rooted on the spot until next combat round. **Cost: 10.**

LEAP

You have mighty muscular legs which enable you to leap like a toad or a kangaroo. You can spring up to MRx10 meters in length with one leap. You can jump up to MRx5 meters in height. **Cost: 10.**

LONG LEGS

You possess vastly long legs that enable you to run at great speed. Double your movement rate. **Cost: 10.**

MIDGET

You are tiny, with short stumpy legs and limbs. Because of your small size, you can fit into places where most people cannot. Opponents are at -2 to hit you with ranged weapons, or perceive you when you hide. **Cost: 10.**

MINDSPEECH

You have the ability to communicate with any willing visible intelligence within 100 meters. This is just like speech but is totally silent, and only you and the person you are communicating with will hear what is being said as if by voices inside your head. This is not telepathy. It does not allow you to read anyone's thoughts. It only allows communication with willing subjects. If the target is unwilling for any reason, then you will be immediately cut off and unable to renew the link. Any form of psishield or psiscreen automatically prevents mindspeech. **Cost: 10.**

MULTIPLE EYES

You have multiple eyes scattered around your body. They glare from the back of your head and the palms of your hand. You have a very unnatural appearance. Subtract 2 from all reaction rolls. However, no one can sneak up behind you or take you unawares. **Cost: 10.**

MUTARCH TRANSFORMATION

Mutarch transformation is a power limited to the mutants of Kimera, who have long been exposed to the terrifying influence of the Eye of Khaos. It enables these mutants to transform themselves into towering monsters of incredible power.



When purchasing this power, you must design a separate mutarch form. You must take the giant special power plus up to any four special powers that you wish, normally including things like horns, tail, claws, etc. You buy these at half the normal point cost. Even though your mutarch form has all of these extra powers, they all count as part of the mutant transformation power for purposes of calculating how many powers you have.

When in mutarch form, you are truly repulsive and terrifying. People respond to you at -1 plus an additional -1 per power you possess, except when you are trying to intimidate them. Transforming into mutarch form costs one point of LF. You must pay one point of LF for every action phase thereafter you remain in mutarch form.

Mutarchs pay the price for their great power by burning their own vitality at a far faster rate than normal people. They tend to age more quickly.

If you have more LF in transformed form, damage is proportional when you switch back. For example, if you lose half your LF in transformed form, you will have half your normal form's LF when you switch back.

Cost: 20+ (The cost of giant and any other powers purchased/2).

POISON

You emit a powerful contact poison either from your skin or from your claws or fangs if you possess those. You can smear this on close-combat weapons or just communicate it with your moist, slimy touch. When you fumble trying to hit with a poison attack, your poison sacs are empty and will not recharge for another 24 hours.

Cost: 10. Plus a cumulative cost of 1 per level of poison plus the following cost multiplier based on the type of poison:

Blind:	x2.
Kill:	x3.
Phase:	x1.
Snooze	x2.
Staze:	x2.

PREHENSILE FEET

Your feet are just like hands. Your toes are long and segmented like fingers. You can use them to grip just like hands. You can hold weapons, swing from ropes or bars or manipulate the controls of a vehicle with your feet, leaving you free to use your hands for other purposes. **Cost: 5.**

RED EYE

Your eyes have no pupils, iris or whites. They are covered in a reddish film, which obscures all detail but which allows you to see into the infrared spectrum, perceiving all the shape and intensity of all heat sources around you. **Cost: 10.**

REGENERATION

You heal long-term damage very quickly, recovering from major wounds in one day without medical supervision. In addition, you can grow back lost limbs and organs. These take from d4 days for small body parts up to the size of a hand to d4 weeks for anything larger such as an arm. You cannot regenerate from any critical hit that kills you. If you possess this power, you can never have bionic implants. Your body simply rejects them. Characters with robotic bodies cannot possess this power. **Cost: 20.**

SHADOW FORM

You emit a shadowy field around your entire body that makes your features and outline very difficult to see. While this has the effect of making you very distinctive-looking among crowds or in a well-lit place, it makes you very difficult to spot in shadows or darkness. All opponents are at -2 to spot you under such conditions. They are also at -2 to hit you with all ranged attacks. **Cost: 20.**

SLIMY

You exude a thick, noxious-colored slime that oozes from every pore and covers your body, making it moist and foul to the touch. This makes you very difficult to hold or grip, and you can automatically slip free of all attempts to restrain you. If you generate poison, this mucous can be poisonous. **Cost: 10.**

SLITHER

The bones of your ribcage and chest are articulated like a snakes, allowing you to slither along flat to the ground. This enables you to move at full speed in a prone position. The weird malformation of your ribcage and its constant movement is obvious to any observer. You get +2 to all your stealth rolls and -2 to be hit with ranged weapons when moving in this fashion. **Cost: 10.**

SOUL LINK

You share a potent psychic link with one other person, (PC or NC, your choice, subject to Narrator's approval). This allows you and that person to use mindspeech when you are within 100 meters of each other. You do not have to be able to see each other; you just have to be in range. Beyond this range, each person in the link will always know if the other is alive, what direction they are going, and their approximate state of health (healthy, weak, wounded, etc.). In times of great stress, either person in the link can send out a brief one-word message, such as "help". Soul links are automatically blocked if either partner is within a psishield or psiscreen of any kind. Two player characters can share the cost of a soul link. Each pays half the cost. **Cost: 10.**





SPINES

There are two forms of this mutation. The first is that you bristle with spines like a porcupine. They cover your entire body and give you an extra 1M+1 attack in hand-to-hand combat. If anyone assaults you with fists or feet or attempts to grapple you in close combat, you automatically get to make a close combat attack against them using your spines for damage. This attack happens simultaneously with that of your opponent.

The second form is more limited. Rows of spines emerge from your forearms and you can flick and fire them at a range of up to 20 meters for 1M+1 damage. You have a bonus roll of these spines in each arm. They will grow back within one day.

If you possess the poison mutation, either of these forms of spine may be poisoned. **Cost: 10.**

SUCKERS

Your hands and feet are covered in suckerlike suction cups. Webbing between your fingers and toes curves around to form them. This means you can clamber up and down sheer surfaces without any handholds, and even move across ceilings, at half your normal speed. **Cost: 10.**

SYSTEMIC AUTOREPAIR

This is a special system that allows a robot to recover from system shock on its own. If knocked unconscious by system shock, the robot will regain consciousness and the ability to act within d6 hours, even if not treated by a robomancer. This system does not enable the robot to recover lost LF. These must still be repaired by a robomancer. **Cost: 10.**

SPIKED TAIL

You have a long, spiked tail. If you have the poison generation mutation then you can have a spiked stinger. Otherwise your tail grants you an extra attack at damage 1M+2 in close combat. You get the tail slot in the unarmed combat skill for free when you buy this power. **Cost: 15.**

TELESCOPIC NECK

You have a long, stalk-like telescopic neck, which can be extended up three meters. This is useful for looking over walls, etc. When not extended, your neck collapses into a series of wattled, overlapping folds of flesh. **Cost: 5.**

THIRD EYE

Right in the middle of your forehead grows your third eye. When opened, this allows you to perceive all psychic phenomena going on around you. You can see invisible creatures, spot hidden beings by their auras, and watch the psychic power flows as psychers use their abilities. You can spot Psi-Demons and those possessed by Psi-Demons. **Cost: 10.**

WEBBED FEET AND HANDS

You have webbed hands and feet, adapted for amphibious life. These allow you to swim at your full running speed if ever you can find a body of water sufficiently large for you to do so in. **Cost: 10.**

WINGS

You possess powerful wings and the muscles to use them. They can be bird-like or bat-like or even insectoid, at your choice. These mean that you can fly. **Cost: 20.**

PSI POWERS

Most people think that psi powers are one of the many mutations to afflict mankind since the Armageddon Wars. The truth is that they date back to before that age of terrible conflict and that psychers played a devastating part in those wars.

Psychers are a breed apart. They can tap into the basic energy flows of the universe and wield their power in many different ways. They can read thoughts, control men's minds, devastate armored vehicles with a gesture. They can fly, transport themselves instantaneously from place to place and move through obstacles unhindered. They can shield themselves with illusions, ward themselves with barriers of psychokinetic force, and blind the eyes of observers. On battlefields, they make terrifying foes.

Of course, this devastating power makes them suspect. Few normal people trust those who wield such seemingly supernatural energies. The superstitious believe them to be witches and sorcerers in league with the Demons. Even the most sophisticated and educated fear and hate them, for who wants to know a person who can read your innermost thoughts and secrets and can control your very actions?

Worse still, many people believe that psychers, by the very nature of their powers, are open to the influence of the demonic. The truth is even more frightening. Unless used with great care, psychic powers lead almost inevitably to madness and insanity. The more powerful the psycher, the greater the chance of insanity.

MINDBURNING

This is the worst fate that can befall any psyker. Most would find death preferable. It entails having all the power channels in their brain overloaded and burned out so that they can never be used again. It means the permanent and irrevocable loss of all their power. Once mindburned, a psyker will never wield power again. The secrets of mindburning are known only to the Guilds, who never talk about them, and to the Prometheans. It is thought that the Prometheans use ancient engines of force to perform this task. It is rumored that the Guild uses a day-long ritual performed by a group of magisters, although no one knows that for sure. The Prometheans use this punishment on any psyker who is captured in their city. The Guild uses this power only on the worst and most recalcitrant psychic criminals.

Once mindburned, a psyker becomes but a shadow of his former self. He is wan and listless and prone to depression. He can remember all his previous powers and gifts, and he mourns their loss. Many mindburned psykers become so depressed that they take their own lives or simply pine away.

BUYING PSIONIC POWERS

You need to have the psyker mutation to wield psychic powers. This costs 20 points. You also need to achieve a certain minimum level of power before you can use psionic powers; thus you can only gain psionic powers if your PW is greater than 0.

Once you possess the psyer special power, you can buy individual psionic powers.

PSI POWERS

There are many different psi powers, and no psyker known possesses them all. Each is different, each grants a specific ability and each can be modified by the psyker's power level. To simply possess the potential to use a power, you must buy it. This costs points equal to its cost multiplier. So a power that costs x3 will cost you three points to purchase.

Simply buying a power isn't enough. That means you have it only as a dormant potential power. In order to be able to use a power, you must buy psionic power levels with it.

PSIONIC POWER LEVEL (PL)

Although all psychers possess basically the same mutation, which enables them to manipulate the psychic energy they call the power, not all of them are of the same strength. Some can barely wield enough power to light a candle. Others can destroy armored vehicles.

All psychers in Waste World have a psionic power level (PL) between dormant and level nine with each of their powers. The PL tells you how strong the psycher is with that power. The higher the rating, the greater their strength. It is perfectly possible, indeed quite likely, that over time you will gain far higher PL with some powers than with others.

In addition, the Psychers Guild recognizes four distinct levels of power, known as the levels of mastery:

Psychers who have no PL with a power are said to be dormant. The power is there but it cannot be used. The psycher will register on any machine or test designed to spot them even if this is the only power they possess.

Psychers of PL one through three are known as acolytes.
Psychers of PL four through six are known as initiates.
Psychers of PL seven through nine are known as magisters.

These are important distinctions, since between each level there can be huge jumps in ability. Your level of mastery can affect everything from range to duration and effectiveness of your powers.

INCREASING PL

In order to increase your level with a psionic power, you must pay the level you want to achieve times the cost multiplier. This is a cumulative cost, so you have to pay for all the levels between the one you have and the one you want to reach.

For example, if you have a x4 power at level five and you want to take it to level six, this would cost 24 points (the level you want to achieve times the cost multiplier.) When designing a character, the easiest way to deal with this is to look at the Cumulative Cost Table.

MADNESS

Psychic powers work by burning new pathways into the neural paths of the brain. That can have a very disruptive effect on the minds of students, since the delicate harmony of the brain can be destroyed by such radical changes. Down through history, this has led to psychers being driven mad and causing much havoc. That is one reason they are so suspect among the common people.

Whenever you gain a new psi power, you must make a madness roll. The positive modifier is your IN, the negative modifier is the number of psi powers you already possess. If this roll fails, you will gain an insanity (see the section on disadvantages.) If you already possess an insanity, it will increase one step. (If you have more than one insanity, then the Narrator will choose which one is increased.) Each time you fail a madness roll, your insanity will increase one step. If you are already at the third step and you gain an insanity, your character becomes completely insane and is removed from play, becoming, in effect, an NC. You must create a new character.

MAXIMUM NUMBER OF PSI POWERS

There is a limit to the amount of psionic talents that even the most powerful brain can handle. This is partially dependent on natural abilities such as intelligence and determination, but it can also be increased by training. The maximum number of psi powers any psycher can ever have is equal to his IN plus PW+3.

USING PSIONIC POWERS

All psychers generate psychic energy equal to their PW every action phase. This energy powers all their psychic abilities. It is the basic fuel of their powers. When you use a PW you are said to activate it. Once a power has been activated it stays on until it has been canceled. A power that has been activated and has not yet been canceled is said to be maintained.

Activating a psionic power normally takes one action phase. For more on action phases, see the section on combat.

A psionic power costs energy equal to its level of mastery to use. To use a power at acolyte level requires one point of psychic energy. At initiate level, it requires two points of psychic energy. At magister level, it requires three points of psychic energy.

So if you had a PW of three, you could use one power at magister level each action phase, or you could use three powers at acolyte level, or you could use one power at acolyte level and one power at initiate level.

Your PW limits the number of psionic powers you can have activated. If you want to activate another power and this would put you beyond the limit of psychic energy you have, then you must cancel one of the powers you are maintaining.

For example, you have a PW of one. You are using it to maintain your psychic shield at acolyte level when suddenly you fall over a cliff. In order to activate your Levitation ability, you will need to cancel your psychic shield.

Fortunately, you can automatically cancel a psi power you are maintaining whenever you wish.

DURATION

In almost every case, a psionic power, once activated, will continue to operate for as long as you maintain it or until you are stunned, fall asleep, lose consciousness or are killed.

BURNOUT

You cannot run your psionic powers forever without taking a terrible toll on yourself. If you keep a power activated for more than eight hours without sleeping or meditating for at least eight hours with the power cancelled, then you will lose a point of PW. That applies even to those who do not normally need to sleep or rest. This process is called burnout.

PW LOSS

Some psionic powers are so draining that they actually consume PW and impair your ability to generate more psychic energy. Where this is the case, it will say so in the text. When this happens, it takes a day of total rest and meditation to return your power to normal. Until this happens, your PW will be at the new reduced level.

CONCENTRATION

Many powers require concentration to make them work. This is particularly true in the early stages of learning to use a power. If a power needs concentration to make it work, then it is subject to the following rules.



DATA CORE ACCESS



SECURITY RISK ALERT

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ALL SYSTEMS GO

INFODUMP WARNING

FLOWLINK INTENSITY 7

CHARACTER GENERATION





You must stand still and focus your mind entirely on using the power. All other currently operating powers must be canceled. You cannot move (unless the power you are concentrating on is a movement power, in which case you can use it to move.) You cannot speak or use a weapon. You may make certain gestures needed to help you focus the ability but that is all. Your concentration will be broken if you take damage, are stunned, or one of your mental disadvantages is triggered. If your concentration is broken, then the power you are activating will automatically be canceled.

Maintaining a power that requires concentration over a long period is a tiring and emotionally draining task. If you maintain a power which requires concentration over a long period, the Narrator may ask you to make a ST roll to see whether you can keep up the concentration. If you fail this roll, the power is canceled. If you succeed and continue, he can ask you to make another roll. If you fail this time, the power will be canceled and you will suffer one PW loss. The exact nature of these extended time periods is left up to the Narrator. The strain will vary with circumstances. It is a lot easier to maintain your concentration when holding a glowglobe aloft in a quiet temple than it is to use your telekinesis to hold your best friend above a pit of snakes while he disarms the doomsday device, and the villain's bullets ricochet all around you.

TARGETING

Unless it says differently in their description, most psychic powers can be targeted on any foe in sight. You must be able to see or otherwise detect a foe to be able to target him. There are no range modifiers.

Weapons that unleash some form of bolt or energy can be targeted using your DX or your thrown-weapon skill.

When it says you must contest with a target, you roll a d20, adding your PW and PL with the power. You subtract your target's PW and PL. If the result is greater than 10, you succeed. If the result is 10 or less, you fail.

RESISTING PSYCHIC POWERS

Some psychic power can be resisted. This means the target gets to make some kind of characteristic roll to escape some or all of their effects. In addition, those psionic powers that affect a target's mind can be affected by the resistance skill. Where a power can be resisted, it will say so in the text.

DAMAGE

All damage given here in the form of $xM+PW$ means that x is the damage multiplier and PW is the damage modifier. So, for an example, an attack given as $2M+PW$ has a damage multiplier of 2M plus PW. All damage given in the form of $d6+PW$ means that you should roll a six-sided die and add your PW. Or whatever type of dice is given.



PSIONIC POWERS

ABSORPTION

cost: x4.

You have the power to absorb energy directed at you and at higher levels and redirect it to your own advantage. You can even absorb the kinetic energy of bullets, negating their ability to harm you. This power can be used as a response action. See the section on combat for more details.

Acolyte: When you take damage, you can automatically negate up to your PL in damage points from any source. To activate and maintain the power at this level, you must concentrate.

Initiate: Whenever you take damage, you can not only negate your PL in damage, you can also convert the energy directed at you into temporary LF points. This only works if the damage inflicted is less than the damage you can absorb. If any damage gets through your absorption, you do not gain the LF points. This LF lasts for one hour, and then your body naturally dissipates the energy.

Magister: You can invoke an absorption field for up to your PL in meters around your body. This will protect all within it, and allow you to absorb the energy of all weapons directed at them as if it were directed at you. If this damage exceeds your PL you will gain no LF.

ANIMATE DEAD

Cost: x5.

You have the power to temporarily animate the corpses of the dead, bringing them to life as zombie puppets totally and mindlessly obedient to your will. All of these zombies will have the same statistics and powers and will retain none of the skills or abilities they possessed when alive.

Acolyte: You can animate up to your PL in zombies, provided that the bodies are within 60 meters of you. These bodies must be humanoid and approximately human-size or smaller.

You have a psychic link with these creatures and you can, with concentration, see through their eyes and talk through their mouths. If the zombies go beyond your PLx10 meters, then they will automatically cease to be animated and will flop to the ground. You will then have to re-animate them. The zombies will stay animated for as long as you maintain this power. At this level, the power requires concentration.

Initiate: You can animate up to your PLx10 in humanoid zombies, provided that the bodies are within 120 meters of you. These zombies will remain animated until they pass beyond 120 meters of you.

Magister: You can use your powers to create permanently animated zombies. You can create up to your PL of these, provided the bodies are within PLx10 meters of you. They will remain animated no matter how far they travel from you. You will always be aware if one is destroyed, even though you will not be able to see through their eyes or talk through their mouths unless they are within PLx100 meters of you.

You can have them obey simple, one-sentence commands such as: enter the village and kill everyone you find there, or kill anyone except me, or people wearing the same uniform who enter this chamber. You do not need to maintain these zombies once animated. However, you must invest one point of your own Life Force in them. You lose this LF for as long as the Zombie is animated. If the zombie is slain or you reclaim the LF, then you get the LF back. If you choose to reclaim the LF then the zombie ceases to be animated.

Zombies are ST +1, DX 0, IN -3, PW -3, LF 10. They are wearing whatever armor they had when they died and carrying whatever weapons they had when they died. You can choose to equip them otherwise if you have the equipment to give them. They use all weapons at skill level 0 and will fight until their LF reaches zero, when they will cease to be animated. They never take Panic Tests and are immune to all weapons and powers that affect thoughts or emotions.

CLAIRVOYANCE

Cost: x3.

You can detach a psychic eye from your forehead which will float invisibly and intangibly away from you whilst still allowing you to view what is going on. This eye can only be blocked by psiscreens. Contact with the eye will be lost if a psiscreen comes between you and it. It can only be detected by those with psi sense. You can use certain psionic powers such as telepathy and teleportation through the eye.

Acolyte: Your eye has a range of PLx100 meters. It can travel 100 meters per combat round. At this level, use of the power requires concentration.

Initiate: Your eye has a range of (PL-3)x1,000 meters. It can travel up to 1,000 meters per combat round.

Magister: Your eye has unlimited range and can travel at up to (PL-6)x100 kph.

CRYOKINESIS

Cost: x5.

You have the psionic power of lowering the temperature around you. You can use this in many different ways.

Acolyte: As long as this power is active, you can ignore any variation in temperature around you from 100C to absolute zero. You can generate a zone of cold around you at a range of 10 meters per PL. Anyone within this zone will take PL damage per combat round. Armor counts against this. You can freeze the ground, making it slippery. You can touch someone in combat for 2M+PW+PL freezing damage. You must roll to hit, as usual.

Initiate: You can fire a single bolt of cold at anyone you can see. This does 2M+PW+PL damage.

Magister: You throw up to your PL bolts of cold per turn, doing 2M+PW+PL damage.

DEMON BINDING

Cost: x5.

This power enables you to bind all forms of energy beings such as Demons to your will. You do this by psychokinetically manipulating their energy forms. You can use this power in various ways to harm or control them and also to exorcise them.

Acolyte: You can use this power to tear and rend an energy being. You can blast them with 2M+PW damage. You use your PL as a modifier to the hit roll and there are no modifications for range. You can use this power to blast an energy being directly, without harming any living body it may be possessing.

Alternatively, you can pin down an energy being to one spot for PL hours by holding its energy form in place. To do this you must make a success roll, pitting your PL+PW against its PL+PW. Lastly, you can exorcise an energy being from any living creature it may be possessing. You must contest your PL+PW against its, and if you succeed, it will be driven forth from that body and unable to possess it again for at least one hour. At this level, the power requires concentration.

Initiate: You can do 3M+PW disruption damage to energy beings using your blast. You can also bind them into an object such as a stone or a casket indefinitely if you can make a success roll pitting your PW+PL versus theirs. They will be bound within the object until it is broken or shattered. They can still communicate telepathically with anyone who comes within their range. Certain Psi-Demons can be bound and then bargained with, performing a single service for their freedom. You can also use this power to bind a demon into a body it has possessed, stopping it from leaving at will.

Magister: At this level, you are sufficiently skilled to perceive, bind and weave the energy flows that controls an energy beings thought patterns. This will enable you to bind them to your will and control them. You must pit your PL+PW against theirs, and if you are successful, they are bound to obey you for PL days. You can never have more than your PL in energy beings bound to your will at one time. Binding an energy being this way is extremely dangerous, for once they are free they will bear you unrelenting enmity. Fortunately, at this level of mastery you are capable of doing 4M+PW disruption damage to their energy forms.

DISPEL

Cost: x3.

This is a general purpose dispel that can be used against any psionic power within range. It allows you to attempt to dispel any psionic power being used within your vicinity. It can be used as a response action. See the section on combat for more details.

Acolyte: Once activated, you get to use your PL+PW+1 to attempt your dispel. The range is 10xPL meters. At this level, the dispel requires concentration.

Initiate: Once activated, you get to use your PL+PW+2 to attempt your dispel. The range is 100x(PL-3) meters.

Magister: Once activated, you get to use your PL with the dispel+PW+3 to attempt your dispel. The range is 1,000x(PL-6) meters.

DOMINATION

Cost: x5.

This power enables you to dominate the will of another living being and force them to do what you command. It is obviously more difficult to control an opponent who is wary and who has all his attention focused on defending himself, so any foe who is already in combat with you gets +4 to his resistance rolls.

Acolyte: You can dominate one person at a time. You must be within 10 meters of your target. Roll a d20 and add your will power and power level. Subtract the target's PW, PL (if any) and the level of any psishield he may possess. If the result is greater than 10, then the target is under your power and will obey any command you give. If such a command would lead to self-destruction, then the target automatically becomes free of your influence. At this level, activating the power requires concentration, but it can be maintained without concentration once a target is successfully under your control.

Initiate: You can dominate up to three people at a time. Otherwise, the psi power is used as above, taking the highest resistance roll of any of the victims and adding one to it for each target above the first. If you use this power on a single target, and order him to do anything otherwise self-destructive, then you must roll again to dominate his will. If you are controlling a group of individuals, then they are automatically freed from your influence.

Magister: At magister level, you can dominate as many people as you wish. The range of your power is 60 meters. The group's resistance is calculated from the best of the targets, with +1 added for every two additional targets. If controlling only one individual, you can even order him to do obviously self-destructive things. If controlling a group, you must roll again.

There is an absolute maximum number of people any one psyker can control at a given time. This is 10 times his PL. If he exceeds this, the people he took under control earliest are the first to slip from his domination.

ELECTROKINESIS

Cost: x5.

You have the power to redirect electrical energy at will. You can use this power in several different ways.

Acolyte: You can lash out with electrical blasts. These potent lightning flashes can strike a single target at up to 100 meters per PL, doing 1M+PW damage. You roll to hit, using your PL as a positive modifier. There are no range modifiers. Electrical blasts ignore metal armor unless it is insulated. They do half damage to people in insulated armor.

Initiate: You can generate electrical bolts of 2M+PW damage. Range is 100 meters per PL. You can drain the power from any one Drakonium Power Cell (DPC) or array of DPCs within PL meters, rendering them useless. All the energy they contain will be drained, and any device they power will be rendered nonfunctional. The maximum size of the DPC array you can drain is equal to 2xPL.

Magister: You can generate electrical bolts of 3M+PW damage. Range is 100 meters per PL. You can also directly control the flow of electrical energy around you, preventing DPC-powered weapons and devices from working. You can do this over an area of 10 meters per PL per PW point spent. This effect is temporary and lasts only one combat round.



EMOTION CONTROL

Cost: x5.

You are a natural empath, able to read the emotions of those around you, the way other people can read books. You have the power to sway the emotions of individuals and groups, transmuting fear into courage, love into hate, or magnifying annoyance into blinding rage. The difficulty of doing this is modified by the present emotional state of your targets. Generally speaking, if you are working with the mood of a group, turning anger into rage, there will be a bonus of up to +2. If you are working against the mood, turning a crowd against their beloved leader, then there will be a penalty of -4 or more. The more people you try to affect, the more difficult things will become.

One person:	No penalty
Two To Four:	-1
5-10:	-2
11-20:	-4
21-40:	-6
40-80:	-8
80+:	-10

Acolyte: You can read strong emotions such as fear, hatred or love in anyone within PLx5 meters of you. This can be blocked by psishields or even by good self-control.

You can alter the mood of all within PLx5 meters of you.

Initiate: As above, but the range is PLx10. You can detect subtle and complex emotional states.

Magister: As above, but the range is PLx100.

HEAL

Cost: x4.

You possess the power of psychic healing, which enables you to repair organic damage in human beings. You stimulate the body's self-repair mechanisms to superhuman levels.

Acolyte: You can repair your PL+PW long-term damage simply by touching the person you wish to heal. This power is extremely draining and will cause you to lose one LF. At this level, the power requires concentration.

Initiate: You can regenerate lost limbs and body parts by touching them. To do this, you must make a success roll, adding your PL. The difficult factor is at least six and may be greater at the Narrator's discretion. It takes limbs about one month to grow back. Eyes and destroyed organs take about one week from when the process begins. This use of the power is exceedingly draining and causes a PW loss of one. Regeneration requires concentration at this level. Normal healing does not. This power can also be used to heal major wounds on the spot.

Magister: You can heal brain damage and other complex forms of damage. You can also bring the recently-dead back to life, if you can reach them in time. You can heal someone who is dead, bringing them back to life with one LF, if you get there within your PL in hours. The difficulty factor for this is nine. You are only allowed one attempt. This use of the power is extraordinarily complex and draining. It causes PW loss of two and requires concentration.

ILLUSION

Cost: x5.

You can create subtle and complex illusions, projecting them directly into the brains of your targets. At higher levels, these illusions are capable of causing damage if believed. These illusions can be up to PLx10 by PLx10 by PLx10 in dimension with respect to length, height and breadth.

Acolyte: You can project visual illusions at a range of up to PLx50 meters. These can be of anything you imagine. If touched, they will be dispelled and vanish.

Initiate: You can add auditory and olfactory components to the illusion. Anyone touching them will know them to be unreal but they will not vanish.

Magister: You can add a tactile component to your illusions and they are capable of doing actual physical harm to anyone who believes them. When checking to see whether they are believed, you pit your PL+PW against theirs. If checking for large groups, use the highest PW+PL+ any psiscreens in the group.

INVISIBILITY

Cost: x5.

You are capable of misdirecting the perceptions of anyone trying to spot you. This power actually works on the perceptual centers of your target's brains and thus will work on those whose primary senses are sonar, energy detection, etc., as well as sight. You cannot attack and remain invisible.

Acolyte: You can render yourself invisible. Anyone aware that something is there will be able to spot you if they make a perception roll at minus your PL. They can only do this if you do something to give yourself away or if they were looking at you when you disappeared. At this level, activating and maintaining the power requires concentration.

Initiate: You can render yourself invisible without concentration.

Magister: You can render yourself and up to your PL other people invisible.

LEVITATION

Cost: x4.

You can use your psychic powers to levitate yourself up into the air. This allows you to fly at considerable speed.

Acolyte: You can fly at a speed of up to PLx20 kph. You can carry up to 100 kilograms additional weight per power level. This can include other characters you are holding onto. At this level, the power requires concentration to activate and maintain. You can still move using the power but you can do nothing else.

Initiate: You can fly for one hour at a speed of 100 kph per power level. Your powers protect you from the effects of traveling at such high speed.

Magister: You can fly for up to one hour a speed of 1,000 kph per PL-6.

LIFE DRAIN

Cost: x5.

You are capable of sucking a person's life force from them and feeding upon it. In order to do this you must touch them. Armor will not stop this power, nor will anything that affects physical damage. Psiscreens protect against this power the way armor protects against physical damage.



Acolyte: You can touch someone and drain their life force. In order to touch them, you must hit them in close combat. Once you do, you automatically inflict your PL in damage by spending one PW point.

Initiate: You can drain someone's life force and use it to add to your own. Half the LF points you drain can be used to heal any damage you have taken.

Magister: You can drain a person's life force at no cost in PW points. You can add all the LF points you drain to your own to repair any damage you have taken.

MIND LINK

Cost: x3.

You can create and maintain mind links between up to your PL+PW in people. All the people who are to be linked must be physically present and touching hands for the link to take effect. Once established, these links have unlimited range as long as you maintain them. You must always be part of the chain. People in one chain are not linked to people in another, even if you are part of both. They can relay messages through individuals who are part of both chains, but cannot talk directly. If a person who is part of a chain ventures within a psi-screen, he automatically drops out of the chain and does not rejoin when he re-emerges.

Acolyte: Each link in the chain can speak directly to any other over any distance. In addition, any member of the chain will know when another member drops out, is badly hurt, or killed.

Initiate: By concentrating, any member of a chain may look through the eyes and hear with the ears of any other member of the chain. This concentration leaves them incapable of doing little else.

Magister: By concentrating, any members of the chain may share their LF with any other links of the chain. This is entirely voluntary. Transferred LF can only be used to heal damage already taken.

POSSESSION

Cost: x5.

You have the ability to take over the bodies of living things and use them as if they were your own. If the body you are possessing dies, you will be cast from it and returned to your own. While you are in possession of another's body, your own body is vacated and vulnerable.

Acolyte: You can possess the body of any individual within PL meters, and can remain in control of it as if it were your own, so long as it stays within PLx100 meters of your own body. Taking possession requires a contest between your PL+PW and your targets. You will not have access to any of the victim's skills or memories. At this level, the power requires concentration to activate and maintain.

Initiate: As above, but the range you can take possession over is (PL-3)x10 meters. The range you can maintain possession over is PLx1,000 meters.

Magister: You can take possession of anyone you can see. You can maintain possession over any distance and there is no limit on duration, save that your own body will die of dehydration or starvation unless it is taken care off.

PRECOGNITION

Cost: x3.

You have the ability to see into the future. This power is far from reliable and takes the form of visions, oracular prophecies and prophetic dreams. You are very sensitive to potential disasters. This power can be used as a plot device by the Narrator to give you warnings and forebodings of upcoming events he may want you to look into. This ability can come on spontaneously, giving you warning flashes and visions of dreadful omens.

Acolyte: You sometimes get flashes of events that will cause you, or your immediate companions, danger or harm. Whenever such a thing is likely to happen, the Narrator should make a success roll using your PL as a positive modifier. If you succeed, he should give you a premonition of danger.

Initiate: You can drop into an oracular trance and get flashes of information concerning any upcoming events you choose to inquire about. This will give a vision, sometimes cryptic, of what may happen. Just remember that there are many possible future time lines and that the Narrator is perfectly within his rights to tell you that the future is too cloudy to be perceived.

Magister: You will often get flashes of big upcoming events that may affect you, your friends, your homeland or the world. These are the sort of grand visions that may start you or your minions on a quest to forestall a terrible doom. To be frank, this variant is most often given to NCs in order to kick-start plots, but it can be just as useful to the Narrator for a PC to have it.

PSI SENSE

Cost: x2.

You have the power to detect the use of psionic powers within your immediate vicinity. As your mastery increases, you are capable of detecting the possession of psychic powers, even if they are latent and their owner had yet to discover them. You can also easily spot active psionic devices and beings, even if they are in possession of another's body.

Acolyte: You will sense it if any psychic power is used within PLx100 meters of you. You can see active psi-screens and other such devices and will be able to see that someone is possessed by psionic means or by energy beings.



Initiate: By concentrating, you will be able to detect any active psionics or psionic power sources within PL kilometers.

Magister: You can tell just by looking at someone whether they are a psyker or not. You do not even need to have the power active to do this; you can simply do it.

PSIONIC BLAST

Cost: x5.

You can focus all your psionic energies and unleash them in a terrifying wave of pure psychic power. A crackling aura of energy surrounds your forehead and then is unleashed as bolts of pure force. With all psionic blasts, you must still roll to hit, using your PL as your skill level, and there are no range modifiers.

Acolyte: You can fire up to your PL in psionic bolts at targets you can see. These do damage of 1M+PW.

Initiate: You can unleash either up to your PL-3 mighty bolts of psionic force, doing 2M+PW damage, or you can unleash your PL in lesser bolts of 1M+PW damage.

Magister: You can unleash up to your PL-6 a monstrosly powerful bolt that does 3M+PW damage, or you can unleash your PL-3 initiate-level bolts or your PL acolyte-level bolts.

PSIONIC SCREEN

Cost: x3.

You have a talent for blocking out all incoming psionic attacks. This acts as a "drag" on all incoming psionic attacks and psibolts (but not attacks that generate a physical manifestation, such as electrokinesis, or against objects thrown by telekinesis).

Acolyte: You yourself always get a psionic screen equal to your power level against all incoming attacks.

In addition, you can extend your protection to anyone you can touch with your hands. This protection lasts until the link is broken. This link can be extended to up to your power level in people as long as they hold hands. A psiscreen adds your level to the difficulty of a psionic attack made against anyone protected by it.

Initiate: You can project your psionic screen over an area equal to 10 meters per PL. This will form a dome with its highest point one meter over your head and will interfere with anyone else's use of psi powers on anyone within the area. If you are levitating this shape will be a globe.

Magister: as above, but you can protect your psionic screen over an area of 1,000 meters x(PL-6).

PSIONIC SHIELD

Cost: x2.

You can surround yourself with a potent psychic shield that helps negate any damage you take and which will help protect you from harm. This is cumulative with any other form of armor or protection you may have. It even works against forceblades and similar weapons, but not against psychic attack. Use of this power can be a response action. See the section on combat for more details.

Acolyte: You can add your PL to your armor rating. If you take damage, your psionic shield will be punctured and collapse, and you must cast it again. At this level, activating and maintaining the power takes concentration.



SCANNING

Cost: x3.

By using this psi power, you can track down anyone you have met or touched or anyone of whom you have a possession (i.e., something carried about their person for more than one hour.) By invoking this power, you will know what direction they are in, the approximate distance, and their general state of health (sick, wounded, healthy, dead). You can also use this power to locate objects you have handled. If the person or object is outside your range, that is all you will know. You can use this power to target other psi powers such as telepathy or psibolts if you have the range to use them. You do not need a line of sight under these conditions.

Acolyte: Range is PL+PW kilometers. At this level, the power requires concentration to activate.

Initiate: Range is (PL+PW)x10 kilometers.

Magister: Range is (PL+PW)x100 kilometers.

TELEKINESIS

Cost: x5.

You have the power to lift and move objects by the power of mind alone. You can grab unwilling people and things and carry them using your telekinesis. To do so, you must roll to hit them. You can make only one grab at a time, but you can handle up to your maximum weight in people and objects.

Acolyte: You can lift up to PLx10 kilograms and move it up to PLx10 meters. You can accelerate objects so that they do 1+PW damage, using your PL as a positive modifier to the success roll to hit. At this level, the power takes concentration to activate and maintain.

Initiate: You can raise up to PLx100 kilograms and move it up to PLx100 meters. You can accelerate objects so that they do 2+PW damage when thrown.

Magister: You can raise PLx1,000 kilograms and move it up to PLx1,000 meters. You can accelerate objects so that they do 3+PW damage when thrown.

TELEPATHY

Cost: x3.

You have the power to project your own thoughts and to read minds.

Acolyte: You can read the thoughts of any unprotected person within PLx20 meters. To do so against an unwilling target, you must pit your own PL+PW against theirs. You can project your own thoughts over the same distance to any person you can see.

Initiate: You can read and project thoughts at a range of up to PLx100 meters.

Magister: You can read and project thoughts at a range of up to PLx1000 meters.

TELEPORTATION

Cost: x5.

You may instantaneously transfer yourself and possibly your companions between any two points without passing through the space in between.

To do this, you must either know your destination really well or be able to see it - either directly, through clairvoyance, or by some other means. Use of this power always causes loss of one PW.

Acolyte: You can teleport up to one kilometer, taking only yourself and what you carry upon your person. At this level, activation of the power requires concentration.

Initiate: You can teleport up to 10 kilometers, taking yourself and anybody you are touching, and all the gear you are all carrying.

Magister: You can teleport up to 100 kilometers, taking yourself and anybody and anything within 10 meters.

DISADVANTAGES

Nobody is perfect. Everybody has their weak spots, and wasteworlders are no exception. Indeed, the deadly, violent and vengeful nature of Waste World's inhabitants, combined with their toxic surroundings, means that almost everybody has something wrong with them, in one way or another. That's the bad news.

The good news is that by taking disadvantages during character creation, you will also get yourself some extra points to spend. Points gained from disadvantages are added to your total available points and can be spent in exactly the same way. If you take a disadvantage that costs -15 points, you get 15 points to spend.

TYPES OF DISADVANTAGE

There are three categories of disadvantage: physical, mental and social. Physical disadvantages are those which affect your character's health and physical well-being.

Mental disadvantages are those that affect your character's state of mind and sanity. They range from mild phobias to outright madness.

Social disadvantages are really about how other people respond to your character. They could be anything from having a bad reputation to being part of a minority group that suffers from extreme prejudice.

LEVELS OF DISADVANTAGE

Many disadvantages come in three levels: mild, serious and total. Mild is the least impairing of these; total is the most impairing. Generally speaking, when you roll a disadvantage for a newly created character, you have it in its mild form. If you already have the disadvantage as part of your character template and you roll it again, then it increases from mild to serious.

When you take a disadvantage, you get five points for a mild disadvantage, 15 points for a serious disadvantage and 30 points for a total disadvantage. If a disadvantage doesn't have levels, you get the point cost given.

DISADVANTAGES ACQUIRED IN PLAY

During the course of play, your character might acquire a disadvantage. You may get shot and lose an arm, or you may acquire Rejection Syndrome due to getting one too many bionic implants. Whenever this happens, you get the disadvantage, but you do not get any extra points to spend.

PHYSICAL DISADVANTAGES

EXOTIC APPEARANCE

You look different from the norm, so much so that you stand out in a crowd. This does not mean that you are prejudiced against. It simply means you are noticeable and find it difficult to hide. This is the classic disadvantage of Xenogens and robots. You cannot pass yourself off for human. **Cost: -5.**

IMPAIRED VISION

Impaired vision means that your visual acuity is somehow less than normal. It comes in three levels:

Mild: Your eyes are simply bad. You suffer -1 on all sight perception rolls and with all ranged weapons. **Cost: -5.**

Serious: You are nearly blind and have difficulty seeing anything more than five meters away. You are at -2 to all sight perception rolls and with all ranged weapons. **Cost: -15.**

Total: You are blind. You cannot see at all. Obviously, you are incapable of using any weapons at all unless you have some compensating ability. **Cost: -30.**

MISSING EYE/EYES

You have the use of only one eye. This means that you are at -2 to all ~~ranged~~ ^{close range} attacks and perception rolls. **Cost: -15.**

If you lose both eyes, you are, of course, blind. (Unless you are a mutant with more than two eyes.)

MUTE

You are incapable of normal speech and must communicate through sign language or some mechanical device or telepathy. This could mean that you have anything from damaged vocal cords to an inability to pronounce any human language. **Cost: -5.**

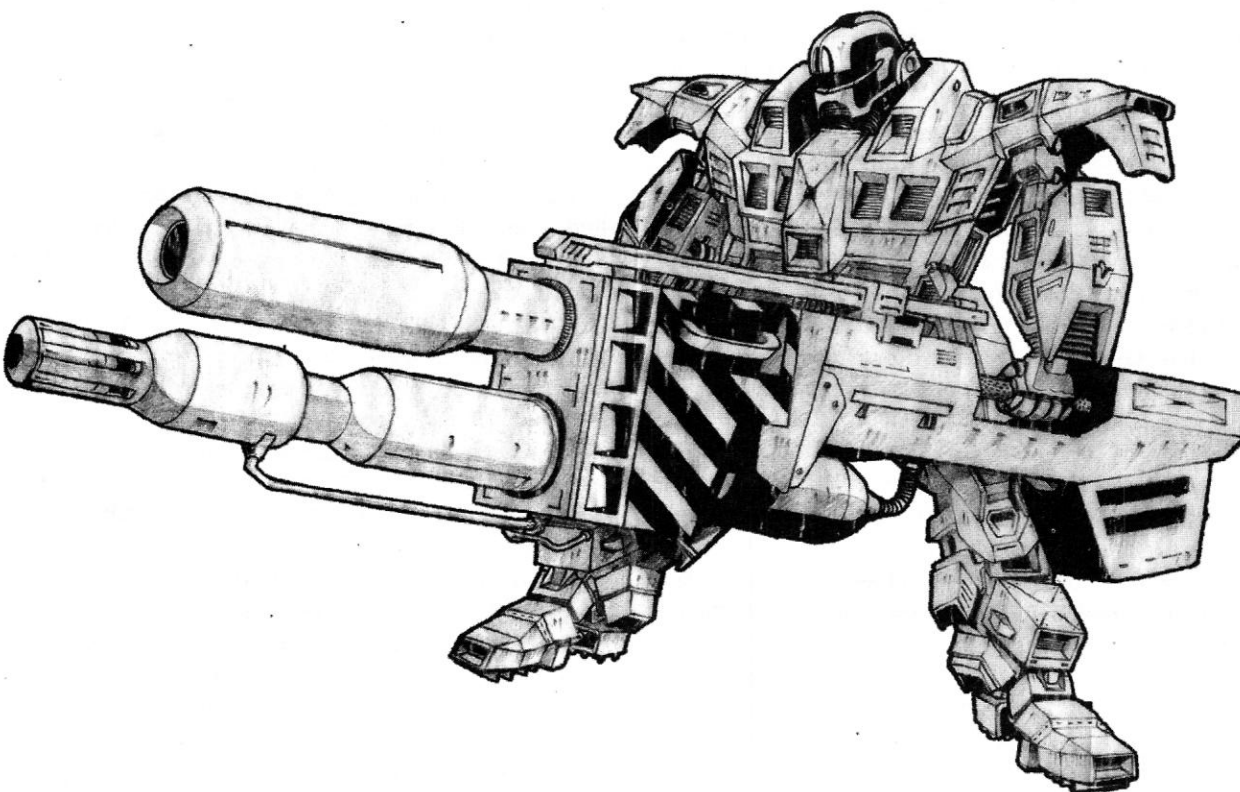
NEGATIVE APPEARANCE

Your appearance is definitely against you. This appearance comes in three levels:

Ugly: You are clearly ugly, and people react to you at -1. **Cost: -5.**

Hideous: You go beyond ugly and are downright frightening. You are covered in boils, weeping sores or the open stigmata of mutation. People react to you at -3. **Cost: 15.**

Monstrous: You look unspeakably frightening. You may be a shambling mound of festering sores, or your mutations may have become truly repulsive, but you are so ugly that you are a monster. **Cost: -30.**



NEGATIVE CHARACTERISTICS

Reducing your characteristics such as ST, DX, IN or PW to below zero is a disadvantage, and any points gained from doing so count towards your total number of disadvantages.

POSITRONIC BRAIN

This disadvantage is normally only possessed by robots. It means that instead of a human brain, you have a sophisticated neural network computer system. While allowing you to learn and to act independently of human instruction, positronic brains are not without their limitations. In many ways, they are simply not as capable as human brains. Even with the most complex positronic brain, you cannot learn any skill above level six. Embedded within most positronic brains is at least one prime directive. These are programmed instructions that must be obeyed. You have no choice but to carry them out. They must be simple, able to be expressed in 10 words or less. For example: kill all non-humans. Obey your magister. Protect the civilians. These are purchased as total mental disadvantages.

If two prime directives come into conflict, you will be unable to do anything until you make an IN roll at negative modifier -9. If you make the roll, roll randomly to see which directive you obey. If you fail the roll, you must roll again next turn. If you fumble, you will shut down for d20 hours until you resolve the issue. When you awake, roll randomly to see which prime directive you obey.

Before play starts, you should work out what your prime directives are with the Narrator.

Positronic brains work in a different way from organic ones and cannot be the locus of psychic powers. You are psychically inert. **Cost: -15.**

REJECTION SYNDROME

Your body has started to reject all unnatural prosthetic implants. It will cause you great difficulty if you have any more cybernetics or symbionics implanted. Many Posthumans suffer from the mild form of this disadvantage. This disadvantage increases the difficulty factor when you roll to see if your body rejects a cybernetic implant.

Mild: Increase negative modifier by -3. **Cost: -5.**

Serious: Increase negative modifier by -6. **Cost: -15.**

Total: Increase negative modifier by -9. **Cost: -30.**

Each time you fail a rejection roll, your level of Cybernetic Rejection Syndrome (CRS) increases by one. If you have total CRS and fail a rejection roll, you die.

ROBOTIC BODY

You possess a robotic body of duralloy or ceramic. This runs on its own energy sources. You are immune to the effects of poisons and immune to mutation. You do not suffer normal shock.

The news is not all good, however.

Once your character has been created, you cannot increase its ST or DX. These are fixed by the design of the body.

Robots deal with damage differently from most other characters. Once unconscious from system shock, you can only regain consciousness if repaired by a robomancer. This takes ten minutes and a successful robomancy roll.

Instead of needing medical attention after taking a critical hit in combat, a robot must be repaired by someone with a robomancy skill. Any functions lost through critical hits will not return until these repairs have been performed.

The robomancer must have the proper tools and spare parts. To fix a minor wound, he takes one hour and a successful robomancy roll. It will take one day and a successful robomancy roll, at a penalty of -3, to heal a major wound.

Normally, a robomancer charges 10 credits per minor wound, and 100 credits per major wound. Spare parts cost 10 credits per minor wound and 100 credits per major wound. They are availability nine, in those places where robomancy is legal. Availability one elsewhere. A robotic body must have its power cells replaced once per month (this is its food), or it will power-down and be unable to act. For more on this, see the section on equipment. Most robots maintain a small emergency charge even when powered down. This lets them act for up to 10 minutes in critical situations. **Cost: -20.**

UNUSABLE ARM

You may have suffered an amputation at the wrist or elbow, or you may have suffered from some neurological damage, but in any case one of your arms is unusable. This means you cannot hold things with it, or use two-handed weapons. You could have something like a blade or a hook strapped to the stump, but you cannot manipulate with it. **Cost: -10.**

If your arm was amputated at the shoulder, you suffer in the same way and cannot have anything attached to the stump. **Cost: -15.**

If both arms suffer from this, then you cannot hold or lift anything: double the penalty.

UNUSABLE LEGS

Your leg may have been amputated at the foot, knee or hip, or you may have suffered neurological damage, but in any case, you cannot walk normally without crutches. Even with them, your MR will be halved and you will be unable to run. **Cost: -15.**

If both legs are unusable, you will be confined to a wheelchair. **Cost: -30.**

MENTAL DISADVANTAGES

Most mental disadvantages work in the same way. Normally, they apply in certain situations, where they will force you to perform stupid or life-threatening actions, unless you make an IN roll. The negative modifier for this roll increases with the magnitude of your mental disadvantage. Each time the disadvantage step increases by one, the negative modifier applied to any roll involving the disadvantage increases.

Mild:	Negative Modifier -1
Serious:	Negative Modifier -3
Total:	Negative Modifier -6

For example: you possess mild overconfidence. You are in a bar drinking alone and waiting for your buddies when a Skavenger gang enters. Their leader comes up, spits in your beer, then asks you why you're not drinking it. Now, under these circumstances, a person might well just drink up with a cheesy smile. It may even be what your character would want to do. However, your Narrator knows you have total overconfidence. You must make an IN roll with a -9 penalty. If you fail the roll, then you will most likely reply: Because I don't like the smell, have a bath, and then tip your beer over the gang leader.

If for any reason your level of mental disadvantage ever increases beyond total, your character becomes howlingly insane and is removed from play permanently. This is always a possibility for psychers.

It has to be said that many people who suffer from mental disadvantages are not all that pleasant to be around. They usually suffer a reaction penalty from any NC they interact with once their mental disadvantage becomes evident. This penalty is normally -1 to the reaction roll per step.

ADDICTION

You are addicted to one particular noxious, mind-altering substance. You will do almost anything to get it, and when your stash runs out, you will obsess about it until you acquire another. You will even put your life at risk to get the stuff. You are certainly capable of blowing a small fortune to keep you in your substance of choice.

If a situation ever occurs where you have to do something stupid or life-threatening to feed your addiction, then make an IN roll at -3 if you are mildly addicted; -6 if seriously addicted; -9 if totally addicted.

You and the Narrator should decide what it is you are addicted to. It is also perfectly possible that addiction will cause some form of psychological imbalance. If this is the case, then you and your Narrator should decide between you what it is.

If you do not get your daily dose of your substance of choice, all your skill rolls will be at -1. This penalty is cumulative for each further day missed until it levels off at -3. If you are addicted to multiple drugs and are suffering from withdrawal, use the worst penalty. They are not cumulative.

If you are addicted to a substance such as a psibooster or combat drug that would normally improve your performance in some way, you only get half the normal benefits of the drug, rounded down. This is because your body has become accustomed to the substance and now requires some of it just to function at a normal level.

AMNESIA

You cannot remember who you are, or how you came to be here. All your skills are intact, but your memories are not. People could be hunting you down and you would not know it. Your past is a mystery and an obsession to you, and you desperately want to try to find out who you are.

It is up to your Narrator to decide what the secret of your past is, and perhaps during the course of your career reveal it to you. If you encounter someone from your past life, perhaps you will feel a twinge; perhaps you won't. They certainly will remember you. Whatever the secret is, it should be dramatic and have some significance. You might have been someone who survived an attempted assassination and was left for dead. The head wound you took may have scrambled your brain. Or maybe you were mind-wiped for some terrible crime, and some of your previous victims are still on the lookout for you. Maybe you are the heir to a great fortune. Whatever the answer, there should be a tale to tell, and a hook for a storyline. **Cost: -5.**

ANIMAL INTELLIGENCE

This disadvantage applies to animals and is normally reserved for NCs. It means that you cannot talk, use tools or reason the way more intelligent races do. You live totally in the moment and act on instinct. Some creatures of animal intelligence may have quite a high IN. This represents their ability to make perception rolls rather than their reasoning ability. **Cost: -30.**

CODE OF HONOR

You are bound by a rigid code of honor that you would rather die than break. There are many sorts of these. The most common are:

Samurai

You must avenge insults to yourself, your lord, and your family.

Standard

You must aid your folk and give succor to non-hostile strangers. You must protect the young and the weak and the innocent.

Personal

You must avenge any insults to yourself. You will never break your word. Add three more things you must do under a set of specific circumstances - i.e., never shoot a man in the back, never let anybody swear in the presence of a lady, whatever. Be creative.

You can take your code of honor at any of the three levels.

Mild: **Cost: -5.** Strong: **Cost: -15.** Total: **Cost: -30.**

FANATIC

Mild: You are a fanatical believer in your religion or your nation. You are prepared to die for it, and you're certainly prepared to bore others ranting about it. You are at -1 to all reaction rolls (except from other fanatics of your cause) because your conversation is limited to singing the praises of your particular religion or nationality. If asked to perform some life-threatening mission or to do some immoral or illegal act in the service of whatever you are fanatical about, you must make an IN roll at -3 to not volunteer instantly. **Cost: -5.**

Serious: As above, but all penalties are at -6. **Cost: -15.**

Total: As above, but all penalties are at -9. **Cost: -30.**

MEGALOMANIA

You are an insufferable megalomaniac. You have delusions of grandeur and are always moving from one grandiose scheme to another. You desire to rule and to dominate and you cannot stand to be opposed in even the most trifling things. You make a great and convincing leader, but only if those following you have no will of their own. Most people hate you, but you will actually get +3 reaction from the naive, the weak-minded and the impressionable. You can take megalomania at any of the three levels. The modifiers for PW rolls should be taken in situations where your megalomania applies.

Mild: **Cost: -5.** Strong: **Cost: -15.** Total: **Cost: -30.**



VENGEANCE SEEKER

You are hunting someone, someone powerful and nasty who did you wrong. They killed your family, bankrupted your business, stole your life savings, ruined your life - but you are going to make them pay. So far they have eluded you, but that doesn't stop you. You'll get them. If you have to spend every penny you make, and every free waking hour looking for them, you will. Nothing is going to stop you now.

You can take this disadvantage at any of the three levels. Its affects will apply when anything comes between you and your prey. You will make the roll when normal scruples, friendships or even simple prudence would stop you from following through with your vengeance seeking.

Mild: **Cost: -5.** Strong: **Cost: -15.** Total: **Cost: -30.**

OBSESSION

You are obsessed with one particular thing. You could be obsessed with achieving a particular, nearly unattainable, goal. Or your mind could be filled with thoughts of one person, who you talk about all the time. You could be obsessed with collecting a specific type of object, such as rare gemstones or ancient postage stamps or Swarm larvae. Whatever your obsession is, it is one of the dominant traits of your personality. Whenever your obsession comes into play, you must make an IN roll at -3 to -9, depending on the level of your obsession, not to go with it regardless of how silly or self-destructive the result might be. If you ever achieve your unattainable goal, this disadvantage must be replaced with another mental disadvantage of the Narrator's choice, unless you buy it off with experience points. After all, you need something to replace that which has taken up your time for so long.

Mild: **Cost: -5.** Strong: **Cost: -15.** Total: **Cost: -30.**

OVERCONFIDENCE

You are the best and you know it. Those 20 Panzers - what chance do they have against your mighty autocannon? There is no situation you can't handle and no foe you fear. You are ready for anything. Even when you are not.

Mild: **Cost: -5.** Strong: **Cost: -15.** Total: **Cost: -30.**

PARANOIA

Mild: They're all out to get you. You know it. Trust no one. Believe nothing. Sit with your back to a wall where you can cover all exits at all times. Be alert. Look around you all the time. You often see threats where there are none. You are exaggeratedly cautious. Folk react to you at -3. The Narrator can call for a paranoia roll whenever he deems appropriate.

Mild: **Cost: -5.** Strong: **Cost: -15.** Total: **Cost: -30.**



PHOBIA

There is something rooted in the deepest, darkest part of your psyche that leaves you paralyzed with fear. You become paralyzed in its presence and overwhelmed by sheer terror. You cannot deal with it normally and rationally. If you cannot get away, there is a 50-50 chance you will go either catatonic or berserk. There are many things you can be phobic about. You can decide with your Narrator what your particular phobia is. It should be something that you have a reasonable chance of encountering.

Mild: **Cost: -5.** Strong: **Cost: -15.** Total: **Cost: -30.**

PREJUDICED

You are insanely prejudiced against a certain racial, ethnic, religious or other group. You will take every opportunity to express your prejudice in the form of insults, violence or other extreme forms of behavior, even at risk to your own life. You are at -3 to all reaction rolls and -6 from the group against which you are prejudiced.

Mild: **Cost: -5.** Strong: **Cost: -15.** Total: **Cost: -30.**

PSYCHOPATH

You live to kill. You enjoy it. Even when it's not necessarily in your best interests, you will do it. No one trusts you, and rightly so. Whenever the opportunity to kill arises, you will take it, and enjoy it. You will actually seek out opportunities to kill.

Mild: **Cost: -5.** Strong: **Cost: -15.** Total: **Cost: -30.**

SOCIAL DISADVANTAGES

BAD REPUTATION

For some reason, you have a bad reputation. This reputation could be for almost anything. Perhaps people believe that you are a traitor or a psychopath or the one who deserted their comrades at the Battle of Alkador. Maybe they have heard you are a cheat or a thief. Maybe this reputation is true. Maybe it is false and you are trying to clear your name. Justified or not, this reputation will follow you wherever you go.

Whatever your bad reputation is for, it is bound to be brought up sooner or later. This depends on what kind of bad reputation you have. You can be widely known as a bad person in a way that just leads people to disparage you. You get -3 reaction modifiers from those who know of your reputation. The narrator should make an IN roll for any NCs to see whether they have recognized you. The fact that you have chosen this disadvantage means that your fame is pretty widespread. **Cost: -10.**

DARK SECRET

You have a dark secret that no one must ever find out because if they do, the consequences are just too dire to contemplate. You would kill to prevent this secret becoming known. You and your Narrator must decide what your dark secret is. Maybe you committed a terrible crime and are wracked with guilt, maybe your parents were mutants, maybe you were once a member of a forbidden cult or conspiracy. Whatever it is, the consequences should be nasty. **Cost: -10.**

DEPENDENT

You have someone you must protect at all costs, even at risk to your own life. This could be your wife, husband, girlfriend or that annoying little kid you rescued from the Demon Hives. These are the people who are always being captured or poking their noses in where they shouldn't. You should decide who this person is with your Narrator. **Cost: -10.**

OBLIGATION

You are under a feudal obligation to your overlord, your temple or your commanders. You must obey their orders on pain of sanctions or death. All samurai, serving soldiers, and priests of most religions have this disadvantage. **Cost: -10.**

HUNTED

You have powerful, implacable enemies, and they are after you. They might be hunting you because you killed their kinfolk back in Poison Springs, or because they think you have some secret plans belonging to them (maybe you have) or just because they hate you. The reason is immaterial; they are after you, and they can't be bought off or reasoned with or threatened. They will never, ever stop until you are dead. It's up to you and your Narrator to decide who your hunters are, but they should always be mean and they should always be powerful. And whoever they are, there are always enough of them so that if you kill one, another will soon be on your trail. This is a three-level disadvantage:

Level One

Your hunters have limited power. They are private citizens or a small secret organization of limited means. Or perhaps they are powerful but only truly effective in a limited geographical area such as one of the habzones. **Cost: -5.**

Level Two

Your hunters are powerful and have a long reach. They could be a major crime lord or a powerful cult. They may have placed a high bounty on your head. Wherever you go, you can expect some form of trouble, sooner or later. **Cost: -15.**

Level Three

Your hunters are awesomely powerful and totally implacable. They could be the government of a metrozone, or an insane billionaire who has placed an astronomical bounty on your head. The power and influence of your hunters will affect your life in countless ways. You may have to go about disguised in order to avoid assassination. Anyone associated with you will find their life in danger. **Cost: -30.**

PREJUDICED AGAINST

You belong a minority that suffers from insults, slights, slurs and violence from other factions of your society or the world at large. This is not a lot of fun, and it can be dangerous. People react to you at -2. **Cost: -10.**

OTHER DISADVANTAGES

This is far from an exhaustive list of disadvantages. You are perfectly free to make up your own, if they suit your character and your Narrator agrees.

EXPERIENCE

In Waste World, characters are not static: they change and grow, acquiring new skills and abilities, refining old ones and becoming stronger and better as their careers progress. We use experience points (XPs) to simulate this process of growth.

In game terms, XPs are the reason most characters go adventuring. They are a reward for successfully completing an adventure, and they can be used to improve the character in many different ways. At the end of each adventure session, your Narrator will usually award you some XPs. You should keep careful track of them, for they will be important to you.

Once you have been awarded XPs, you can spend them in many different ways. They are just like character points. One XP is, in fact, exactly like one character point. You can buy the same things with them, with one exception: you cannot use them to buy equipment directly. You must pay money for that. (On the other hand, you don't need to spend XPs when buying new equipment; with a few exceptions, such as cybernetics, it can be purchased with money alone.)

You never have to spend experience points. You can save them, or spend part of the ones you are awarded and keep the rest. Many times you will save experience points over a number of adventures in order to achieve some long-cherished goal.

XP are just like money. Once they are spent, they are gone. Once you expend experience points, you should cross them off your character sheet. In all cases, regardless of whether you gain your skills by practical experience or by study, you must still spend the experience points to pay for them.

Here are a few guidelines: as usual, common sense should be applied in these matters. Most improvements take some time to perfect, so your characters won't suddenly just get better for no reason at all. If they are acquiring new skills, they must learn them somehow. If they are improving old ones, they must practice. Of course, if your character used certain skills heavily during an adventure, this could easily prove a rationale for the improvement. Psionic powers are prone to spontaneous manifestation. For more on this see below.

TIME

We use a simple rule for improvement through training. It takes 10 hours of training per point spent to make an improvement, provided you have a tutor. It takes twice this to improve through self-teaching or simple on-the-job practice. For example, if you wished to learn an easy skill at level one, it would cost 10 hours of training and one XP.

Of course, there are ways around this. Some devices make intensive training easy. Some drugs cut down training time considerably. These are covered in the section on equipment.

Lastly, the Narrator may feel that the times given are just plain wrong under certain circumstances and may change them. This is perfectly acceptable. These are guidelines - they are not binding in every situation.

IMPROVING SKILLS

Improving skills is the easiest way to progress. If you used a skill heavily during the previous adventure, you can just spend the points and the skill will improve. If you did not, you must practice. You cannot increase a skill through use in an adventure by more than one level without going on another adventure, even if you have the experience points available to pay.

Generally speaking, most knowledge-based skills can be improved by study, either alone or with a teacher. Improving a skill costs XPs equal to the skill level you want to acquire, so if you want to move from handgun four to handgun five, you must pay five XPs. If you want to move from stealth six to stealth seven, it will cost you seven XPs.

IMPROVING CHARACTERISTICS

Characteristics can be increased by spending experience points on them, but this is very expensive. It costs the level of the new characteristic times 10 XPs to buy the increase.

You cannot spontaneously increase a characteristic by practice during an adventure, the way you can a skill. (Power is the single exception to this.) Strength and dexterity must be increased by exercise. Intelligence can be increased by study. (This simply represents an increase in your level of general knowledge and awareness.)

If you want to increase a characteristic by more than one level, you must spend XPs to improve all the intervening levels. For example, to go from ST two to ST four would cost 70 XPs and take 700 hours of exercise.

Increasing a negative characteristic is handled slightly differently. You must pay off the points you gained through having a negative characteristic in the first place.

INCREASING PW

You can spontaneously increase PW. Just pay the points and it is yours.

INCREASING LF

You can spontaneously increase your LF. Pay the points and it will increase.



BECOMING A PSYCHER

At the Narrator's discretion, any character may use XPs to purchase psionic powers. This should not just come out of the blue. There must be some convincing reason why a non-psycher has suddenly gained psionic powers. Perhaps this happened through exposure to radiation or certain drugs, or even an psionic attack which triggered a long-dormant talent. The important thing is that the character gaining such a power fits into your plans for your campaign.

Don't let the fact that the character might have already tested negative for possession of such powers stop you from purchasing them if it seems appropriate. Not even Promethean scanners are infallible, and even guild magisters make mistakes. The potential for wielding the power can lie dormant and undetected, even within the most "pure" seeming of people. That is why there is such paranoia about psychers and mutants.

You can choose to become a psyker by spending 20 XPs. You can only do this if you have a PW of +1 or greater.

BUYING NEW PSYCHIC POWERS

It takes time to manifest and master a new psychic power, even if you are a psyker. Usually you must find someone who already has the power you wish to learn and get them to teach you, but at the Narrator's discretion, you can spontaneously develop a new power, if the circumstances are right. However, you should be aware that there is always the chance of madness.

Increasing the level of a psi power you already possess costs the level of the psi power you want times the power's cost multiplier. For example, if you wanted to go from level four to five with a x5 power, it would cost 25 points. As always, going up more than one level is cumulative, so going from level four through six would cost 55 points.

BUYING NEW SPECIAL POWERS

Mutations are incredibly common in the hideously polluted and radioactive lands of Waste World. The good news is that they make new special powers easy to acquire. The bad news is that you have to be a mutant to acquire them this way. If you wish to become a mutant, simply pay the price for the power you want and wait the appropriate time for it to go from a small stigmata, to a full blown mutation. Powers take d6+ their point cost days to fully manifest and become useable.

Of course, then you must then make a mutation roll. To do this, make a ST roll using the number of powers you already have as a modifier. If you fail this roll, your level of negative appearance will increase by 1. If you do not have the negative appearance disadvantage, you will now acquire it. If your negative appearance becomes hideous, you will become an obvious mutant and acquire the prejudiced against disadvantage. (You don't get any points for these.) If your negative appearance becomes monstrous because of mutation, you will find that your warped and twisted appearance has begun to affect your sanity. The next time you fail a mutation roll you will acquire a new mental disadvantage, usually a form of madness. Each time you fail a future mutation roll, this disadvantage will increase by one level. If it ever increases beyond total, you will go stark raving mad and become an NC. It will then be time to create a new character.

REJECTION, MUTATION AND MADNESS

It can be quite confusing trying to work out which of these applies when you gain a new power. To help clarify things, here are a few simple guidelines: Rejection syndrome affects those things that were implanted. If your new ability comes from an outside source, such as a symbiotic graft, then you must make a rejection roll.

On the other hand, if your power manifests itself from the inside, as a spontaneous mutation does, then it's a mutation roll you must make. Madness comes about through the gaining of psi powers, and as a long-term side effect of the mind-warping that stems from mutation.

BUYING NEW ADVANTAGES

Advantages are a special case. Some advantages you either have, or you don't have. If you have them, well and good. If you don't, you will never acquire them. Those that can be learned or acquired are indicated as such in their descriptions. It takes roughly the same amount of time to learn such a special ability as it takes to learn a comparable skill.

BUYING NEW CYBERNETICS AND SYMBIONICS

Buying new cybernetics is simple: you pay the cost in megacredits to have them implanted, and then have the operation performed. Once they are implanted, the fun begins. For more on potential complications, see the section on cybernetics and symbionics.

If you are buying a prosthetic to get rid of a physical disadvantage, you must pay the XP cost for this as well.

BUYING OFF DISADVANTAGES

You cannot simply buy off most disadvantages. There must always be a reason. If you are hunted, perhaps you and your Narrator may decide that you have killed off the last of your hunters, or that you have made peace with them. Then you can make the peace. If you are blind, perhaps you could have bionic eyes implanted. If you are an addict, maybe you get dried out. Anyway, if a suitable explanation can be found, it is possible to buy off most disadvantages. It costs the amount of points the disadvantage cost you in the first place.

When implanting a bionic system that will cure a disadvantage such as blindness, you must also pay the cost for buying off the disadvantage before the implant will work. As Narrator, you can always rationalize this by saying that the nerve connections take longer to regenerate, or that the previous disadvantage introduced some complication into the procedure.

Sometimes you can buy off these disadvantages with XPs. In some cases, it takes a combination of experience points and treatment to buy off a disadvantage. For example, if you lose an arm, you will acquire the unusable arm disadvantage. You can get rid of this by buying a prosthetic arm, but you must also spend the experience points to buy off the disadvantage. So getting rid of this disadvantage will cost both money and experience points.



LAST WORDS

For the Narrator, there are three rules to observe in the spending of XP:

The first rule is that there ain't no such thing as a free lunch. If somebody wants to do something that gets rid of a disadvantage, they have got to pay the cost.

The second rule is that there has to be a reason. You can't let players suddenly just manifest new powers or skills. There has to be a reason for this to happen. This might be wild and implausible. You might let a character manifest new special powers after being exposed to an entropic sector or bitten by a radioactive spider, but there should always be something that hooks the new abilities onto the ongoing storyline and into the campaign.

The third and final rule is that if you don't like it, you don't have to put up with it. If you don't want to let a player have a new power or ability or even gain a skill because it would ruin your campaign or, heaven forbid, simply not fit in with the concept of their character, you don't have to let them have it. Period. End of story. It's your game and what you say goes.

VIRUS DETECTION PROGRAM: ON
FLOW LINK QUASI-PROTOCOL: INITIATED
FILE SUB-PROTOL: STANDARD
NANOMECHANICAL INTERFACE:
VALIDATE SIMULATION

INITIATE SEQUENCE
NON-BIOLOGICAL RAW MATERIAL:
INTERNAL DATA CORRUPTION:
LINGUISTIC MARKUP DIRECTORY
MOLECULAR BINARY:

GUNSTBERG OVERDRIVE
MICRO-OPTICAL MODULATOR: ON
SILICONE SYNAPTIC SIMULATOR
DYSFUNCTION
ARTIFICIAL NEUROSYNTHESIS

CORTICO QUASI-DEGRADATION
GANGLIAL ELECTRO-IMPLANT
SMART CHIP INSTALLED
METHANE IMPULSE CATHETER
OCCIPITAL FLOW MODULATION: SINE

EQUIPMENT

LOGIN:
PASSWORD:
ACCESS GRANTED
SECURITY CLEARANCE LEVEL:
EXCESS GENETIC VARIATION:

SUB system COORDINATES
X1:209.45.1 X2:196.96.9
Y1:333.33.3 Y2:929.92.2
Z2: 21.21.2 Z1: 65.65.6
ABBERANT CHROMA LEVELS:

SEROTONERGIC OVERLOAD
AMYGDALPTIC OVERWRITE
SMART CHIP INSTALLED
BIOMECH AUGMENTATION:
NANOCCIPITAL DRIVER

BIOFEEDBACK MATRIX: XO
NEUROCIRCUIT FEEDBACK
AMOEBOID DRONE: PRESENT
INSITE MODULATION ON:
STORYMODE INITIATING

The aircab dropped Jak Tramfil at the outskirts of the city. Behind him, in the distance, he could see the weapon-studded towers of Prometheus. Ahead of him loomed the gigantic armored mass of the perimeter wall. Huge, rusting ventilation pipes clung to its scarred surface like a particularly pernicious form of mutant ivy. He walked across a flat expanse of concrete. Vented gas and hot air billowed out into the chill night air. He moved to the huge pillbox guarding this entrance to the pits and ran his bounty hunter's license through the ancient digital readout of the turnstile. The robotic intelligence accepted it and the armored doors clicked open. He moved through the hatch, ignoring the flashing neon sign informing him that visitors entered this sector at their own risk. He stepped into the monstrous ancient elevator and dropped the equivalent of 50 stories into the bowels of the city.

The elevator doors swished open and he entered another security zone. Once more, he showed his license to the security droids. Once more, he was warned of the coming dangers. He passed a pair of bleary-eyed slumming citizens returning from the depths of this underworld. They shot him a suspicious look and kept their hands close to the butts of their weapons, just like he did.

He checked the digital readout on his pistol: 30 shots. That was good. It was a full clip and should prove to be enough, unless this battery was a dud like the other one had been. Jak shuddered - that fiasco had cost him an arm; replacing it with his new bionic had cost him his life-savings. He tried to reassure himself; the new arm was better than the old one, stronger, faster, steadier. That didn't mean he was happy about it. There were certain things about bionics that just were not as good as with real arms. You couldn't feel the flesh of the woman you caressed or enjoy any but the most basic tactile sensations.

Yeah, too bad, he told himself. Enough mooning about. He had a job to do. Central had told him that BL-301 had been spotted in this area. His own informants told him that the mad droid was holed up in an abandoned storage cell. Jak smiled nastily. He had a score to settle with Wild Bill for ripping off his arm. Now he was going to settle it. The bounty on the rogue robot would go some way to making up the money his lost limb had cost him.

He clicked the fiber-optic control cable on the weapon's base into the neurojak in his arm. The smartchip in the weapon interfaced with his own control systems. The gun felt like part of him now. He could activate it by an effort of will instead of by pulling on the trigger.

He moved down a long dark corridor and entered the Pits. He stood at the head of a long flight of stairs leading down into an enormous circular chamber. An enormous crowd of the lost and the damned waited down there.

Jak eased down the steps and into the milling crowd. He passed stalls where blank-eyed men sold unappetizing sludge from bowls heated by gas woks. He saw barbecued rat being sold on skewer sticks. He smelled offal and garbage. A cockroach the size of a kitten scuttled away from him. Two feral children with sharpened teeth and hungry faces eyed him as if he might be their next meal.

This was a bad area of the undercity, avoided by all but the most poor and desperate of the proles, a haven for criminals, insurgents and rogue droids, a sanctuary for mutants and Xenogens. It was a place that few would come by choice. Rumor had it that they had eaten three Janusian missionaries last week. Jak was prepared to believe that rumor. Personally, he thought the missionaries probably deserved it.

All eyes turned to look at him and then swiftly looked away. Jak knew he looked like trouble to these people. What else could he be; a heavily armed and armored normal with new bionics and a big gun. He just had to be some form of law enforcement. Several armed locals gave him the once over, measuring him for a coffin, trying to decide whether it was worth the risk of robbing him. Jak upped the bravado of his swagger a notch and smiled nastily at the nearest. They hastily backed away.



DATA CORE ACCESS



SECURITY RISK ALERT

985.0300.2233.666.957.000.000.1



ALL SYSTEMS GO

STORY MODE ACTIVE

PERSONA: TRAMIL

EQUIPMENT



Two mutants with melted faces backed hastily away from him. Jak ignored them. He had not sunk so low yet that he needed to claim the state bounty on mutants. He was a roboslayer, the cream of his profession, and he was after bigger game. He moved out of the alley and into the darkened corridors. Here everything had a nasty, worn-out look. Paint flaked away from the stonework. Revolutionary graffiti covered the walls. Even the bulkheads of the safety doors were rusty. Here and there they had been cannibalized for their metal.

This was the part of Prometheus that outsiders never saw. There was no trace of the megacity's legendary neatness or efficiency here. These were the underpits, the place where all the city's scum eventually settled, the place the citizens referred to as society's sewer.

Jak had never gone along with that. He had grown up here, the poor son of poor parents. He had fought his way up and out as soon as he was able. He had served 10 years in the Legions. He had almost made citizen.

But he had been dishonorably discharged for striking his commanding officer back, when the citizen fool had hit him in front of the men. Now he eked out a living as a roboslayer. His 10 years of military experience had at least qualified him for that.

He took the flight of stairs down on the right. He held his blaster at the ready. Almost at Wild Bill's hideout now. He could tell by the signs that it was an abandoned bodyshop where black-market robomancers had once sold spare parts. The perfect place for a rogue droid, really.

He held himself flat against the wall and eased himself to the door. It was dark and cold and chill. Luminous mold clung to the walls. Big roaches slithered along the floor. He pressed his ear to the door and heard nothing inside. Good, BL-301 was probably dormant. This would be an easy kill. He checked the palm switch on the door but it had been disabled so that no one could activate it from this side.

He slid the demo charge from his belt and gently eased it into place. The magnets on the weapon's base held in place for three seconds, then the shaped charge took out the door. He stepped through, weapon at the ready, prepared to blast anything that moved.

From the shadows a gigantic robot emerged. It was half again his height and many times his weight. Blaster shots had blistered the paintwork on its side and caused the metal on the right side of its face to flow into a distorted parody of human features.

"You could just have knocked," it said.

"Yeah but where's the fun in that?" Jak raised his gun, but as he did so, he heard the click of weapon safety catches from both sides of the room. Half a dozen enormous forms had trained weapons on him. Fat Ned had said nothing about this. He had never mentioned that Wild Bill had a gang. If he ever got out of this alive he would make the blubbery fool pay.

It was starting to look like a big if.

"There's obviously been a mistake here, boys," Jak said, backing toward the door.

"Yes, and you made it, meat man," said a voice he recognized as belonging to BL-301. He had only a second to throw himself flat before the hail of bullets cut through the spot where he stood. He rolled to one side, taking aim at the largest of the gunners and letting fly with a stream of blaster bolts.

Today was not his lucky day, he decided.

EQUIPMENT

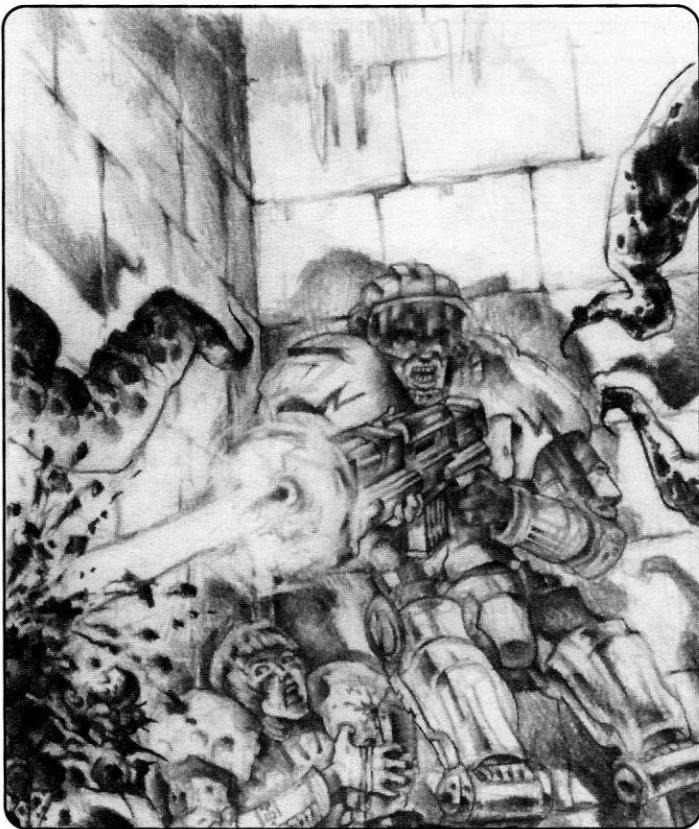
In the following sections, all weights are given in kilograms and all prices are given in credits, megacredits or gigacredits.

AVAILABILITY

Waste World is a place of constant shortages. Even in the great metrozones, special equipment, fuel and sometimes even common foodstuffs are not always available. People queue for days sometimes just to get soap and foodtabs. These constant shortages make life miserable for people in the cities. In the Wastes they can mean life and death. Caches of ancient weapons, munitions dumps, and cases of old military rations are all great treasures.

To simulate this, all equipment has an availability rating between zero and nine. Availability zero is the rarest of equipment. Availability nine is the most common. Whenever you go into a store and try and purchase a piece of equipment, the Narrator can make a d20 roll adding the equipment's availability rating and any other modifiers to see whether the shopkeeper has it or not. If the result is greater than 10, then the equipment is available. If the result is less than 10, then it is not.

There are several modifiers to this roll, the Narrator can use at his discretion. Location is important. It is usually easier to find most items in a megacity than in a small habtown's only store. If you are in a megacity, add four to the availability roll. If you are in a hab in the Wastes, subtract four.



DRAKONIUM POWER CELLS (DPC)

Drakonium power cells are so common and so important on Waste World that they deserve a special section to themselves - so here it is. Drakonium power cells were developed by the Ancients in the times before the Armageddon Wars and are manufactured in all the major megacities. They are the most common form of energy storage on Waste World and are used to power everything from glowglobes to holospheres to energy weapons. Minute amounts of processed Drakonium is the energy source. The Drakonium is consumed as energy is released. Larger power cells are used to propel vehicles and robots. They are found in virtually all vehicles, energy weapons and electrical devices as well as many forms of armor. They are implanted in bionic systems. A DPC will power a bionic limb for a year. Smaller organs and internal devices draw less power, and their cells will probably last the lifetime of their owner, unless they are defective.

Typically, a single Drakonium power cell could power a glowglobe for one year. Energy weapons simply discharge the energy in bursts. This rapid discharge can run down a power cell very quickly. Once a power cell is discharged it must be replaced.

Different things require more DPCs, fused into powerpacks. Typically man-portable equipment uses a single power cell. More powerful devices use cell banks of 10. Robots and car size vehicles use 100 cell banks which keep them operating for up to a month between replacements. Trucks and larger robots need banks rated at up to 1,000. The number of cells fused into a DPC powerpack affects its size, cost and weight. Massive vehicles such as wastekrawlers use their own Drakonium furnaces and so do not need Drakonium power cells.

DPC RATING

All equipment that requires a Drakonium power cell has a DPC rating. The first number given is the size of the DPC. This tells you how many cells have been fused into the powerpack. The number after the slash is the period of continuous use before a replacement is necessary. Unless stated otherwise in the description, this number is always given in hours. So, for example, a device with a DPC rating of 10/100 uses a 10 DPC powerpack and will operate for 100 hours of continuous usage before needing to be replaced.

Typically a DPC in a man portable device can be replaced in one combat round. Larger DPCs take longer. Multiply the time needed to change a DPC by its rating. So a unit rated at 10 DPC will take 10 rounds to replace.

Any equipment that does not need a DPC will have no DPC rating. If a powered weapon such as a force blade has no DPC rating, that is because the DPC will last the lifetime of the weapon. The weight of any DPC's present is figured into the weight of the equipment. DPC powerpacks use the following statistics for cost and weight. Weight: 0.01 kg per DPC in the powerpack. Availability: 9. **Cost: 1 per cell.**

AMMUNITION

Ammunition costs one percent of the cost of the weapon per clip. Clips weigh five percent of the weapon's weight at a minimum of 0.1 kg. Availability as per the weapon you are buying it for, unless the weapon uses 6.66 caliber ammunition, in which case it is availability: 9.

Energy weapons use Drakonium power cells. Energy weapons are rated by the number of DPC cells they use. A new magazine costs the same as a new cell or multicell array. A weapons DPC lasts until it runs out of ammo when being fired.

In some cases, such as forceblades, a single DPC will last the weapon's entire lifetime unless some special circumstances intervene. In other cases, such as with chainswords, a DPC will last for so long and the use of a DPC will be so intermittent that it is pointless to keep track of the power expenditure. In these cases no DPC rating is given.

MELEE WEAPONS

	D	T	W	MS	C
Axe	1M	C	1.5	0	75
Chainsword	1M+4	C	1.5	0	600
Dagger	1M-1	C	.5	-	10
Forceblade*	1M	C	.25	-	1M
Greatsword	1M+1	C	3	1	150
Jackhammer*	2M	C	3	0	900
MegaMace	2M	C	1.5	0	750
Neurolash*	Spec	C	1	-	1M
Power Gaunt*	2M+2	C	1	-	1.5M
Power Star*	1M+6	C	1.5	0	800
Razor Wheels	1M+1	C	1	-	750
Ripstaff	1M+4	C	1	-	800
Ripper Claw	1M+1	C	1	-	150
Shockstaff	1M+2	C	1	0	800
Spiked Gaunt	1M	C	1	0	100
Staff	1M	C	1	-	20
Sword	1M	C	1	0	60
2H Axe	1M+1	C	3.5	2	100
2H Mace	1M+1	C	3	1	90
Unarmed	0.5M	C	-	-	-

Duralloy close combat weapons cost twice the listed price.

WEAPONS DESCRIPTIONS

In Waste World, all weapons have a profile that tells you their significant details. Each weapon has the following statistics in its profile.

NAME

This simply tells you the weapon's name. If a weapon has a * after its name, then it requires a Special Weapon skill to use it. See the section on Skills for more details.

CLOSE RANGE (CR)

All ranges are given in meters. This tells you the optimal range for the weapon. Most ranged weapons are more effective at close range. When fired at this range there is no negative modifier to hit for range. Melee weapons don't have any range statistics.

RANGE (R)

This tells you the maximum range the weapon can fire over. When fired at over close range, but up to maximum range, the weapon suffers a negative modifier to hit because of the effects of range.

DAMAGE (D)

This tells you how much damage the weapon does if it hits in close combat. Where a number has an M after it this is a damage multiplier. If the number has a D after it then it refers to the type of dice you roll for the weapon's damage. The number after the plus sign is the damage modifier. If the weapon has Spec in the damage section it means it does special damage that will be explained in the weapon's description.

TYPE (T)

This tells you whether the weapon is single shot, semi-auto or automatic. S means single shot. X means semi-auto. F means fully automatic. O means a weapon is full burst fire only. If a weapon has C in this column then it is a close combat weapon and can only be used in close combat. If a weapon has T in this column then it is a thrown weapon and uses the rules for thrown weapons.

WEIGHT (W)

This tells you the weapon's weight in kilograms.

MINIMUM ST (MS)

Some weapons are heavy or have huge recoil or a lot of inertia. They take a lot of strength to use. This column tells you the minimum strength you need to use the weapon effectively. If you have less than the minimum strength needed then you suffer a -4 negative modifier when using the weapon. If the weapon has a (-) in the MS column then it has no strength requirement and anyone can use it without penalty. You can use even two handed weapons with one hand if you have ST two or more, greater than the weapon's MS.

COST (C)

Where prices are in credits they have no letter after them. Where they are in megacredits they have M after them.

CLOSE COMBAT WEAPONS

These basic weapons are all commonly available and are mass produced in the autofacs of the megacities. Although there are many variations in design, most perform in exactly the same way and to exactly the same specification. The Overminds of the autofacs have pushed these designs pretty close to the limits of performance.

AXE

The standard axe used throughout history, because it is relatively cheap and easy to make. It features a two-edged blade of steel or alloy attached to a long handle of wood or plastic. Duralloy is favored by those in the know, giving an additional +1 damage modifier. Availability: 9.

CHAINWORD

Favoured by Skavengers and the more brutal slum criminals of Waste World, this is a long blade wrapped with duralloy chainsaw teeth and powered by an electric motor in the hilt, that makes this a favorite among the more psychotic warriors of Waste World. It makes a throaty roar when activated, and the distinctive sound made as it rends through armor, rips through flesh and then saws through bone is never forgotten by anyone who hears it. Availability: 6.

DAGGER

The standard fighting knife in Waste World is wickedly sharp and almost half a meter long. They are carried by all Skavengers. Bayonets are knives that are clipped onto the end of rifles and other long-barrelled ranged weapons. They give 1M damage. The most prized knives are made from duralloy and have an extra +1 damage modifier. Availability: 9.

FORCEBLADE

First created during the dark days of the Demon Wars, this weapon proved to be invaluable against human foes as well as Demons. It was swiftly adopted by the samurai of the Shogunate as their favoured close combat-weapon, and is now their badge of office.

This innocuous-looking weapon appears to be little more than a long duralloy tube when it is not in use. That appearance is deceptive. When the activation stud is pushed, a meter long blade of pure force is projected from the active end of the tube. This blade is capable of shearing through any material substance. It can hurt energy beings such as Demons even when they are in nonmaterial form, disrupting the balance of their energy fields. In the hands of an expert this is the deadliest close combat weapon there is. Only force fields and other forceblades are resistant to such weapons. Forceblades cannot be parried except by other forceblades. Your foe must dodge instead. If you successfully parry a non-forceblade attack, your foe's weapon is broken. If you successfully parry an attack by something using bare hands, claws or other natural weapons, their attack fails, and you do damage to them as if your parry has been an attack. Availability: 0.

GREATSWORD

These huge swords are almost two meters long and come in many shapes and sizes. The enormous mass of these weapons make them extremely dangerous in close combat. They cannot be used in confined spaces. That means you need at least two meters clear on each side to swing them. These are not the best weapons to use in narrow passages. Availability: 4.

JACKHAMMER

Originally developed in Prometheus for use on building sites, the jackhammer was swiftly adapted for combat. This enormous hammer contains a pneumatic drive within its shaft, which drives the 20 pound head forward with enormous force along its slider. A single blow from one of these mighty weapons can shatter a boulder or cave in a man's chest with ease.

DPC: 10/ 10 Combat Rounds. Availability: 4.

MEGAMACE

These potent weapons were first developed before the Armageddon Wars on the far-away homeworld of the Kroks. They were originally designed to be attached to the tails of Krok warriors. During the Panzer Wars, they were adapted by human soldiers by threading the explosive heads onto a shaft duralloy handle. They were particularly useful in close combat with the heavily armed Panzers. In Janus, a tail-mounted variant can still be purchased by Kroks. This costs the same as a normal megamace.



The megamace looks like a small ancient sea mine attached to a short handle. The head is perfectly spherical and bristles with short contact spikes. Within the head is a powerful shock generator that detonates the spike, driving it into anything it touches. The spikes can penetrate all but the most resistant of armor, and the blast can do terrible damage to a foe.

DPC rating: roll a d20 after a succesful hit. If the result is 10 or less, then the DPC has discharged and the megamace may only be used as an improvised weapon until it is recharged. Availability: 3.

NEUROLASH

The Ikareans take credit for creating this evil implement of torture, but there are records of its use in punishing criminals by the magistrates of Kronus before the Armageddon Wars.

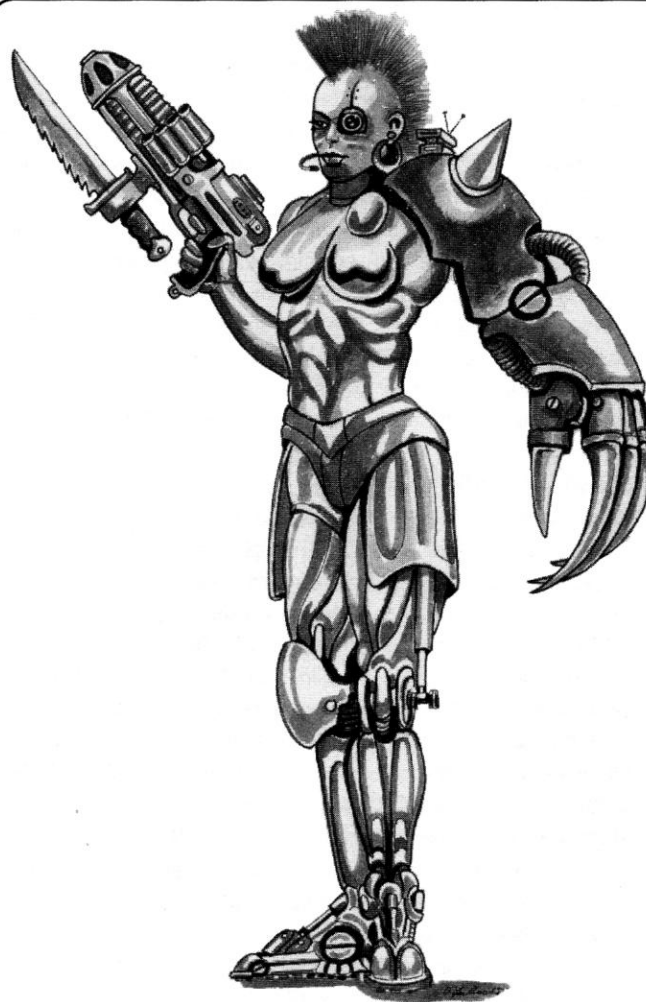
The neurolash consists of a duralloy handle and a long segmented coil of conductive cable. In the handle is a small but potent neural pain-inductor. This is activated any time the coil makes contact with a foe and the safety stud is released. This contact sends a blast of white-hot agony ripping through any unprotected target. This weapon is favored by slavers since it does no permanent damage. Those affected will recover lost LF at the rate of one per hour. If a neurolash reduces you to zero LF or less, you will immediately become unconscious. Neurolashes ignore armor but have no effect whatsoever on those protected by a force field.

This weapon affects energy beings by disrupting their systems. It inflicts permanent damage on them.

It takes skill to use a neurolash. Unless you have the special weapon (neurolash) skill at level zero or greater then you can do yourself, more harm than good using this weapon. If you miss you will hit yourself doing a d6 damage. Armor does not count against this damage. Availability: 3.

POWER GAUNTLET

This weapon was originally designed for the use of the Promethean hero, Amalrik Deathstorm, in his campaigns against the Swarm. It is designed to give a human being a fighting chance in close combat, even against a Swarm hivelord. Using his power gauntlet, Amalrik killed 19 Swarm warriors at the Battle of Malakar before being overwhelmed by their sheer numbers. The plans for this weapon were stored by the Promethean Overminds and put into mass production in the autofacs after the great man's death.



A power gauntlet is a massive mechanical glove that sheathes its users entire fist. It contains an array of servo motors and bionic enhancers and is capable of crushing stone in its grasp. Most power gauntlets have retractable blades in their fingers, that can be used to inflict terrible ripping damage on a foe. Availability: 1.

POWER STAR

This powerful weapon was a favourite of the Skavenger Khan Tekana Roy, who raided the borders of the Shogunate for 20 years before finally being defeated in single combat by the Shogun himself. It is said that Tekana Roy's power star holds pride of place among all the trophies in the Chamber of Nineteen Thousand Victories, deep in the Shogun's palace.

A power star consists of a number of megamace heads attached to a central duralloy grip by a series of chains. A small but powerful servo-motor within the grip whirls the spheres at enormous speed, adding to their impact when the heads touch a foe and detonate. Power stars are very tricky to use for all but the most skillful. Unless you have a skill of at least four with special weapon (power star), any miss with a power star will result in you inflicting 2d6+2 damage upon yourself. DPC rating: Roll a d20 after a successful hit. If the result is 10 or less, then the DPC has discharged and the power star may only be used as an improvised weapon until it is recharged. Availability: 3.

RAZOR WHEELS

Razor wheels are most often to be found attached to Promethean battle armor, although many have been salvaged and are sold to Skavengers and other desert wanderers. They are very useful in confined spaces and are often used by bug hunters, those intrepid souls who descend into Swarm Hives in search of riches. They are also often used by Ikarean torturers, who use them to perform finger and limb amputations with great showmanship. They are sometimes known as redhands or goresplatters because droplets of blood get whirled away from the blades at great speed and splatter everything nearby.

They are easy to use in confined spaces and there is no penalty for off-hand use. Their use involves the unarmed combat skill.

Razor wheels are a form of power gauntlet with a 30 centimeter circular buzzsaw blade attached to the back. This is rotated at hyperspeed by a powerful engine housed within the gauntlet. These buzzsaws have reinforced duralloy blades and are capable of ripping through almost anything. Availability: 5.

RIPPER CLAW

The ripper claw is a weapon favored by the gangsters of the Promethean underworld. At first it appears only to be a gauntlet made from segmented, flexible duralloy, but with a flex of the hand, it can extrude razor-sharp blades from each finger.

Many Promethean gang lords carry scars inflicted by these weapons, which are commonly used to resolve disputes among them. A favoured game in the taverns of the Promethean warrens is barehand. Players sit with one ripper-clawed hand and one unarmoured hand splayed on the table; they stare into each other's eyes until someones nerve breaks, and then the action begins. The object of the exercise is to pull your own bare hand away while pinning the other player's hand to the table. For maximum thrills, the game has to be played while blindfolded and drunk. Availability: 6.

RIPSTAFF

Ripstaves resemble a normal staff save that they are tipped with a rotating blade similar to that on a razor wheel. The additional reach and leverage of the staff makes them a deadly weapon. Using this weapon takes the skill. Availability: 5.

SHOCK STAFF

A shock staff is simply a two meter long duralloy pole with two shock generator contacts, one at each end of the staff. The generator is contained within the body of the staff. The weapon is used in quarterstaff fashion, and when the contacts touch a target, the shock wave is unleashed. These are extremely deadly weapons in the hands of the skillful. Anyone with staff skill of six or more gets an additional +2 damage modifier when using this weapon.

DPC rating; 1/10 successful hits. Availability: 4.

SPIKED GAUNTLET

This is a simple mailed gauntlet with large spikes over each knuckle. It is particularly favored by Skavengers, who use it all the times in brawls. Availability: 7.

STAFF

This is the long staff made of wood, bone or light metal used in the same manner as a quarterstaff. Availability: 9.

SWORD

The standard meter-long broadsword that has been used since ancient times. The only real refinement is now some of the blades are made from duralloy, giving them an extra +1 damage modifier. Availability: 6.

UNARMED

This is the damage you can do with your bare hands and feet unless you are trained in the martial arts. Martial artists do a base one damage multiplier damage. Availability: does not apply.

RANGED WEAPONS

ASSAULT RIFLE

This is the standard assault rifle used throughout history. It fires standard-issue 6.66 caliber slugs at a high rate. It is capable of fully sustained automatic fire. This is a common weapon among Skavengers who like it for its ease of use, ease of repair and the ready availability of ammunition. The most famous manufacturers of assault rifles are the Janusians. Some estimates claim that over 100 million rifles a year are manufactured there. Availability: 6.



RANGED WEAPONS

	CR	R	D	T	W	MS	C
PISTOLS							
Autopistol	15	100	1M	X	1	-	150
Blaster Pistol	20	200	1M+2	X	1	-	1000
Laser Pistol	30	1000	1M	S	1	-	700
RIFLES							
Assault Rifle	30	500	1M	F	4	0	600
Blaster	30	1000	1M+2	F	4	0	2M
Laser Rifle	50	5000	1M	F	5	-	1.4M
Psi Blaster*	50	150	Spec	S	4	-	1M
Railgun	50	1000	2M	S	4	0	1.2M
Shredder	50	150	1M+2	F	5	0	900
HEAVY WEAPONS							
Autocannon	200	2500	1M	O	15	2	3M
Hvy Blaster	250	2000	2M	O	5	1	4M
Hvy Laser	250	5000	1M+2	O	7.5	-	3M
HMG	100	1500	1M+2	O	10	1	1M
MegaBlaster	100	2000	2M	O	50	4	5M
Rkt Launcher	1000	-	D20	S	15	2	2M

SPECIAL WEAPONS

	CR	R	D	T	W	MS	C
Bow	100	300	1M	S	1	0	75
Blaster Gaunt*	10	50	1M+2	S	1	0	1.5M
Crossbow	100	300	1M+1	S	1	0	100
Ice Gun*	30	-	D20	S	1	-	1M
Miniflamer*	5	-	D20	S	.5	-	900
Msle Gaunt.*	25	50	3M	X	3	0	1M
Shotgun	30	60	1M+2	X	4	0	300

AUTOCANNON

Autocannons are the most powerful of all machine guns. They fire enormous numbers of heavy-caliber bullets. All have multiple barrels that rotate as the weapon is fired and that can be quickly changed in order to cool the weapon. Availability: 3.

AUTOPISTOL

This is the standard semi-automatic pistol, sold almost everywhere. It uses the ultra-common 6.66 caliber slug. Cheap, reliable and portable, this is the sidearm of choice for most people. Availability: 9.

BLASTER

The blaster is a heavy, long-barreled energy rifle manufactured mostly in Prometheus and the Shogunate. It fires bolts of super-heated plasma, capable of disrupting the energy structure of a Psidemon. It combines excellent range with spectacular hitting power. In theory it is restricted for sale only to samurai and Promethean citizens, but, of course, huge numbers find their way out onto the black market. That does nothing to bring down the already high prices. DPC: 1. Availability: 5.

BLASTER GAUNTLET

Manufactured only in Prometheus, this is a very specialized weapon favored by devil hunters and psychers. This weapon features a powerful plasma bolt generator built into a duralloy servo-gauntlet. This can be used either in close combat to surround the gauntlet with a magnetically contained plasma field capable of eating through almost anything, or it can be used to project plasma bolts over short ranges. As with all plasma weapons, it is extremely expensive, but those who must deal with Demons and their ilk on a regular basis find it a very useful tool.

The DPC will exhaust itself if you roll a one when using this weapon either at range or in close combat. DPC: 1. Availability: 3.

BLASTER PISTOL

This is the short-barreled pistol version of the blaster plasma weapon. It has all the vices and virtues of its rifle cousin. It is the standard-issue sidearm for all Promethean legionaries, and most citizens have at least one in their homes for protection against intruders. DPC: 1. Availability: 5.

BOW

This ancient weapon is still used by certain orders of monks in the Shogunate and by the most primitive of Skavengers and Wastelanders. Availability: 6.

CROSSBOW

Like the bow, this ancient muscle and spring powered weapon is still used among the most primitive of the Wastelanders and Skavengers. It is occasionally used by Ikareans when they hunt for humans. Most Waste World crossbows come with a small magazine, that feeds the weapon with bolts. Weapons without the magazine cost half the price but the user must spend an action phase reloading after every shot. Availability: 5.

ICE GUN

Ice guns carry canisters of pressurized cryogenic fluid is capable of instantly freezing almost anything it touches. Armor is ineffective against such weapons, since it freezes and becomes brittle, just like flesh.

Ice guns ignore normal armor (AR) but have no effect whatsoever on force fields. Their main weakness is their very short range and the fact that if you fumble when shooting one, it explodes, inflicting d20 damage upon the bearer regardless of armor.

Ice guns can be used to hose down the entire area in front of the user. This effects a cone 10 meters long and three meters wide at the base. Everyone in the area must make a DX roll. If they fail, they take a d20 damage. If used in this manner, the weapon is automatically emptied. Before it can be fired again, the user must spend an action phase reloading it. Availability: 3.

HEAVY BLASTER

This is the military issue-plasma weapon. It features multiple rotating barrels and plasma chambers for a high rate of fire without overheating and meltdown. It is capable of churning out dozens of bolts per second, sending a withering hail of plasma fire at its targets. DPC: 2. Availability: 2.

HEAVY LASER

Lasers can be finicky, fragile and unreliable weapons, but they have many advantages. They are silent, they are long-ranged, and they are deadly. The heavy laser is the most powerful available laser weapon. It can fire a powerful laser beam capable of killing a target out to the horizon. DPC: 2. Availability: 3.

LASER PISTOL

Somewhat less powerful than the laser rifle is the pistol variant. This is small and easily portable, but it lacks the hitting power and sheer range of its larger counterparts. It does have a niche market with assassins and hit-men, who like the fact that it is silent and there is no bang to give away their position. DPC: 1. Availability: 5.

LASER RIFLE

This is the most common available laser weapon, the long-barreled rifle favored by hunters and assassins everywhere. DPC: 1. Availability: 6.

HEAVY MACHINE GUN (HMG)

This is the heavy machine gun, favored for infantry support throughout history, and even now found bolted to the roll bars of Skavenger dune buggies and carried by Skavenger warriors. It is most commonly and reliably manufactured in Janus, but Skavengers still find caches in the ruins of the destroyed megacities. It uses belts of the ubiquitous 6.66 caliber bullets. Availability: 6.

MEGABLASTER

This is the ultimate destructive weapon, usable only by the very strong or by Promethean infantry men in full powered armor. It is THE squad-support weapon capable of churning out an enormous number of incredibly potent plasma bolts. It is also the most expensive man-portable weapon it is possible to buy. DPC: 10. Availability: 1.

MINIFLAMER

These are hand-held versions of the flame-thrower. You do not need to roll to hit with a miniflamer. It will hit everything in an area five meters long by two meters wide at the base unless the target makes a DX roll and avoids it. Miniflamers reduce the value of all armor except force fields by a half; round down. After you have fired the weapon, roll a d20. On a result of five or less, the magazine is empty. They can be very useful in tight spots. Availability: 3.

MISSILE GAUNTLET

A weapon favored by many a mercenary, the missile gauntlet is a duralloy glove with a rack of micro-missiles mounted on the back. These can be unleashed singly or in groups. When the launcher is exhausted, it takes a full 10 minutes to clean, reload and remount. Availability: 4.

PSIBLASTER

This terrible weapon is designed for use against psychers, but it can be useful against almost anybody. It fires concentrated beams of zeta particles capable of scrambling the neurons in the brain. This induces fits, convulsions and screams of pure agony. It does a d20 damage to psychers and d10 damage to everybody else. Armor and force fields don't stop it. psishields reduce its damage by their rating. DPC: 1. Availability: 2.

RAILGUN

This potent weapon magnetically accelerates steel-jacketed slugs up to hyper sonic speeds. The impact of such shells can destroy all but the heaviest of armor. It is accurate up to fairly long ranges. Its greatest weakness is the time it takes to charge up the magnetic accelerator, that limits it to being a single-shot weapon. Availability: 2.

ROCKET LAUNCHER

These man-portable rocket launchers contain racks of potent micro-missiles with multi-purpose warheads. As with the missile gauntlet, once the ammo runs out with these weapons, it takes 10 minutes to strip, clean, reload and remount. It is usually not possible in the middle of a firefight. The explosive rockets do d20 explosive damage over a four meter radius. Availability: 4.

SHREDDER

This weapon magnetically accelerates small, razor-sharp duralloy discs to hypersonic speeds and sends them racing toward the target. It is capable of reducing a man to hundreds of little pieces. The heavy shredder is just a larger and more powerful variant. Availability: 6.

SHOTGUN

The shotgun is a commonly available and fires charges containing many pellets. Although its armor-penetration power is low, it is very effective against lightly armored targets, since its shots can scatter. All armor with an AR rating of five or more counts double against a shotgun. Availability: 7.

GRENADES

Grenades are thrown weapons for lobbing at the enemy. They are all one-use only. Weight: 0.1. Cost: 10.

FLASH

This powerful device blasts out a dazzling flash of light, temporarily blinding all targets within its range. Certain creatures are particularly sensitive to this light and may actually take damage from it. They will blind a target for d6 combat rounds if they fail to make a DX roll to shield their eyes. Availability: 3.

HEX

These powerful, shaped charges explode sending shrapnel everywhere and inflicting damage on all within three meters. Availability: 6.

PLASMA

These grenades contain an overloaded plasma generator, which explodes on a time-detonation fuse, bathing everything within three meters in superheated plasma. Doing 2d6 damage. Availability: 3.

WEB

These grenades release thousands of filaments of sticky fluid, that swiftly harden to form a cocoon around their victim, preventing movement. In their hardened state, these filaments are tough enough to resist the efforts of all but the strongest creatures to free themselves. Although tough, these filaments are permeable by air and will not suffocate a target. This makes them a favorite restraining device for law-enforcement agencies. They will immobilize anyone with ST three or less. Alert victims get a DX roll to avoid being splashed. Weight: 0.1. Availability: 3.

SUPER-HEAVY WEAPONS

Super-heavy weapons are huge powerful weapons that are usually used only by the military. They can be carried by certain giant robots or vehicle mounted. Or they can be set up on tripods by infantry.

With the Narrator's permission, you can purchase a super-heavy version of any close-combat or heavy weapon. To do so, multiply a weapon's cost by two for every +1M they add.

You can add up to +4 damage multipliers this way. If you want to carry a super-heavy weapon by yourself, add two to the minimum ST modifier of your chosen weapon type for every additional damage multiplier the weapon has. Double the weapon's weight for every additional damage multiplier. Unless you possess the ST minimum for a super-heavy weapon, you cannot fire it without a tripod.

A tripod for a super-heavy weapon costs 100 credits plus an extra 100 credits per additional damage multiplier. Availability for each weapon is based on negative one per additional damage multiplier.

SMART WEAPONS

Smart weapons were invented by the ancient Prometheans and are most commonly manufactured in that metrozone, although some are also made in Janus using pirated Promethean technology.

Any normal weapon can be configured as a smart weapon. A smart weapon has been given special circuitry enabling to be linked to a neurojak by a fiber-optic cable. This hook-up allows the user to control the weapon directly without pulling a trigger. It enables precision control and targeting as the weapon becomes an extension of the user's body and nervous system. Within the weapon are gyroscopes and compensators that will enhance this very fine control.

A smart weapon that has been attached to your body with a fiber-optic cable can be used as a weapon-implant. You can fight with it using your weapon implant skill, or your skill with that weapon whichever is greater. To get the full benefit of a smart weapon you need the weapon-implant skill. Once you have it, all you need to do is add a proficiency slot to your weapon-implant skill for the smart weapon you have just purchased.

Most smart weapons can be purchased with a control chip that can be plugged into an implant computer. This control chip contains all the programming needed to add the proficiency slot to your weapon-implant skill. Control chips cost 1M and are the same availability as the weapon you are purchasing. (Control chips count as equipment that can be taken from you, so you do not have to spend XP in order to master using them.)

For example, let us say that you buy a blaster pistol that has been configured as a smart weapon. You can now either use your blaster pistol skill, or your weapon-implant skill. If you already have a weapon-implant skill of six, then all you have to do is add a blaster pistol proficiency slot to your weapon-implant skill in order to be able to use the blaster pistol at skill level six. Alternatively, you could just buy the control chip, which will automatically grant you the proficiency slot.

Smart weapons have the same availability as a normal weapon in Prometheus. They have one less availability in Janus and are black market elsewhere. Smart weapons cost three times as much as normal weapons because of all the extra systems they contain.



ARMOR

Most armor comes in three distinctive bands, light, medium and heavy. Obviously the lighter the armor, the less it will encumber you. The heavier the armor, the more it will do so. On the other hand, heavier armor grants better protection than light armor. Amazingly enough you can only wear one suit of armor at a time. Armor has several characteristics;

ARMOR RATING (AR)

This tells you how much damage it stops

DX PENALTY (DP)

Certain armor types slow down movement and apply this penalty to all DX based skills. You can add your ST to DX Penalty. This will never make the penalty positive but will offset the penalty. So if you have armor with a -2 penalty and a ST of +1 your armor would have a penalty of -1. If you had the same armor and ST +3 then the penalty would be zero. Conversely if you had the same armor and a ST of -1, the penalty would increase to -3.

WEIGHT (W)

This tells you how much it weighs in kilograms.

COST

This tells you the price of the armor.

ARMOR TYPES

There are a number of different armor types available. These vary in cost and construction but all serve the purpose of protecting their wearer from damage.

CARAPACE

Carapace armor is grown in tanks and attaches itself to the body of its wearer as a symbiote. It is almost as tough as ceramic armor, with the added advantage that it can have all sorts of bio-systems added to it. (For more information on this subject, see the section on cybernetics and symbionics below.)

Few save Hydrans, mutants and Xenogens will wear it, since there is a common prejudice that such symbiotes can steal a man's soul. Carapace armor is favoured by Hydrans and mutants, as it is genetically tailored and adapts itself to its user's special abilities, allowing wings to grow through, for example. Availability: 6.

CERAMIC

This layered and polished armor is padded and capable of resisting most forms of impact damage. It can be molded into many strange and exotic shapes and is the most common military armor of Waste World. Availability: 9.

ARMOR TYPE	AR	DP	WT	C
Light Carapace	2	0	-	500
Med Carapace	4	0	-	1M
Hvy Carapace	6	0	-	2M
Light Ceramic	3	0	8	400
Med Ceramic	6	-1	17.5	800
Hvy Ceramic	9	-2	25	1.5M
Hide	1	0	4	100
Battlesuit	10	0	-	10M
Ikarean Battlesuit	6	0	-	2 M

HIDE

This is the most primitive of armor, used by Wastelanders and urban street gangs. It provides very little protection against bullets and energy weapons, although it will slow a blade. Availability: 9.

POWERED ARMOR

Powered armor integrates hydraulic systems, computer controls and layers of ceramic to produce the ultimate personal armor. It contains a hydraulic exoskeleton which enhances its wearer's strength, and life-support systems that allow its wearer to survive in the deadliest terrain for up to a week without food or water as well as making him immune to all normal biohazards such as poison, radiation, etc.

All powered armor contains a communicator, which allows its user to communicate with anybody else on the same frequency. (The frequency can, of course be altered to monitor other comm traffic.)

The best suits are manufactured in the megacity of Prometheus. Powered armor does not count toward encumbrance because its servo-systems carry its weight. In fact, powered armor has its own strength, which it substitutes for its user's. All forms of powered armor use banks of 100 DPCs, which grants them a month of continuous operation between recharges.

It is possible to add cybernetic systems to powered armor. (For more information on this subject see the section on cybernetics and symbionics below.)

All powered armor has an energy rating. This is how many energy points you can spend each turn when wearing it.

It takes one energy point to move, to make a close-combat attack, or use an integral weapon or system such as bionics. When lifting and carrying things, you must spend energy points equal to the ST you need to carry your burden.



You cannot spend more energy points than your suit generates each turn. So if your suit had an energy rating of two and you had two attached weapons, a psi-shield and an IRIS, you could choose to move and fire one of the weapons, or move and activate the psi shield, or fire two weapons. If the suit had a ST of three, you could move and fire both weapons, or move and activate the psishield and fire one weapon, and so on. At the start of your action phase, you get to decide how to spend your energy rating.

PROMETHEAN BATTLESUIT

These mighty Promethean suits give a ST of four to their users. They also include a level nine psishield. Energy rating: 6. Availability: 0.

IKAREAN BATTLESUIT

These potent powered armor suits are held aloft on suspensor fields, which enable them to fly at speeds exceeding 300 kph. The helmets contain a powerful digital magnocular system which works just like the device of the same name, see below. They add to their user's strength and the razor-sharp wing blades that extrude from the armguards are capable of cutting a man in half. Normally these wings are sheathed within the suit and only extruded during flight or combat. These wings do 1M+2 damage and use the Ikarean battlesuit skill slot in close combat. Energy rating: 3. Availability: 0.

PROTECTION

Although these systems are not armor, they are all used to enhance survivability in the warzones of Waste World.

CAMOCLOAK

Camocloaks are manufactured from photosensitive material that reacts to ambient light and color, creating a quickly changing disruptive pattern. They can make their wearers very hard to spot at a distance and quite difficult to see when close up, particularly if the wearer does not move. Camocloaks are relatively common among the Wastelanders and popular with the criminal elements in the megacities. Opponents are at -2 to spot the wearer of a camocloak. Weight: 2. Availability: 3. **Cost: 1M.**

DISTORTION FIELD

Distortion fields bend and refract light around its wearer, causing his outline to blur and shift and making him difficult to hit with ranged weapons. Distortion field generators are small and highly portable and are normally worn attached to a belt. Opponents are at -2 to hit the wearer of a distortion field with a ranged weapon and -2 to hit him in close combat. Weight: 1. Availability: 3. **Cost: 5M.**

FORCE FIELD

Force fields are rare and expensive but still produced in certain places, most notably Prometheus. They sheath the wearer in a halo of energy. Although these force fields are almost impenetrable, the impact of weapons can force them to bend, causing damage to the wearer. Force fields, too, can be found on belt and armband generators. They are extremely expensive and favored by the wealthy who do not wish to wear full armor everywhere and yet want to be protected. Force fields are AR three against most forms of damage but AR six against energy weapons such as lasers, blasters and force blades. This is cumulative with any other armor you may wear. Weight: 1. Availability: 1. **Cost: 7. 5M.**



PSI SHIELD

These are most common among the masses of the city of Prometheus but are also worn by most rulers, merchants and spies, in short anyone with reason to be suspicious of having their thoughts read or controlled. They come in the form of amulets, torcs, rings, necklaces and other jewelry. All of them contain small traces of psychotropic crystal which disrupts the flow of psychic energy. There are various more powerful mechanically enhanced systems which feed small charges of energy into the crystals and create an area effect field which disrupts psychic powers. Weight: negligible. Availability: 9 to 1 per point of protection. **Cost:** 100 per point of protection up to 3 points. 300 per point thereafter up to 6 points. 1M per point thereafter to a maximum of 9 points.

REBREATHER MASK

These are standard-issue to anyone who ventures beyond the megacities. They slip into place over the face and give protection against the most common forms of inhaled gas. You do not need to make a poison roll if exposed while wearing a rebreather. They also contain micromesh filters, which prevent the inhalation of ash, sand and other contaminants. Anyone who ventures into the Wastes without one must make a ST roll for every hour he breathes unfiltered air. Failing this roll means you will take a d4 poison damage from airborne pollutants. Weight: 1. Availability: 9. **Cost:** 100.

REPULSOR FIELD

Repulsor fields repel projectiles and blades with a speed inversely proportional to their kinetic energy. Fast-moving weapons such as bullets are deflected automatically; slow moving weapons such as blades have a chance of penetrating them. Repulsor field generators are small and portable and can be worn on a belt or armlet.

Repulsor fields give AR 30 against bullet-firing ranged weapons (not energy weapons). They grant no protection against anything else. If a ranged weapon penetrates the field, and it may not be used again until repaired. Weight: 1. Availability: 2. **Cost:** 10M.

SHIELD

Shields are primitive devices mainly used in close combat to parry attacks. With a shield you can parry up to three enemies in close combat without any penalty to your parry roll because of the additional attacks. Using a small shield gives you +1 on any parry roll made with your shield skill. Using a large shield gives you +2 on your parry roll.

Small Shield: Weight: 1. Availability: 9. **Cost:** 50.

Large Shield: Weight: 2. Availability: 6. **Cost:** 90.



SURVIVAL SUIT

These are common among the Wastelanders. They are sealed suits with their own hoods and gauntlets. They contain waste reclamation systems and water recyclers, all powered by the pumping of the body when in motion. They are regarded as essential by all who venture forth into the deserts. They will let you survive in the deep desert for up to a week without food or water. Weight: 5. Availability: 9. **Cost:** 100.

SYMBsuit

Symb suits are effectively a much more sophisticated biotechnological variant of the survival suit manufactured exclusively in the city of Hydra.

The symbiote fuses with its wearer and lives by photosynthesis and recycling the wearer's wastes, which it converts back into nutrients. Symb suits extrude tendrils through every orifice of their wearer's body and effectively become part of him. They contain many filtration systems that make their wearers immune to toxins and disease.

Many are covered in a chameleon-like skin, which acts like a camocloak. Some are even intelligent and capable of processing data.

It is said that the wearer of a symbysuit can exist for a month in the desert on a piece of fruit and a thimbleful of water. They grant immunity to poisons. Symbysuits are purchased as carapace armor with a symbiotic attachment. Weight: negligible. Availability: 4 (2 for camocloak version.). **Cost:** 1M + Cost of Armor + 1M for the Camocloak version.

MEDICAL DEVICES

This medical equipment is used for a variety of purposes, from healing to bringing back the dead in clone bodies.

NEKROCHIPS

This was a device popular with the Ancients and still found in many places, although its use is illegal in some cities. It is an implanted chip that records a person's thoughts, memories and emotions right up until the point of death. After death, the chip can be removed and implanted into a computer system, a robot, a mindwiped hostbody or a specially grown clone of the original body, effectively returning the person to life. It can also be used in conjunction with a Lazarus pod to resurrect people who have been killed in action.

These small and powerful memory-recording devices are usually attached to a subject's skull at the temple, or just behind the ear. They use ancient and little-understood nanotech processes to monitor a subject's brain chemistry and neural pathways and constantly update their own storage systems. If someone wearing a nekrochip is killed or suffers brain damage, the nekrochip can be used to recreate an exact model of their brain patterns and thought processes. When a chip is used this way, it burns out and must be replaced. Nekrochips provide the basis of most of Waste World's resurrection technologies. Normally they come as part of a resurrection contract policy. They are also the basis of the Shogunate's religious system.

Nekrochips are most commonly used by the wealthy and adventurous, who take out resurrection contracts with body brokers who will bring them back in event of fatal accident. Of course, if the chip is lost, there is nothing the broker can do.

Sometimes, the biochip is flawed and the user is brought back insane or brain-damaged. If you have a contract with a body broker, the procedure works as follows: If your body is still physically intact, the broker will place you in a Lazarus pod and bring you back that way.

If only your chip is returned and you have paid to have a clone sample taken and preserved, you will be brought back in a clone of your body which is physically the same as the body you possessed when the sample was taken. You will not have any bionic implants, but you will have all missing limbs, organs, eyes etc., unless your original body suffered from some sort of genetic defect. The use of robots and mind-wiped bodies will be covered in future supplements. Weight: Negligible. Availability: 3. **Cost: 1M for basic chip.**

LAZARUS POD

These powerful automated medical systems resemble huge cryonic coffins containing masses of medical sensors, surgical tools and nanovirus-repair systems. Once inside them, a subject is soaked in a nutrient bath of cellular-repair hormones and enzymes, and whatever level of surgical or medical intervention needed to bring the subject back to life is used by the artificial intelligence within the Lazarus pod. Although they are so bulky and heavy they can only be carried by large vehicles (truck-sized and above), Lazarus pods represent the ultimate battlefield medical technology of the ancients. Weight: 1 tonne. Availability: 1. **Cost: 500M.**

REINCARNATION STATION

A reincarnation station is a massive medical facility containing all the computer datacores, Lazarus pods, and clone vats needed to carry out the process of reincarnating someone using clone samples and karma chips. They are common throughout the Shogunate and can be found in most of the metrozones where they are used to carry out resurrection contracts. Weight: 50 tonnes. Availability: 1. **Cost: 5G.**

RESURRECTION CONTRACT

A resurrection contract is simply a contract between you and a body broker who will ensure that if you die, you are brought back to life. The contract consists of certain elements. As part of one, you will be outfitted with a nekrochip bearing the broker's seal, and a tissue sample will be taken. If you are killed for any reason other than legal execution, the broker will do his best to revive you. If your body is brought to the broker's facility, you will be placed in a Lazarus pod. If this fails to revive you, a new clone body will be grown and your memories will be downloaded into it. It is normally stipulated in the contract that such a clone body becomes your legal heir.



Anyone bringing a body or chip containing his mark back to a broker is rewarded with a salvage fee of one M, which is part of the price of the contract. As part of the contract, you can stipulate that anyone bringing your nekrochip or body back will get an extra reward donated by you as part of the contract. Many adventurers have the value of this extra reward tattooed on their body.

Of course, the broker or his agents usually carry out some form of investigation to make sure murder was not committed simply to get the reward. This will be in addition to any investigation carried out by local law-enforcement agencies.

A basic contract costs one megacredit per basic life extension. There is a one-time-only additional fee of one megacredit for taking and preserving a tissue sample. You may also choose to add an additional reward for anyone who returns your chip.

If your nekrochip is not returned by your buddies, you may make a success roll each week to see whether it is returned, by anybody else. To see whether your chip is returned make a success roll. There is a +1 modifier megacredit of additional reward you post, although the narrator may disallow this or apply severe negative modifiers if your body was lost in some out-of-the way place far from normal habitation. If you fumble this roll, then your chip is lost or irrevocably damaged. Weight: Negligible. Availability: 9. **Cost:** 1M+1M fee+any reward.

RANSOM BOND

Ransom bonds are normally posted with the Universal Trading Bank, a Janusian trading Kombine, or with a body broker. These people are known as guarantors. It goes without saying that such people must be above suspicion and irreproachable in their business practises - at least when it comes to paying out such bonds.

Ransom bonds consist of any sum of money you wish to pay. Normally when you have been kidnapped, taken prisoner or are otherwise being held against your will. Agents of the people holding you and of the guarantor will meet and arrange for your safe return to freedom, in exchange for the bond.

Bonds posted in this way are always honored once the guarantor has concrete evidence of your freedom. There is no way to cancel such a transfer once it has been set-up. Again, as with resurrection contracts, it is not uncommon for adventurers to have the price of their ransom bond tattooed on their body or stenciled on their armor. It is also common practice to carry a copy of the contract on your person if you possess one of these.

Ransom bonds are only paid while you are alive, thus giving your captors some reason to take you alive and keep you that way. If you are killed in the line of action, your bond goes to your heirs. This can include any clone created under a resurrection contract. You can increase the value of your ransom bond at any time by visiting your guarantor's offices. You can also redeem the bond in part or in full at any time. If you cash the bond in, you will lose the one megacredit administration fee. Weight: Negligible. Availability: 9. **Cost:** 1M + whatever you wish to pay as your ransom.

ORGAN GRAFTS

Organ grafts are common in the wealthier cities of Waste World. They are used to replace organs that have been lost to accident or disease.

They provide the basis of the horrific criminal industry known as body snatching. This is where a person is kidnapped and broken up for his body parts. The practice was originally used to salvage the body parts of people fatally injured in accidents but has now become commonplace as a crime in the more violent megacities. In the more civilized places, organs are grown in life vats and custom tailored to a patient's immune system. Availability: 6. **Cost:** 100 times the cost of the disadvantage you are buying off.

PSI DEVICES

These devices are used by psychers to enhance their powers and by others to track down and detect psychers. They manipulate, amplify and analyze the psiwaves emitted by psychers.

PSI DETECTOR

There are many types of psi detector, ranging from the small hand-held units used by witch hunters everywhere to the gigantic and sophisticated analysis chambers used by the Prometheans to screen their citizenry. All psi detectors will pick up anyone possessed by a Demon, or other form of energy being, unless they are using some form of concealment. Being possessed by a Demon will show up on a psidetector.

MINI SCANNER

These units are small, weighing less than half a kilogram. They are either held in the user's hand or attached to his wrist or clothing. They can detect a psyker actively using his power within 50 meters. They are cheap, portable and commonly available almost everywhere, but next to useless if a psyker chooses not to use his powers. Weight: 1. Availability: 4. **Cost:** 200.



MINI TRACKER

These Promethean-built devices resemble mini scanners but are much more powerful, sophisticated and expensive. They can detect the active use of psi powers within one kilometer and then allow their users to home in on that spot. They have a fix button, which will set them to home in on the last point the psi power was used if the psyker ceases to use his powers, and finally they have an analysis function, which means that they bleep out an alarm when activated within one meter of a psyker, even if the psyker is not actively using his powers. They are, in fact, miniature versions of Promethean scanning chambers. Weight: 1. Availability: 4. Cost: 2M.

SCANNING CHAMBERS

These are devices used to deep-scan Promethean citizens. These can be chosen at random, during the military-service medical. They are automatically used on any criminal not sentenced to death. They can deep probe any psyker or mutant and detect the presence of psychic powers or any other form of mutation no matter how well-hidden. They can also be used to detect the level and exact abilities possessed by any psyker. Last, they can be set to mindburn the power out of any psyker, leaving them powerless but acceptable to Promethean society. Weight and cost are not given since they are not available for sale.

PSICRYSTALS

Psicrystals are found in the toxic Wastes amid the fast growing Drakonium fields. They are flawed forms of Drakonium, useless as an energy source and, as such, shunned by sandhunters. However these crystals are treasured by psychers, who know their usefulness. In any concentration, their presence can be sensed by psychers up to a kilometer away. It has been speculated that it is probably their presence that allows psychers to detect Drakonium fields. They are all seemingly non-toxic, although some savants have suggested that long-term exposure to them can drive psychers insane.

To use them, a psyker must set them in his flesh, where they can contact skin, or he must have them readily available where he can touch them, i.e. set in amulets or other forms of jewelry. There are many colors of psicrystal, all of which have their own function. Psicrystal can easily be told from any other form of jewelry. It glows with its own internal light. To use a crystal, you must forge a psychic link with it, so that it resonates in harmony with your own psychic aura. To forge this link, you must carry it upon your person for the number of days equal to the crystal's level. The maximum number of psicrystals you can have attuned to you is equal to your psionic power level. Weight is negligible for all psicrystals.

AMBER

Amber crystals add one to your PW for one day. Once activated, they last 24 hours and then become dull and useless. They cannot be recharged. You cannot use more than one amber crystal at once. Availability: 1. Cost: 1M.



TOPAZ

Topaz crystals can be used to make power matrices. They take 10 times as long to attune as normal crystals, and you must spend at least one hour per day concentrating on them to attune them. Once attuned, they become viridian crystals, containing a matrix of the psipower you chose to attune them with. You can attune a topaz crystal with any psipower that you currently possess. When attuned, the matrix is fixed and cannot be changed. Availability: 1. **Cost: 1M per level.**

VIRIDIAN

Viridian crystals contain a matrix of psychic power set there by another psycher. To use one, you must attune it to you in the normal way. This takes nine days. Once attuned, it will grant you access to whatever power is implanted in the matrix. You can use this as if it were an ordinary psi power that you possess for as long as you have the crystal. If the crystal is stolen or removed from your person, you will lose the power. It will take the new possessor nine days to attune it to his own aura. Once another person has attempted to attune the crystal, you must re-attune it to yourself as normal, even if the crystal was only out of your hands for an hour. Availability: 1. **Cost: 2 or more Ms per level.**

PSI ENHANCER

The psi enhancer is a mechanical device that looks like a helmet. Inside it are a couple of contact pads that attach themselves to the wearer's forehead and connect his brain with the enhancer's complex circuitry. The psienhancer greatly increases the user's abilities, having all the effects of increasing your PW by one while wearing it. Weight: 2. Availability: 2. **Cost: 10M.**

DRUGS

Drugs are usually ingested in tablet form, but they can also be injected by hypodermic or induction capsule. Once assimilated, they can have many different effects on the user. The drugs listed are by no means the only ones available in Waste World. This list is far from exhaustive. Weight is negligible for most drugs.

Most drugs are addictive. That means that every time you use them, you must make an addiction roll. If you fail this addiction roll, you gain one addiction point. That is used as a negative modifier on all future addiction rolls for that drug. If you gain 10 addiction points to the same drug, you automatically gain an addiction as described in the disadvantages section.



Once you have gained an addiction, you should reset your addiction points for that particular drug to zero. This does not mean that you no longer have to make addiction rolls. You do, only this time when you gain 10 addiction points for this particular drug, you gain the next level of addiction or you gain a new disadvantage of your Narrator's choice. This is because of the cumulative long term psychological or physiological ill effects of the drug. The disadvantage should be one that seems appropriate to your character and his particular addiction.

Addiction modifiers: some drugs are easier to become addicted to than others. If a drug has a positive addiction modifier, then it is added to your chance of making the addiction roll. These are drugs it is easy to avoid becoming addicted to. If a drug has a negative addiction modifier, then it is subtracted from your addiction roll. These are drugs it is harder to resist. Some drugs are so addictive that they give you two or more addiction points whenever you fail your addiction roll.

Some drugs are nonaddictive. That means that you do not need to make an addiction roll.

You can reduce your addiction points to a drug by simply not taking it for one week. If you do this, you will automatically lose one addiction point.

PSIBOOSTERS

There are various forms of psibooster, drug all of them are usually taken in tablet form, and they take d4 combat rounds to take effect.

PSICORE

This drug grants its user an extra PW point for one hour but it is very easy to overdose on. Each time you use it, you must make a success roll using your ST as a positive modifier and the number of doses of psicore you have taken in the past 24 hours as a negative modifier. If you fail this roll, you will become entranced and do nothing but contemplate the wonders of the psychic universe for the next 10 hours. You will be completely useless and will have to be carried around by your comrades. You will also gain one addiction point. Availability: 1. **Cost: 500 per dose.**

PSIBOOST

This very dangerous and unstable drug is only used by the most insane or desperate of psychers. It takes effect instantly granting you the full effect of having PL nine for the next combat round. Unfortunately for this to happen you must survive taking the drug itself. Make a success roll using your ST and PW as positive modifiers. The negative modifier is nine. If you fail, your brain will overload with psychic energy and you will take damage equal to the amount you failed the success roll by. In this instance you will get none of the benefits of the drug. This drug is nonaddictive. Availability: 1. **Cost: 1M per dose.**

COMBAT DRUGS

There are various forms of combat drug commonly available. All are more or less addictive. Other than that, their effects are variable.

RAGE

This drug turns the user into a raging berserker who feels no pain for 10 rounds. Even if his LF goes negative, he will not stop, not even if he would otherwise be dead. Rage temporarily adds 10 to the user's LF and three to his ST. It fills the user with blind insensate fury, making him want to confront the enemy and engage in hand-to-hand combat.

Every round the user chooses not to do this, he must make a willpower roll. Otherwise he will cast away the ranged weapon he is using, draw any close-combat weapon he has and charge right in. If there are no enemies left alive and the user is still under the influence of rage, he will attack the nearest friend unless he is restrained. This is a very addictive drug.

Addiction Modifier: -4. You gain 2 addiction points if you fail your addiction roll. Availability: 6. **Cost: 200C per dose.**

ANTI-DAM

Anti-dam makes the user more resistant to damage. It temporarily increases blood clotting and muscle hardness, giving the user the equivalent of one point of cumulative armor for ten rounds. Only one dose is effective at a time. If used more than three times per day, it will have no effect. This is a nonaddictive drug. Availability: 6. **Cost: 100C per dose.**

REGENETRON

Regenatron is a rare and expensive cellular stimulant extracted from the pituitary glands of regenerating mutants, both animal and humanoid. For a period of 10 rounds, it enables its user to regenerate one point of body damage per combat round. Regenatron is banned in many places because it is said to cause long-term genetic damage and lead to mutation in both the user and his descendants. Each use gains you one mutation point (see the bio-hazards section.) Regenatron is not addictive.

This drug can only be used once per day or it will become toxic and give no benefits. Toxic regenatron inflicts d4 points of damage per turn for d20 turns. Availability: 3. **Cost: 1M per dose.**

NEUROENHANCERS

These powerful drugs increase reflex speed granting a temporary boost to DX and all DX based skills. They are favored by pilots and battlesuit warriors who feel that they enhance performance. +1 DX per dose to a maximum of three doses. Effects last one hour. The affects of more than one dose are not cumulative. Addiction Modifier: 0. Availability: 3. **Cost: 300 per dose.**

HALLUCINOGENS

These recreational drugs are often used by psionics to stimulate their minds and their powers. They do, temporarily, add to the psycher's psi points. They add d4 PW points. If the user fails an IN roll, they also cause hallucinations, which may cause the user to run amok. This is one reason why they are illegal in many places and why psychers have such a bad reputation. Addiction modifier: 0. Availability: 6. **Cost: 2d20C per dose.**

STIMULANTS

These are very useful in the battlefield, since they will keep the user awake even when he is chronically fatigued. Each tablet allows the user to go 24 hours without sleep and also adds +1 (not cumulative) to his DX. If used for more than three consecutive days, the user will overdose and start hallucinating. Performance will be impaired (-4 to all skill rolls) and the user will take d6+1 days to recover. Addiction Modifier: -1. Availability: 6. **Cost: 50 per dose.**

HEALERS

Healers work by stimulating nerve and tissue regeneration. They add d6+1 LF per dose ingested. This can never take you above your normal level of LF. You cannot take more than ST+3 doses per day. They will simply have no effect. These drugs are nonaddictive. Availability: 6. **Cost: 100 per dose.**

POISONS

Poisons come in various strengths, which act as a negative modifier to their target's chances of resisting the effects. Most poison strengths are d6+1. To find the final cost of a poison, multiply the cost given here by the strength. This is the basic cost if the poison must be ingested in capsule form or injected through a needle or dart. Multiply this by two if the poison is a contact poison or in gas grenade form. Gas grenades burst and affect everyone within three meters. They have a basic weight of 0.1 kg.

STAZE

This poison paralyzes an opponent for d4x5 minutes unless resisted with a successful poison saving throw. Availability: 3. **Cost: 50 per dose.**

PHASE

This disorients foes and causes them to become dizzy and lose concentration. Its effects last (d6+1)x10 minutes. Unless resisted with a successful poison-saving throw, the victim uses the poison's strength as a negative modifier on all his die rolls. Availability: 3. **Cost: 10 per dose.**

BLIND

This poison induces blindness for d10 hours unless resisted with a successful poison roll. Availability: 2. **Cost: 30 per dose.**

KILL

This poison simply inflicts its STxd6 damage on the victim unless resisted with a successful poison saving throw. Availability: 1. **Cost: 50 per dose.**

SNOOZE

This poison knocks a victim out. He will be unconscious for d6 hours unless resisted with a successful poison saving throw. Availability: 3. **Cost: 25 per dose.**

TOOLS

Tools are the general equipment used by various professionals in order to carry out the skills associated with their profession. Without the proper tools, they will be at a -4 penalty when using their skills, if they can use them at all.

FIRST AID KIT

This can be used by anyone to bind wounds and carry out very basic pieces of first aid. It is also essential for anyone with the healing skill if they intend to perform any field surgery. It contains synthi-skin bandages, sterilizing fluids, painkillers etc. Each kit allows you to perform first aid on one wounded person. Weight: 0.1kg. Availability: 6. **Cost: 100.**

SURGICAL TOOLKIT

These tools are essential for performing surgical operations. Each toolkit contains a biomonitor for letting you know the patient's condition, laser scalpels, biowire suturing tools and all the other equipment you need to perform surgery on humanoids and humans. Weight: 1 kg. Availability: 5. **Cost: 2M.**

CYBERSURGEON TOOLKIT

This contains everything you would find in a surgical toolkit, plus all the necessary implements for connecting organic materials to cybernetic equipment. Weight: 1.5kg. Availability: 4. **Cost: 3M.**

ROBOMANCERS TOOLKIT

This large heavy toolkit comes in its own carrying case and contains a laser micro-welder and multiple power tools, as well as pliers, wrenches and ratchets. It is essential for anyone performing repairs and maintenance on robots. Weight: 5kg. Availability: 4. **Cost: 1M.**

WEBNODE KIT

This keyboard, helmet and powerpack plug directly into a web interface jack and allow a ultramancer to send his spirit out into the web. Without some sort of webnode kit you cannot interface with the webs. Weight: 1kg. Availability: 4. **Cost: 5M.**

MEKTEK TOOLKIT

This is a case containing all the tools for a mekanik or engineer to maintain and repair vehicles and weapons. There are wrenches, spanners, a micro-flare welder and other such devices, all packed within a light shock resistant plastic casing. More advanced versions contain diagnostic computer systems which can be interfaced with a vehicles oversight computers to trace flaws automatically. Weight: 5kg. Availability: 6. **Cost: 1M.**



GENERAL GEAR

BACKPACK

These are used to carry clothing and equipment. Luxury models come with a suspensor harness that will neutralize the weight of the gear carried. You can get up to 25 kg of gear into a standard backpack. DPC: 1/1 year for luxury model. Weight: negligible. Availability: 9 (3 for luxury model.) **Cost: 50 (1M for luxury model.)**

BIOSENSOR

This device is capable of detecting life energy at a range of up to 100 meters. It will tell the user the rough size and strength of the detected entity and also numbers. It projects blips on a simple radial screen which shows all entities detected within the radius of the devices power. DPC: 1/1 year. Weight: 1. Availability: 3. **Cost: 200.**

BIO-HAZARD SENSOR

This device is capable of detecting any biohazards within the immediate surroundings. It can give an analysis of the toxin levels, radiation levels and the presence of any harmful substances or energies. It can be left switched on and, if it detects any, it will emit a warning beep - unless the beep is silenced. It displays any information it gathers on a small holo-screen. DPC: 1/1 year. Weight: 1. Availability: 3. **Cost: 100.**

BUBBLE TENT

These self-inflating tents are made from tough polymer plastics and are designed to withstand all but the worst sandstorms. They are hemispherical in size and have their own filter doors. They can be anchored to hard rock by pitons, and can hold up to four people in comfort. Many folk have survived in the deep desert because they invested in one of these. Still more people use them as permanent habitations in the slums of the great megacities. Weight: 3. Availability: 8. **Cost: 150.**

COMMUNICATOR

These small radio devices are worn on the wrist. They usually contain a chronometer and a small digital calculator, as well. They can be used to broadcast to anyone within range (five kilometers) or they can be set to narrowcast to other units by sending out scrambled pulses. The most expensive versions contain small micro-cameras and screens that enable their users to see the person they are talking to. DPC: 1/1 year. Weight: negligible. Availability: 7 (5 for video model.) **Cost: 100. (500 for video model.)**

Second, they can be used to project small windows over the field-of-vision, displaying incoming signals from headcams and guncams. These more sophisticated versions are usually used by field officers. Third, field visors give their user's flash protection, and can be used in conjunction with an image enhancement, or night vision, camera. In this case, they will superimpose the information from the camera on their user's field of vision. DPC: 1/ 1 Year. Weight: 1.5. Availability 6. **Cost: 200.**

FILTRATION BOTTLE

These bottles are essential for most people traveling in the Wastes. They bottles can accept up to a liter of water or urine. Each bottle has a complex system of filtration meshes and purifiers which will produce pure water. Weight: 1. Availability: 6. **Cost: 150.**

FOOD TABLETS

These concentrated food capsules contain all the calories and vitamins contained in a full meal. They are used by explorers and people who need to keep the weight of their supplies to the absolute minimum. They are also mass-produced in autofacs and distributed among the very poor to prevent starvation during periods of famine. Of course, they lack dietary fibre and need to be used in conjunction with a laxative. Weight: Negligible. Availability: 6. **Cost: 100 per 100.**

FORCE TENT

These ultra-expensive tents are actually a small, programmed force field generator which erects a barrier between you and the outside world. Most also come with a computer controlled heating/cooling unit that provides a livable environment within the force field. The force fields can be walked through once activated, and will automatically adjust themselves if anyone is standing on the activation perimeter when switched on. The force field will flow around their body and spring back to its normal position when the obstacle is removed. Force tents cannot withstand huge pressures, but are favored by the very rich for their portability and comfort. DPC: 1/ 30 night's use. Weight: 1. Availability: 3. **Cost: 2M.**

GLOWGLOBES

These glowing spheres of light are omnipresent throughout the megacities and beyond. They are usually between 2 and 12 centimeters in diameter, and can be set to glow in any color. Usually, they illuminate an area of three meters in diameter. Some are powered by Drakonium power cells. Others store sunlight directly and then release it on a one-for-one basis i.e. one minute of stored sunlight will provide one minute of illumination.

All glowglobes contain automatic cut-outs which will switch them off when ambient light is sufficient for seeing. Some people carry glowglobes set in rods to make torches. In homes of the wealthy they are sometimes mounted on suspensor platforms and hover in the air, or move around in pre-programmed patterns. The most expensive variant on this is the personal glowglobe which is mounted on a suspensor and that is programmed to follow its owner around - just behind his head.. Such glowglobes are usually provided with audial receptors, allowing their user to determine their brightness with a simple verbal command. DPC: 1/ 1 Year. Weight: 1. Availability: 6. **Cost 10-100.**

GRAPNEL GUN

This hand-portable device uses a suspensor-field generator, and a gravitic charger, to shoot a grapnel up to 300 meters. The grapnel contains self-expanding hooks that it extrudes when it reaches a set distance or when it encounters sufficient resistance to brace itself. The microfine wire is capable of supporting up to 1,000 kilograms of weight. This device is favored by assassins, burglars and comandos. Weight: 3. Availability: 5. **Cost: 500.**

GUNCAMS

These are often attached to military issue weaponry. They perform several functions. First, they contain digital-image magnifiers that act as powerful sights for the weapon's user. Second, they send out coded, pulsed frequencies allowing an officer to monitor what his men are seeing, through their sights. The images can be shown on a master control panel, or within the heads-up display in an officer's field visor. They add +2 to hit on any attack over close range. DPC: 1/ 1 Year. Weight: 1. Availability: 6. **Cost: 500.**

HEADCAMS

These are like guncams, only they are normally mounted on head bands worn by soldiers. They are also a favorite of journalists, and others, who need to broadcast information quickly. They are often used in conjunction with throatmikes that enable the user to talk to whoever is on the receiving end of the camera link.

Both guncams and headcams can be equipped with infrared and UV capture, as well as image enhancement software. This enables their users to see into the IR and UV spectrums, and greatly enhance their night-fighting capability. DPC: 1/ 1 Year. Weight: 1. Availability: 6. **Cost: 250.** (Double cost for IR or UV versions. Quadruple cost of they have both.)



HEATING CIRCUITRY

Heating circuitry can be built into most forms of clothing. It is usually sandwiched between two layers of therminsulon fabric, for maximum heat maintenance. Heating circuitry will maintain a comfortable body temperature for its wearer - down to temperatures of minus 50 degrees. It can also be placed within ultra-lightweight sleeping bags. DPC: 1/ 1 Year. Weight: Negligible. Availability: 5. **Cost: 250.**

HOLOTERMINAL

These small crystal balls contain a holoprojector unit, and digital communication link to the nearest computer network. They are voice-activated and allow the user access to any database authorization he possesses in the vicinity. They can also be used to patch the user into the local communications network. The holoprojector is capable of displaying a sphere in the air, three meters above it and two meters in circumference. This allows for full visual display. A small speaker-system within the crystal allows simultaneous sound projection. The system will only work if it is within five kilometers of a dataweb beacon. Therefore, it can normally only be used within five kilometers of a town or megacity. More expensive holoprojectors contain a datachip socket in their base that enables them to access information stored on the chips. This is the favored way for carrying artificially intelligent expert-systems. DPC: 1/ 1 Year. Weight: 1. Availability: 6. **Cost: 1.5M.**

HUNTER-SEEKERS

These small killer-droids are little more than a micro-suspensor unit, a comweb pickup, a targeting chip and a warhead. They can be programmed to track down a tracer at a range of up to five kilometers, to track down a specific pheromone pattern, or visually recognize a person at up to 100 meters.

This makes them a perfect assassination weapon. The killer merely has to get within range of his victim and release the hunter seeker. He can then lose himself in a crowd while the killing machine tracks down its victim. To use a hunter-seeker in this method you require a holophoto or pheromone sample from the target. They do 4d10 damage when they hit. Weight: 2. Availability: 3. **Cost: 5M.**

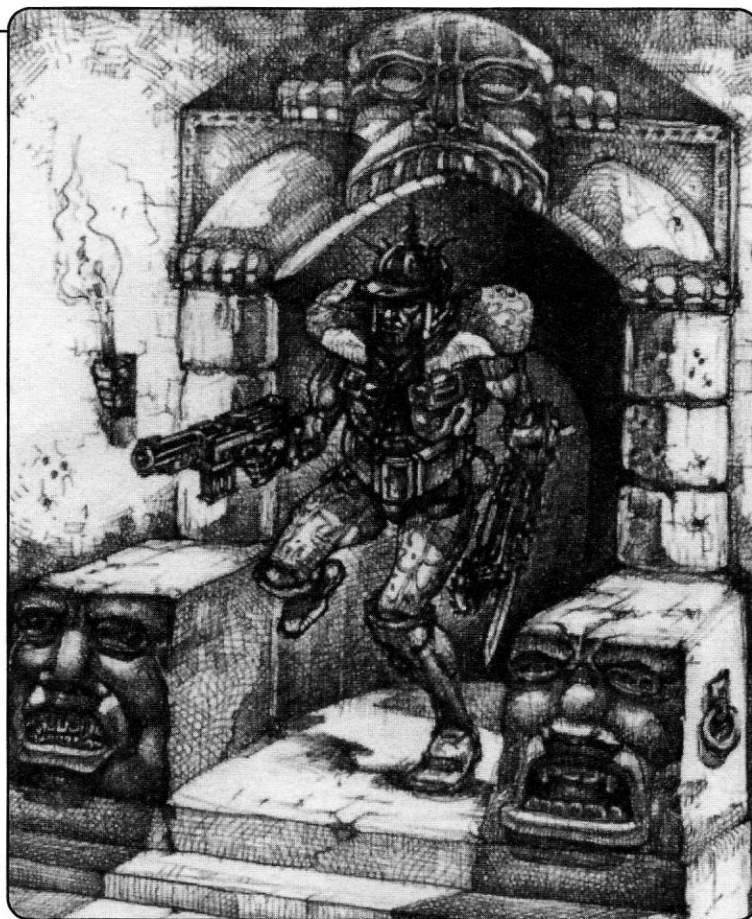


IMAGE PROJECTOR

These small portable units can project a hologram up to 2x2x2 meters in size. They can be programmed with up to 100 images, and can be used to confuse observers, or camouflage bubble tents. A favorite trick of scouts in hostile territory is to take a picture of the area where they are about to pitch their tent. They then erect the tent and cover the area with a holo-projection. Only someone within 10 feet of the projection will notice a slight rippling of the air. DPC: 1/ 8 hours. Weight: 2. Availability: 3. **Cost: 1M.**

INSECTOSCREEN

These small force fields are used to keep mosquitoes and other night-biting insects away from their user. They surround the sleeper with a very low intensity force field through which no insect can fly, but which allows the free exchange of air molecules between the areas inside and outside the field. An added bonus is that the device can be set to sound an alarm if anything larger than an insect penetrates the field - waking the sleeper instantly. DPC: 1/ 30 night's usage. Weight: 1. Availability: 5. **Cost: 500.**



LOCATOR COMPASS

This wrist-mounted device will automatically give your position and movement speed with regard to any previously programmed point. This can be set to magnetic north or some actual location, such as your home megacity. The point has to be stationary. DPC: 1/ 1 Year. Weight: Negligible. Availability: 8. **Cost: 100.**

LOCK-PICKS

This is a selection of lock-picks and other small devices necessary for using the security systems skill. Unless you have it, you will have to improvise and be at -4 to your skill rolls. Weight: Negligible. Availability: 6. **Cost: 100.**

MASKER

This is a mask of fast-setting synthi-flesh which can be molded into almost any shape, and then worn over the user's own face as a disguise. The normal manner of using it is to take an imprint of the features, of the person to be impersonated, using a masker mold - and then fill it with masker paste.

This sets within five minutes and can be attached to the user's face with more masker. It normally needs to be colored using makeup paints.

Contact lenses may have to be used to duplicate the target's eye color. Alternatively, the masker paste can be molded and trimmed with a razor to give the user new facial features. Masker can be applied to specific areas such as the nose. Weight: 1 per usage. Availability: 7. **Cost: 200 per usage.**



MEDI SENSOR

This is a much more sophisticated and sensitive bio-sensor that operates over a much shorter range (1 meter.) It is usually attached to a small diagnostic computer which can tell a trained person a lot about the target's state of health, and general well-being. It can tell, roughly, how many body points a target has left, if they have been poisoned, if they have an illness or if they are in the incubation stage of an illness. It is the favored tool of doctors and cybersurgeons throughout Waste World. DPC: 1/ 1 Year. Weight: 1. Availability: 3. **Cost: 1M.**

MICROBOOK READER

These devices are about the size of a normal paperback book. They consist of a touch sensitive screen and a chip-socket. Books which have been converted to chip form, can be inserted into the reader, and will appear on the screen. They can be leafed through by touching the appropriate icons on the screen, or by verbal command. Sections can be zoomed-in on, printed out or reviewed with ease. The Ancients stored many documents in this form, and almost every scholar on Waste World carries one. Weight: 0.5. (Weight of books is negligible.) Availability: 6. **Cost: 100.**

MICROFINE WIRE

This specially created, high-strength plastic wire is used as a replacement for rope. It can support up to 1,000 kilograms before breaking, and 100 meters weights less than 10 grams. Weight: 0.2. Availability: 4. **Cost: 200.**

MICROGRAPNEL

Micrograpnels contain special expandable hooks attached to lines of microfine wire. They roll up into a package, smaller than a child's fist. The wire extends 100 meters and the line can bear a weight of up to 1,000 kilograms. These lines are favoured by robbers and assassins everywhere. Weight: 0.1. Availability: 6. **Cost: 250.**

NIGHT VISION GOGGLES

These goggles enable their wearer to see in pitch darkness, almost as well as during the day. There is only a -1 penalty to visual awareness perception rolls, instead of the normal -4. Weight: 0.5. Availability: 4. **Cost: 250.**

PERIMETER SECURITY SENSORS

These small, and extremely useful, devices are sold in batches of 10. They are disks, one centimeter across, containing a battery of motion sensors, infrared web beams and other security devices. They can be set up within 20 meters of each other in a circle, or other geometric shape, to establish a perimeter. If anyone comes within five meters of the disc, or crosses one of their beams, then they will alert the person holding the master unit. A number of sensor sets can be daisy-chained to create larger perimeters. DPC: 1/ 30 days. Weight: 1. Availability: 5. **Cost: 3M.**

PORTASTOVE

This ultra light-weight personal microwave is favored by adventurers and explorers. It is contained within a self expanding box, slightly larger than a pack of cards. It unfolds to provide a fully functioning microwave. DPC: 1/ 1 Year. Weight: 0.2. Availability: 6. **Cost: 350.**

PROGRAMMING ENGINE

These potent devices are used by robomancers to program and interface with the positronic brain's of robots. The unit fits in a standard back-pack and contains the cables, helmet and interface jacks needed to connect the robomancer to the brain he is working on. DPC: 1/1 Year. Weight: 10. Availability: 3. **Cost: 1M.**

SCRAMBLER

Scramblers are protective devices designed to be used specifically against hunter-seekers. They broadcast a high density interference pattern around their signal unit, out to a range of about three meters. This prevents a hunter-seeker from locking on to any tracer signal - enabling it to track the user down. Unfortunately, they also interfere with radio and cell phone communications within the area. This is the reason scramblers are rarely switched-on, all the time. They are normally worn on a bracelet, amulet or other form of jewelry. They can be set to switch-on randomly, in five second pulses, to confuse hunter-seekers. Vehicles normally use them this way. DPC: 1/ 1 Year. Weight: Negligible. Availability: 5. **Cost: 500.**

SCREAMER

This powerful sonic-grenade emits a deafening screech of high-intensity sound. It is so powerful that it can make eardrums bleed and disrupt the inner ear, causing loss of balance, dizziness and even deafness. It is a favorite crowd control weapon in the great megacities. All unprotected persons will be at -4 to all DX rolls for d10 minutes. They will also be deaf. DPC: 1/ 1 hour. Weight: 1. Availability: 3. **Cost: 1M.**

SOMNOCLIPS

Somnoclips are small induction pads that attach to the user's forehead. They are connected to a small, tubular power-pack that contains a sleep-induction unit. When activated they cause instant sleep. They are often used to keep dangerous prisoners immobilized during transit. They have the added benefit that 10 minutes of somnosleep is the equivalent of a full hour of normal sleep. This makes these devices favored by the military, long distance truck drivers and others. DPC: 1/ 1 Year. Weight: 0.2. Availability: 4. **Cost: 300.**

STINK BOMB

These grenades emit a foul regurgitant gas that induces vomiting and nausea in any unprotected person who breathes it. Some people are allergic to the gas and it causes them to suffer severe respiratory difficulties or even choke to death. These side effects have not prevented the gas from being used as a crowd control weapon in many megacities. It has the same effects as staze poison. Weight: 0.1. Availability: 3. **Cost: 100.**

SUSPENSOR BEDS

Favored by the very rich, these luxury units maintain the sleeper in a gravity-nullifying suspensor-field, enabling them to float on air. The field is computer controlled and the bed monitors the sleeper, using a variety of sensors, automatically compensating for any movement. They allow almost unparalleled comfort for the user.

Special, portable units can be carried by travelers. They increase the benefits of sleep by up to 10 percent, making 10 hours sleep the equivalent of 11 hours. They can be used in conjunction with somnoclips. They have the added benefit of holding the user above the ground above snakes, scorpions or other pests who find their way into the user's place of rest. DPC: 1/ 1 Year. Weight: 1. Availability: 6. **Cost: 2M.**

SUSPENSOR BELTS

These belts contain powerful suspensor-generators which enable you to jump much further than you normally could. You can increase the height and length of your jumps (see movement in the Character Generation section) by a factor of 20. If you jump into combat, it counts as charging. DPC: 1/ 1 Year. Weight: Negligible. Availability: 4. **Cost: 1M.**

SUSPENSOR PADS

These flat, wide-soled boots actually resemble hi-tech snow shoes but are, in fact, lined with a suspensor grid that neutralizes much of the wearer's weight. This enables trained users to walk on water, snow or sand without leaving tracks, and on pressure sensors without activating them. If correctly calibrated, they will even allow a skilled user to walk on air. DPC: 1/ 1 Year. Weight: Negligible. Availability: 4. **Cost: 1M.**

SYNTHISKIN

This is a spray of quick-setting plastic that is sterile, and can be applied to wounds like a bandage. It can be used to cover burns, cuts or bullet holes and temporarily close them until the patient has time to get to proper medical care. Using synthiskin adds +4 to any appropriate first aid roll. A canister of synthiskin is normally standard issue to all police and military personnel when on duty. Each canister holds 100 doses. Weight: 0.1. Availability: 2. **Cost: 100 per canister.**

TELEPORTER HARNESS

These experimental devices allow their users to shift through space and reappear at their point of destination. They must be given a fixed set of coordinates, and they have a cut-out device that ensures they will not appear within a solid object. They are extremely experimental and, as a result, can be deadly. One in 20 users disappear and are never heard of again. Some scientists speculate that they have most probably appeared on the other side of the world. Others claim that they have disappeared into some alternative dimension where Demons will eat their souls. To use a teleporter harness you must make a successful IN roll to program it. This takes one action phase. You can reappear anywhere that you have a fix on, either by communicator or through visual contact, up to a range of one km. If you fumble the IN roll you vanish mysteriously, never to be seen again. If you fail the IN roll, nothing happens. If you succeed, you vanish and reappear at your destination. DPC: 1/ 1 teleport attempt. Weight: 4. Availability: 0. **Cost: 20M.**

TOXIN NEUTRALIZER - HAND HELD

This hand-held sensor extrudes a spike-probe from its tip. It can be fired into a target's flesh near a major vein, where it will instantly take a blood sample. The sample is immediately analyzed by the onboard diagnostic computer that scans it for the presence of any poisons.



If a poison is detected, and recognized, the neutralizer will synthesize the antidote or select one from over 100 built-in antidotes. The neutralizer will then fire an injection syrette into the target's bloodstream, dispensing the antidote. The whole process usually takes one combat round. Weight: 2. Availability: 2. Cost: 1M.

TRACER

These small micro-transmitters can be magnetically attached to vehicles, equipment, or attached to clothing by superglue. They enable the user to track anything they are attached to - from a range of up to five kilometers. They can also be used as homing beacons by programmed missiles and hunter-seekers. WEIGHT: negligible. Availability: 4. Cost: 100.

VOICE AMPLIFIER

This powerful amplifier is worn attached to the throat and uses forcefield resonators to greatly amplify the user's voice, allowing him to be heard over the loudest background noise at a distance of up to 500 meters. Weight: Negligible. Availability: 6. Cost: 200.

UNIVERSAL TRANSLATOR

This small device is normally worn as an amulet around the neck of its user. A small fiber optic cable runs from the amulet to an earbead in the users ear, and to a patch on the user's throat. It enables a powerful thinking engine to translate to, and from, all known languages on the surface of Waste World, and to speak normally to all they encounter. Weight: negligible. Availability: 4. Cost: 250.

WAKE UP TABLETS

These tablets will ensure that you come instantly awake, jolting from sleep to total awareness in a millisecond. They will ensure that you are never sluggish upon awakening. You can setup an auto-injector tied to an alarm device, such as an insect repellent field, which will automatically send a dosage into your bloodstream if an intruder is present. They can also be taken when you are sleepy and will keep you awake and alert for up to eight hours more. Taking more than six tablets in a 72 hour period will lead to an overdose, and instant unconsciousness. Weight: Negligible. Availability: 5. Cost: 10 per tab.

CYBERNETICS

They are implants which replace body parts. They range from new eyes, to new internal organs and new limbs. They can grant their users enormous powers. Although their use is not without risk, they are much sought after by adventurers.

COSTS DURING CREATION

You can purchase cybernetics and symbionics as equipment during character creation. Just pay the price of the equipment. You don't need to worry about the cost of the cybersurgeon, about RS or warping.

IMPLANTING CYBERNETICS

Generally speaking, getting cybernetics implanted is a simple operation. First, you find the piece of cybernetic equipment you need. All cybernetics are availability zero. There is a +4 positive modifier in Prometheus. Next, you find someone with the cybersurgery skill, request the implant and then undergo the operation. This takes a d6+1 hours, provided there are no complications. Once the operation is over, you must still pay the necessary experience points to learn how to use your new implant, otherwise it will perform the functions of a normal limb. See the section on experience points for more details.

CYBERSURGEONS

Most cybersurgeons have a skill of d6+1. They charge 100C per skill level to perform the operation, in addition to the cost of the implanted parts. In order to perform cybersurgery, a cybersurgeon must have access to a surgery. These cost 20 M to outfit.

To implant a piece of equipment, a surgeon must make a cybersurgery skill roll. If the surgeon makes his roll, all is well. If he fails, then the operation is failure. The implant will still work, but at some future date there will be problems with it. The Narrator should make a note of this and spring a nasty surprise on you at some future point. An arm may suddenly go dead when you fumble a roll, or an eye may short out and leave you partially blind. Usually the Narrator will see that this happens at an appropriate point - when you fumble a roll.

Once the malfunction occurs, you can have it compensated for by getting a cybersurgeon to make a cybersurgery roll. A success will ensure that it never happens again.

If a cybersurgeon fumbles the implant roll, then your level of RS (see below) is automatically increased by one. If you already suffer from total RS then you are dead.

REJECTION SYNDROME (RS)

It is not natural to graft cybernetic systems to the human body, and the body often can't stand the process. It sometimes tries to reject the implants. This process is known as Rejection Syndrome, and it can prove fatal. It may be stabilized by the use of certain drugs, but cannot be cured once it develops.

After each cybernetic or symbiotic system implant you must make a ST roll. The difficulty factor is equal to the number of cybernetic systems you have already had implanted. If you have mild RS then there is a further -3 modifier. If it is strong, there is a -6 modifier. If it is total, there is a -9 modifier.

If you make the roll, well and good. If you fail, your body has developed RS. If you already have RS, then it increases by one step - from mild to strong or from strong to total. If you have total RS and fail the roll, you are dead.

PREREQUISITES

Sometimes you need to possess one cybernetic system before you can possess another. For example, you need a bionic eye before you can have an alpha-wave eye. You cannot have a system with a prerequisite implanted, before you have the prerequisite itself implanted.

REPAIRS

If a cybernetic implant is destroyed during combat, you can pay to have it replaced. You do not have to pay any character or experience points for this. Repairs to damaged units usually cost (d10-1)x10% the cost of a new unit.

UPGRADES

Upgrades are improvements performed on the same system. They do not count as new systems, and when you purchase an upgrade you pay only the cost given. For example, when you upgrade a bionic eye to an alpha-wave eye, it costs you only five points. This remains the same whether the bionic eye was your first system or your ninth. You do not need to roll for RS after an upgrade, unless the cybersurgeon fumbles. Of course, after PC creation you must still pay the financial cost of the upgrade.

POWERED ARMOR

Powered armor is cybernetically enhanced battle armor that contain hydraulic and cybernetic systems designed to enhance its user's fighting ability. It is chiefly manufactured in Prometheus and Ikarus and used by the warriors of those metrozones. It is included here because it has many things in common with cybernetic systems.



You can add cybernetic systems to any form of powered armor. Because they are designed to fit onto battle-suits, they are not quite analogs of the normal cybernetic systems, and they are slightly different from their bionic counterparts. If you attach a bionic eye, it will be built onto your helmet, and you will not have direct access to the information - as you would with a bionic implant (unless you attach a neurojak.) Instead, the information will be shown on the heads-up display within your helmet, or eye-goggles. If you have multiple visual systems implanted, you can toggle between them. You cannot use all of them simultaneously. If you have a neurojak you have access to all your suit's cybernetic systems, just as if they were implants.

All the limitations that apply to cybernetics, apply to those attached to a battlesuit. Cybernetic systems attached to powered armor cost the same as normal cybernetic systems. They run on the suit's energy rating, see the appropriate section for details.

New cybernetic systems can be added to powered armor by anyone with the cybersurgery and mek skills. The operation takes d6 hours, at the end of which they must make a skill roll against the lowest of the two skills. The difficulty factor is equal to the number of cybernetic systems already attached. If they succeed, then everything is fine. If they fail there is no ill effect and they can try again the next day. If they fumble, then the armor shorts out and all its integral systems are destroyed. It will take 50 percent of the armor's cost to get it repaired.

EFFECTS OF MULTIPLE SYSTEMS

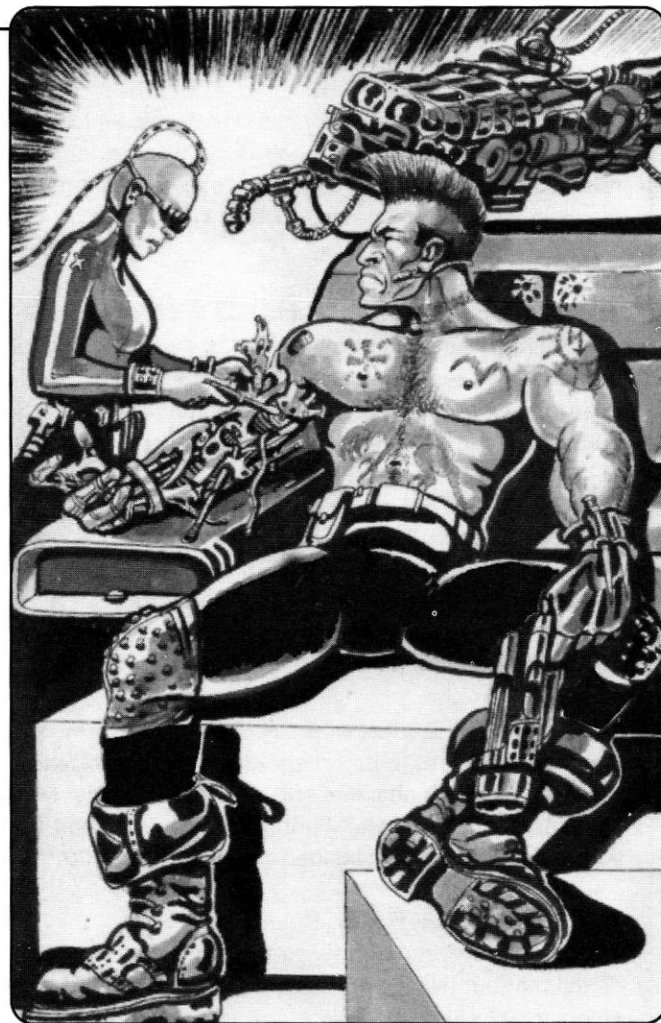
When using the various cybernetic and symbiotic systems, the benefits of systems of the same type are not cumulative. You get the effects of the system that grant you the greatest benefit. They do not accumulate. If you have a cybernetic arm which grants you +1 ST, and a symbiotic graft arm which gives you +2 ST, you get +2 ST. You take the best of the two modifiers, you don't add them together.

You can add together the benefits of different types of systems - so if you have an exoskeleton which grants you +3 ST, and a cybernetic arm which gives you +1 ST, you do get the benefits of +4 ST when using the arm. In these cases they do accumulate.

CYBERNETIC SYSTEMS

BIONIC EYES

These bionic eyes replace those lost in combat. One, or both, of your eyes can be replaced with a machine - hooked to your optic nerve.



This can be an obvious mechanical or symbiotic part; it is totally silver or it glows in the dark. Alternatively, your eye is camouflaged and indistinguishable from a normal eye, without being scanned.

Cost: 1M for mechanical looking eyes. +0.5M for concealed. You can buy all forms of bionic eyes, with concealment, for this cost.

ALPHA WAVE EYE

This upgrade enables you to see through walls, rock and other obstacles not more than 50 centimeters thick. Th work up to a range of 100 meters. The only substance you cannot see through is lead. Also, you cannot see through force fields. **Cost:** 1M.

ENERGY SCAN EYE IMPLANT

You see patterns and wave fronts of psychic energy. It is obvious to you when psi powers are being used close-by. You can spot an invisible Psidemon or tell if a person is possessed by one. **Cost:** 500.

IRIS

This eye allows you to see heat signatures, which enable you to spot foes - even in pitch dark. You see objects as red heat outlines. The hotter the object, the brighter it glows in your sight. **Cost: 500.**

LASER EYE

You have a powerful laser implanted in your eye, enabling you to fire a beam of energy up to 120 meters, doing 1M+1 damage. The eye's power to fire will be exhausted if you roll a one when using it. You will then need to recharge it, before you can use it again. **Cost: 1M.**

PHOTO EYE

This eye enables you to store up to one hours worth of continuous moving images in digitally compressed form. These can be downloaded through a neurojak or by connecting the eye to a computer. You may play back stored images at any time for your own use. **Cost: 200.**

SCANNER EYE

This eye combines a broad spectrum telephoto lens with powerful image enhancement and discrepancy filtering systems. It adds +4 to all sight perception rolls and allows you to spot invisibility shielded beings. **Cost: 500.**

TARGETING EYE

Your bionic eye superimposes targeting crosshairs and a digital readout telling you the speed, vector and velocity of anything you look at. This gives you +1 to hit with any ranged weapon. **Cost: 500 M.**

TELESCOPIC EYE

You have a telescopic eye hooked to your optic nerve and linked to powerful image enhancement software. This enables you to see up to 100x as far as you normally might. You can see clearly to the horizon, with no penalties. **Cost: 300.**

UV EYE

This eye enables you to see into the UV spectrum. While you cannot see in total darkness, it allows you to see far more details than an Iris. **Cost: 800.**

IMPLANT COMPUTER

Inside your head you have a bio-chipped computer implant. This powerful computer system is wet-wired directly into your brain, greatly increasing your power to process information. The system allows you to ignore the normal maximums on IN, provided you are willing to pay the point cost. It also gives you the ability to run any of the programs detailed below (which you can implant using a chip.) Normally you can run only one chip at a time, but you can purchase extra chipholders allowing you to run additional chips. **Cost: 1M+200 per extra chip holder** to a maximum of 4 chips.

LANGUAGE

This enables you to have a full working knowledge of any language you possess the chip for. You can read, write and speak it, but the skill disappears as soon as the program chip is removed. **Cost: 1M.**

SKILL

This gives you access to any skill you possess the chip for, at the chip's skill rating. The maximum skill possible for a chip is six. If this is less than, or equal to, your normal skill - then you gain no bonus.

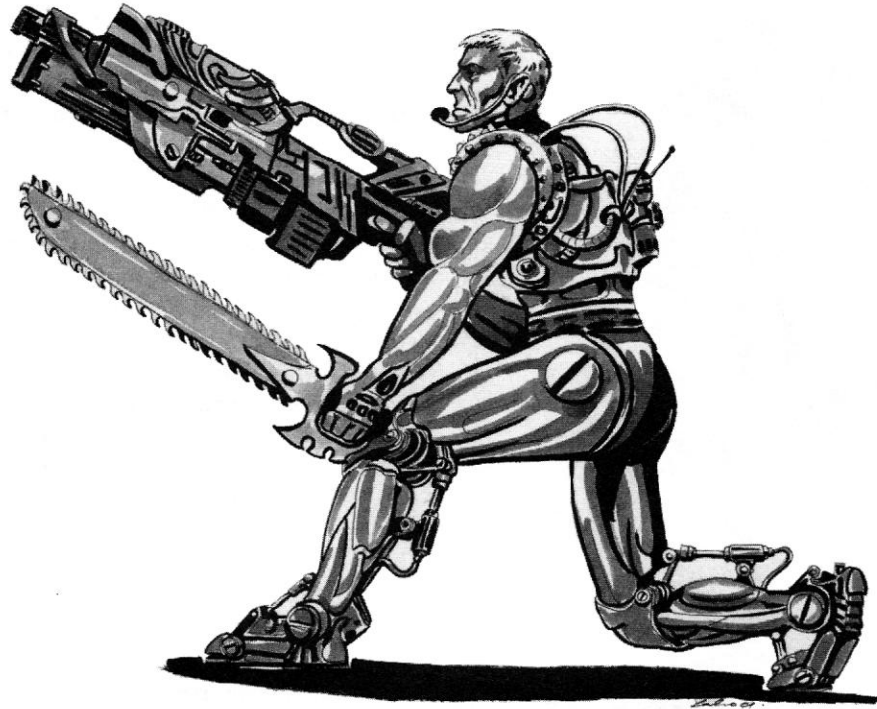
Skill Level	Cost
1	200
2	300
3	400
4	600
5	900
6	1.2M

There are rumours of chips with skill levels beyond this, but such things have not been found on the open market.

BIONIC ARM

You have had your limbs replaced with mechanical prosthetics, powered by servo-motors and sheathed in plastic synthskin. Most bionics have ST of zero. If the ST is less than your normal ST, that's too bad. You can always increase the arm's ST by paying more. This additional ST, and its damage modifier, applies to feats performed using that hand: gripping, swinging a one handed weapon, punching and so on. It does not grant extra LF or BLF or CC.

Cost: 500 for a basic replacement arm +200 per level per ST increase over 0. This is cumulative so that ST 2 costs 600. ST 3 costs 1.2M and so on.



ELECTRO-TENTACLE

Your arm has been replaced with a long, ringed, extensible, metallic tentacle. While incapable of complex manipulation, it is perfectly good for holding weapons. It can stretch up to five meters and is capable of discharging electric shocks into targets for 1+3 damage. **Cost: 500.**

EXTENSOR ARM

Your bionic arm has been ever-more extensively modified and contains long pneumatic piston rods capable of extending to three meters. With this, you can hold and manipulate objects naturally. **Cost: 300.**

WEAPON IMPLANT

This upgrade makes it possible to add a weapon to a cybernetic arm. It can be any close combat or ranged weapon, provided the arm has the ST to lift it (i.e. one-handed). The weapon draws its power from the arm. Any ammo can be stored within the arm. If a weapon implant runs out of ammo, it must be reloaded in the normal manner.

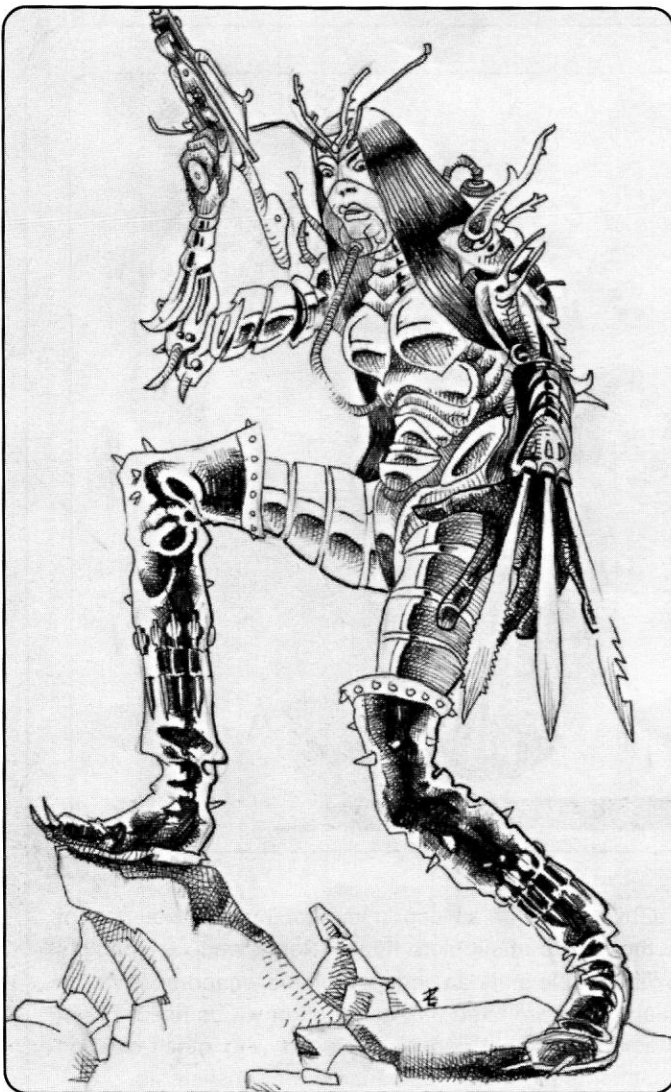
All weapon implants count as ready weapons, all the time. As long as you are awake and aware, your weapon implant is ready for action.

Obviously, with a weapon implant in place, you cannot use the arm to manipulate things. Some weapon implants are detachable and can accept multiple weapons. Weapon implants that are fixed in place are known as fixed-mount systems. Ones that can be replaced with other weapon attachments are known as variable-mount systems.

There are certain bonuses for having an implanted weapon. First, any weapon attached to a weapon implant counts as a slot of your weapon implant skill. Weapon implant skill is an Easy skill to acquire and learn. Any weapon implant attached to a variable-mount system is simply a slot of the weapon implant skill. If the weapon you wish to implant has prerequisite skills, you must pay for more slots in your weapon implant skill, one for each of the prerequisite skills. These slots will not allow you to use a weapon normally, if it is not attached to the mount.

A fixed-mount weapon implant costs 250C plus the cost of the weapon attached. Since the arm is basically a mount for the weapon system, it costs half of what a normal bionic arm would cost to increase the ST. Because you cannot manipulate anything with this arm, you may still have the -10 point unuseable arm disadvantage.

A variable-mount weapon implant costs 500, plus the cost of any weapons attached. You need to add 100C per weapon usable with a variable-mount, because of the special circuitry needed.



BIONIC LEGS

These legs are used to replace limbs lost during combat. They are mechanical creations, every bit as good as the ones they replace. It costs 500 for a basic replacement leg. In order to buy the following upgrades, you must have both legs replaced with prosthetics.

EXTRA-SPEED LEGS

These mighty legs enable you to run much faster than normal, and kick much harder. They give +1 per level of ST, for purposes of calculating BMR and extra kicking damage, per level purchased. This does not increase BLF. Basic ST for legs starts at zero. **Cost:** 200 per additional 1 ST. It is cumulative.

JET LEGS

These legs contain special turbo-jets that enable you to fly at up to 50 times your usual movement speed, for up to 10 minutes. Once 10 minutes total flying time has elapsed, they must be recharged. **Cost:** 1M.

SUPER-LEAP LEGS

These legs use mighty pneumatic pistons to enable you to make great leaps. You can spring up to five times your normal jumping height and distance. **Cost:** 500.

SPECIAL IMPLANTS

CAMODERM

This special synthskin covers your whole body. It is photo-sensitive and takes on the characteristics of its surroundings. Because it takes some time to update, it is slightly less useful when you are moving. When activated, it allows you to blend-in with your background, making you almost invisible when you are still, and very hard to spot when you move. When you stand still, anybody more than one meter away must make a perception roll at -4 to see you. When you move, they must make a perception roll at -2 to see you. These penalties are cumulative with any stealth rolls you have made. **Cost:** 1M.

DERMAL ARMOR

Your skin has been replaced with multiple layers of synthi-plast dermal armor, making it as hard as steel. It is cumulative with any normal armor you wear. **Cost:** 1M per AR. This is a cumulative cost so that AR 2 costs 3M. AR 3 costs 6M. AR 4 costs 10M and so on.

EXO-SKELETON

A frame of carbon fiber, alloys and synthi-plast has been affixed to your body. It amplifies your strength, allows you to carry great weights and you can have weapon modules attached. It adds two to your damage in hand-to-hand combat, and quadruples your carrying capacity. It also adds one to your MR. **Cost:** 2M.

LUNG FILTERS

These filters screen the air you breathe for dust, gas and toxins. They render you completely immune to any airborne gases or toxic dusts. **Cost:** 500.

NEUROJAK

These links are usually placed just behind the ear, and allow direct interfacing between you and any machine equipped with a jackplug interface. There are many bonuses to such an interface, including faster response time, a link to perceptual equipment the machine possesses, and control of the machine as if it were an extension of your own body. It enables you to add +1 to any skill roll you make with that machine. **Cost:** 1M. Adding an interface to a machine adds 10 percent to its standard cost.



PSISCREEN

You have a powerful G-matrix psiscreen embedded in your skull. It makes you totally immune to mind-reading and possession, and adds +4 to any effort you make to resist a psychic attack. **Cost: 1M.**

TOXIN NEUTRALIZER - INTERNAL

In your stomach and bloodstream, powerful microcomputers and micro-sensors constantly analyze and update information concerning your state of health. If they detect any toxins or diseases they will authorize the manufacture and release of anti-bodies and anti-toxins from a powerful micro-pharmaceutical storehouse in your stomach. This means that you are at +4 to resist any poison or disease. If you survive, within one day your body will have memorized and created an antidote or antibody and, in future, you will be completely immune to the poison or disease. **Cost: 1M.**

RETRACTIBLE CLAWS

These claws are honed to glittering razor-sharpness, capable of slicing the flesh of any foe. They do 1M+1 damage in close combat. **Cost: 500.**

POISON CLAWS

Prerequisite: Razor Sharp Claws or Ultra Strong Claws. This upgrade enables your claws to inject a virulent toxin into any wound they make. You must buy any poison separately with credits. If you fumble when striking with poison claws, assume that the poison runs out. They do 1+1 damage and if any damage is inflicted on the foe, the poison may take effect. **Cost: 500.**

ULTRA-STRONG CLAWS

Prerequisite: Retractable claws. This upgrade ensures that your claws are manufactured from a top-secret ultra-strong alloy made by the Ancients. This makes them even tougher than normal claws, and capable of inflicting 2M damage in close combat. **Cost: 1M.**

SYMBIONIC GRAFTS

Symbionics is the ancient art of creating living things to perform specially designed functions. It has been raised to its highest level in the megacity of Hydra. Symbionic grafts use industrially manufactured living organisms, that perform many of the same tasks as cybernetics, which is why they are included in this section of the rules.

The procedures for implanting symbionic grafts are slightly different from those for implanting cybernetics. First of all you must find someone to sell you the graft. Then you must find a symbioncist. The procedure for this is exactly the same as finding a cybersurgeon.



To implant a graft you must have the symbionics skill and the healing skill. If you want a graft implanted you must find someone with these skills. The symbionics skill acts as a limiter on the healing skill. Getting someone to perform an implantation usually costs 100C times their lowest skill of symbionics or healing.

Each time a symbionic graft is added, the implanter must make a ealing skill roll. If he is successful, then the operation is a success. If he fails, then the operation is a failure and the graft dies. (It must still be paid for.) If the implanter fumbles, then the graft dies and the patient must make a ST roll. The difficulty factor of this roll is equal to the number of implants he already has. If he succeeds, well and good. He will awake in d6 hours. If he fails, then the patient begins to warp (see below).

Symbionic grafts can also be added to symbsuits and carapace armor. The procedure is the same except, if the implanter fails, the suit and the implant both die. All symbionics are availability one (There is a +4 modifier to this in Hydra).

WARPING

Attaching symbiotic grafts to living tissue is a complex and delicate process. Many things can go wrong. Sometimes when natural and symbiotic tissue graft, strange things result. This is known as warping. Once you have had a symbiotic graft implanted, you must take a warp test.

This is a normal ST roll, but the difficulty factor is equal to the number of symbiotic grafts you have had implanted. There are further modifiers based on the level of mutation you already possess: -3 for mild, -6 for serious, -9 for total.

If you roll 11 or more, you pass the warp test and nothing dreadful happens. If you roll 10 or less, then you have failed the warp test. This is bad luck for you. Failing a warp test means that the graft you have just received goes wrong and starts to mutate in a way that is appropriate to the implant.

For example, if a claw warps, the graft might swell up and become hideously scaly. You would be unable to retract the claws and they would remain permanently extended. You gain one level of the mutation disadvantage. If you already suffer from total mutation, then you become a mindless warpspawn and must create a new character.

Special grafts are available - cloned from the tissue of the person who is about to be implanted. These cost 10x as much as the usual parts, but mean that there is no negative modifier to the implanter's healing roll. All he has to do is make the roll. If he fails, then the implant still dies. If he fumbles, there are no negative effects for the person being operated on.

These are symbiotic grafts which can be added either to your own body, or to a symbiosuit.

REJECTION SYNDROME (RS)

As with bionics systems, symbionics can also cause rejection syndrome as the body furiously attempts to deal with the alien interloper. Each time you have a new symbiotic graft added, you must test for rejection as above. Add together the number of cybernetic systems and symbiotic grafts you have, when checking for rejection.

REPLACEMENT ORGANS

Symbiotic grafts can replace lost or damaged organs and limbs. They cost 100x the point cost of the disadvantage you are buying-off. They count toward the number of grafts you possess for the purpose of warp checks. All grafted limbs possess the same ST as the rest of your body. They take damage and heal in the same way.

SPECIAL POWER GRAFTS

You can also purchase grafts that give you special powers. They cost 100C times the point cost of any special power they grant. You can purchase any special power that is not specifically restricted to a particular group or nation. (You could not buy mutarch transformation, for example, unless you are a mutant.)

GANGLIONIC LINK

You possess a ganglionic link. This is the symbiotic equivalent of a neurojak. It takes the form of a series of neural ganglions which you can extrude from your flesh, your symbiosuit or carapace armor. It allows you to interface directly with any symbiotic system that possesses a similar attachment. Ganglionic links are only common in Hydra. This is the only place where the everyday use of such technology is commonplace. **Cost: 1M.**

TRANSPORT

There are many forms of transport available on Waste World. The internal combustion engine is still available, but has competition from suspensor and skimmer systems. Most vehicles are availability 9, with the exception of suspensor vehicles which are availability 9 in the metr zones, and availability 3 elsewhere.

STATISTICS

In the Waste World RPG, the following statistics are used to describe all vehicles:

MAXIMUM SPEED (MX)

This tells you how fast the vehicle will go.

LIFE FORCE (LF)

Of course vehicles don't have life force in the way people do. It is a simple way of letting you know how much damage a vehicle can take without inventing a new characteristic. A vehicle's life force tells you how much damage the vehicle can absorb before it will cease to function. Vehicles which lose 25 percent of their LF, have their MX reduced by 25 percent. Vehicles which have their LF reduced by 50 percent, must also reduce MX by 50 percent.

ARMOR RATING (AR)

This tells you how much damage the vehicle's armor will stop.

PASSENGERS (PS)

This tells you how many passengers the vehicle can carry, including the driver.

CARRYING CAPACITY (CC)

This tells you how much cargo the vehicle can haul. It is given in metric tons.



COST (C)

This tells you the vehicles minimum cost. Of course, you can pay more for a nicer model.

BUYING A VEHICLE

For use with the basic game, we provide the following simple system of designing and buying a vehicle.

You choose the type of vehicle you want to own: bike, car, truk, or hauler. This determines the basic cost and other details. You then choose the movement system. You multiply the basic cost by the multiplier given for the movement system. This will give you the basic vehicle.

You can then choose weapon systems, if any. With the Narrator's permission, you can make further modifications. For example, you might want to have a luxurious air-conditioned vehicle, with the most sumtuuous interior trimming imaginable. The Narrator might decide this costs three times as much as a normal vehicle. Vehicles will be covered in more detail in future supplements.

BIKES

MX	LF	AR	PS	CC	C
120	20	3	2	0.1	1M

Bikes are sleek, streamlined vehicles, open to their surroundings and designed to carry two people. They can have up to two forward-firing fixed-mounts. A sidecar can be added that will hold another passenger. This adds 25 percent to the cost, and reduces MX by 10 percent. The sidecar can have another forward or rear-firing weapon added.

CARS

MX	LF	AR	PS	CC	C
80	50	3	4	0.5	3M

Cars are the basic form of passenger transport. They normally have a cabin in which passengers and drivers sit.

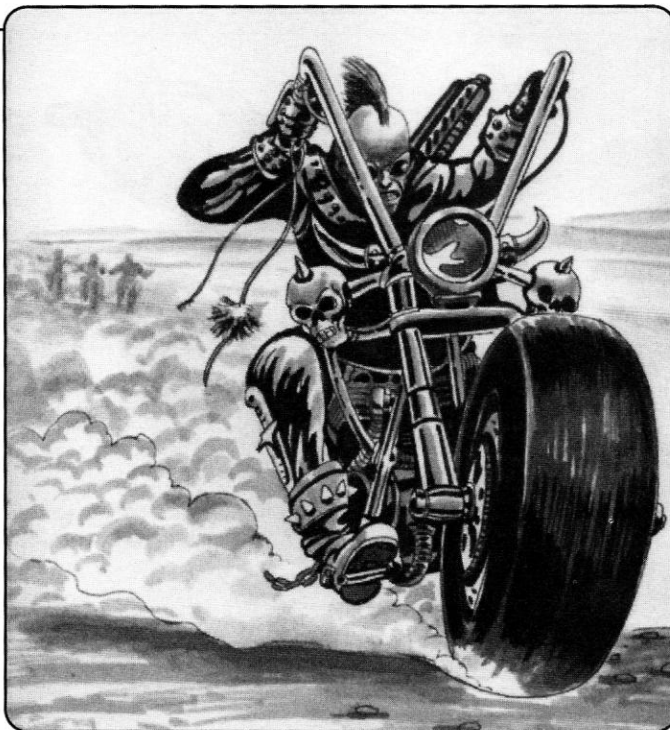
Cars can have one heavy weapon gimble mounted, for 360 degree rotation, on their anti-roll bars. It is possible to have a light machine gun mounted next to the driver seat so that the driver can swivel and fire it with his free hand. Under such circumstances, the driver is at -4 to both shooting and driving rolls.

TRUKS

MX	LF	AR	PS	CC	C
60	80	5	3	30	5M

Truks are the most common means of moving goods around Waste World. They can tow up to two trailers, each of which will increase CC by 75 percent while reducing MX by 10 percent.

Truks can have one turret containing up to four linked heavy weapons mounted over the cab and the trailer. Multi-trailer haulers can add one turret over each trailer.



HAULERS

MX	LF	AR	PS	CC	C
40	100	9	12	40	10M

Haulers are huge vehicles designed to travel across the Wastes in comfort and safety.

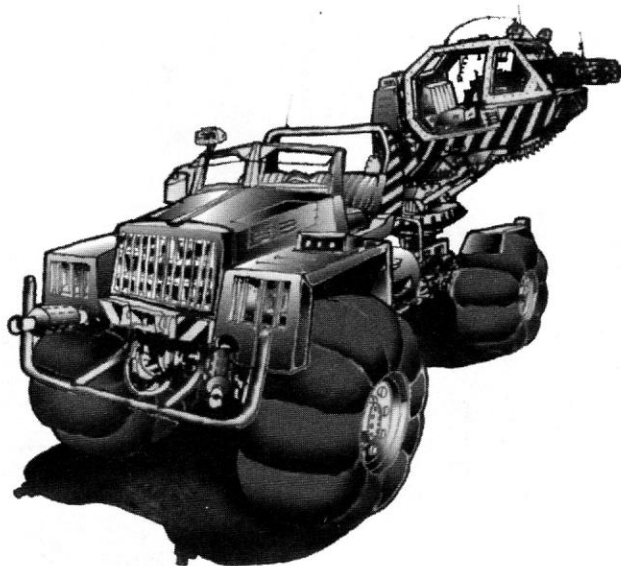
Haulers usually bristle with weapons. They can have up to 10 turrets mounting a super-heavy weapon, or four linked heavy weapons on each side. Normally they also have weapon portals through which crew members can fire light machine guns, or single heavy weapons. There can be 20 on each side.

MOVEMENT SYSTEMS

WHEELED

In the megacities, wheeled autocars and autobikes are still common. Many are powered by internal combustion, but still others use electrical motors.

In the Wastes, buggies and dunebikes use huge, wide, fat tires in order to negotiate the trackless terrain. Truks are large, four-wheeled vehicles designed to shift heavy loads. Multi-trailer dunetruck haulers are not uncommon sights in the Wastelander's konvoys. These vehicles can be truly massive. The costs multiplier for wheeled vehicles is one. Just use the cost given under vehicle type. Wheels are virtually useless except on relatively flat, even terrain.



KRAWLERS

These tracked vehicles are particularly common in the Wastes. Many are huge, heavily armored, mobile fortresses that provide homes to the nomadic Skavenger clans. Many of the giant robots from the ancient days also possess tracked chassis. The cost multiplier for krawlers is one, however MX is reduced by 50 percent. Krawlers can cross truly rough terrain that would be impenetrable by wheeled vehicles.

HOVERS

These are ground-effect vehicle variants of normal cars and trucks. They float above the ground on a cushion of air. They have a lower carrying capability but higher speed, are highly maneuverable and quite common in the Wastes. They are also used on the Skum Seas and in the Slime Swamps, since they are equally at home on land and water. Cost multiplier is one. Increase MX by 25 percent, but reduce CC by the same.

SKIMMERS

Skimmers, too, come in many forms - from tiny, fast-moving skimmer bikes to hover tanks to gigantic sandbarges. They use skimmer generators to keep them off the ground. A skimmer generator is a simple, cheap form of suspensor that automatically raises the vehicle to a maximum of three meters above the ground. Once airborne, the vehicle can easily maintain this position relative to the ground. The only problem comes when it encounters sudden changes of elevation, such as walls or long drops. Under such circumstances being aboard a skimmer is of little help. Skimmer vehicles have double the MX and cost 4x as much as standard vehicle types.

SUSPENSOR

Suspenders use full-blown gravitic repulsor technology to raise their occupants off Waste World's surface. They are easily capable of propelling a vehicle to any altitudes, and at speeds of hundreds of kph. The larger, and more powerful, the generator the faster, and higher, the vehicle will go. They are most commonly used to propel skyships, dirigibles and ornithopters. They can also be found on the small, personal flitters used in the megacities.

All suspensor driven craft can be used in skimmer mode and can perform exactly like skimmers. There are suspensor variants of most skimmer vehicles, although these are vastly more expensive than their skimmer counterparts.

Suspensor craft have the same statistics as their skimmer brethren, only move at 4x the MX of a basic vehicle type, and cost 10x as much to buy.

WALKERS

Walkers are common forms of vehicle and are ideally suited to the rough terrain of the Wastes. They stride along on huge hydraulic limbs. They are particularly useful when neuro-linked to a human pilot, for they have the easiest sort of analog for a human nervous system to understand. Thus, most Waste walkers are bipedal. Bipedal walkers move at 50 percent the base-speed for their type of vehicle, but can walk over almost any terrain. Their cost multiplier is one. Quadrupeds can move at the normal base-speed for their type, and cost twice as much.

WEAPON SYSTEMS

Most vehicles also have a number of hard-points to which weapon systems can be attached, and have a number of optional weapons given in their description. If you want a vehicle with the weapons, then simply add the cost of the weapons to the basic cost. Most weapons can only fire in certain directions.

FIXED HARD-POINTS

Fixed hard-points lock the weapons they carry into being able to fire in a single direction. In order to fire with a fixed hard-point you must move your vehicle into a position where the weapons are pointing directly at the target, if they are to be of any use.

Most combat between vehicles using fixed hard-points consists of jockeying for positions where you can bring your weapons to bear on your foe, and they cannot bring their weapons to bear on you. Fixed hard-points have the advantage of being cheap and being usable by a vehicles driver or pilot.

controls for fixed hard-points are usually mounted on the vehicle's control systems - for easy access. Fixed hard-points usually add 1M to the cost, plus the cost of the weapon, plus an additional 5 five percent of the cost of the weapon for the control systems and ammo-dispensers.

TURRETS

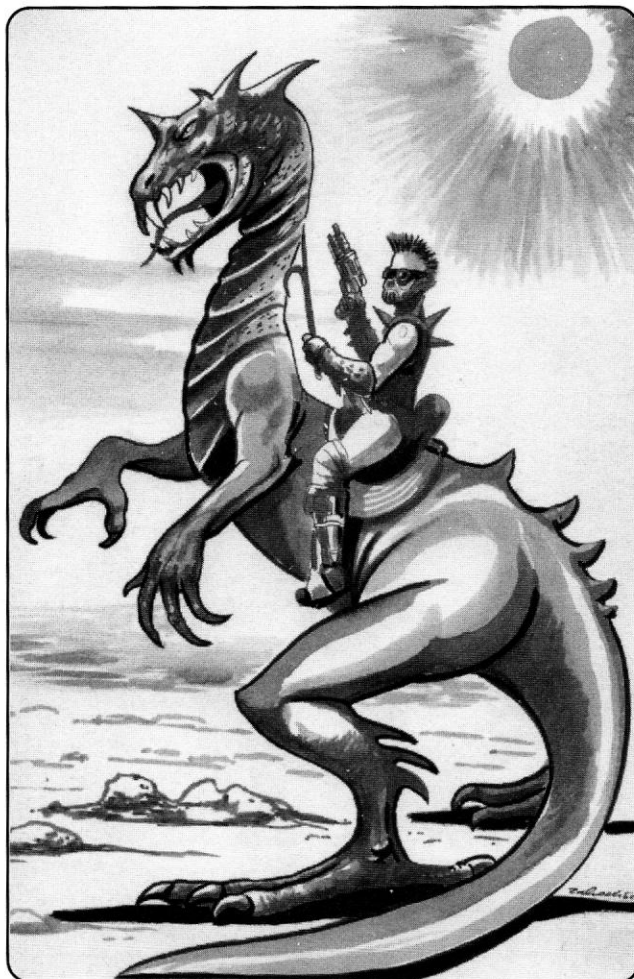
In Waste World, turrets are used as a generic term for any weapon mount that can move or swivel independently of the vehicle on which they are mounted. They usually need a separate gunner or control system in order to be of any use.

Top-mounted turrets can rotate through 360 degrees, but will have difficulty shooting at things below the vehicle - unless they are a long way off. Bottom mounted turrets will have difficulty firing at things above the vehicle. Rear turrets can cover anything within 180 degrees to the rear of the vehicle. Forward turrets can cover 180 degrees to the front of the vehicle. Side hard-points can cover anything within 180 degrees of the appropriate side.

Turrets usually cost 5M, if they hold a single heavy weapon, or 10M if they hold a super-heavy weapon or multiple heavy weapons. To this you must add the cost of the weapons themselves, plus an additional 10 percent of the total weapon cost to pay for control systems and ammunition dispensers. Fixed mountings add 10 percent to the weight of weapon systems. Turrets add 25 percent to the weight. The weight of all weapon systems, and any ammunition carried, is deducted from a vehicle's carrying capacity.

POWER SUPPLY

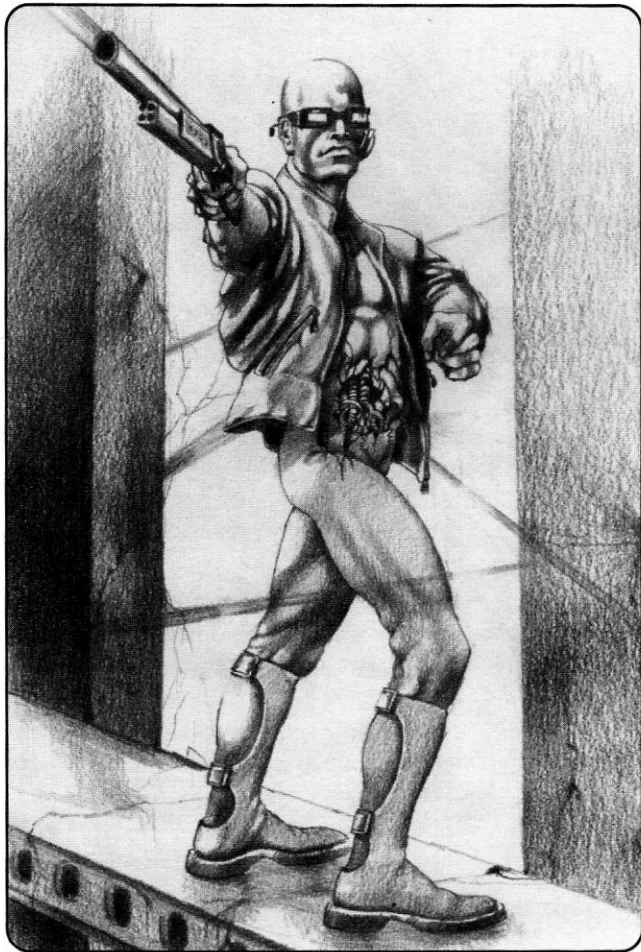
Most vehicles in Waste World are powered by DPC arrays. These store enough power to drive the vehicle for a month, or so.



Some vehicles are powered by internal combustion engines consuming fuel alcohol ("go-juice" or simply "juice") produced in the agridomes of the megacities. These vehicles typically have a much inferior range, and can go for only 10 hours or so on a tank of go-juice. Normally only bikes, cars and trucks are powered in this manner. Such vehicles cost 25 percent less than the price given here. A full tank of go-juice usually costs 25C for bugs, and 100C for trucks. Normally these vehicles are only to be found within the megacities. If they cross the desert it is in convoys - with plenty of fuel tankers present.

RIDING ANIMALS

Riding animals are included here for the sake of completeness. They are a common form of transport among the more primitive Skavenger tribes, among mutants and with some of the nobility of Hydra. Far and away the most common form of riding animal is the saddle lizard. For more details see the Bestiary Section. Saddle lizards typically cost 500C plus 100C per point of ST above zero. They are availability: 9 in more primitive regions; 6 in most others.



ROBOTS

Robots are artificially intelligent mechanical life-forms. They use positronic brains and can be as clever and self-willed as some humans. While most are built in humanoid form, some are not. Many are configured to perform a specific task. Purchasing a robot is quite straightforward. Just design one as you would design a character. It then costs 100C per character point spent. You can use disadvantages and lowered characteristics to reduce this cost. All such custom-built Robots cost a minimum of 1M, no matter how few points you spend on their creation. To this, add the cost of any equipment they have been given.

When creating a robot, there are certain rules and guidelines you should follow.

COMPULSORY ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

By definition, all robots have the positronic brain disadvantage and the robotic body advantage. No NC robot can take any social disadvantages to offset their cost, only physical and mental ones.

OBEDIENCE

All robots have the mental disadvantage Obedience. Usually this is at the level of total obedience. That means they must obey whoever is their owner. This varies from robot to robot. In some cases it is whoever owns their activation key, in other cases it is the first person they see and speak to after a certain password is spoken. In other cases, it might be the representative of a particular government.

PASSWORDS

Passwords are the most common means of establishing ownership of a robot. Once a key phrase is spoken, the ownership of a robot can be transferred. The robot will obey the next person who it sees and hears. This owner can then change the password so that the previous owner cannot take it back.

SHEATH ARMOR

Most robots are simply mechanical skeletons moved by hydraulic systems. They can be given special sheath armor, that wraps around their skeletal core and makes them resemble a humanoid figure. This armor costs the same as normal armor, but is specially made to cover a robotic core.

GOLEMS

Golems are bio-machines; artificial life forms created in the lifevats of Hydra. Like robots, they are designed to perform specific functions. They are created just like characters and cost 100C per point spent. You can use disadvantages and reduced characteristics to reduce this cost, but they will always cost at least 1M. Like robots, they cannot take social disadvantages.

FREE WILL

Robots and golems are not extensions of their owner. They have free will and are NC's under the Narrator's control. They have to obey their owner's instructions, and will normally do so to the best of their ability.

Mistreatment can result in them interpreting their owner's commands literally, and in a way that works to their owners detriment. Good treatment will usually result in loyalty.

MASS PRODUCTION

The costs given here are for custom-built robots and golems, made to a players specifications. At his discretion, the Narrator may chose to make mass production models available. They will cost anything from one half to one tenth of the normal cost of a custom model, thanks to economies of scale.

COST OF LIVING

The following prices are given as guidelines, and should be used as indicators of what things actually cost. Of course prices can vary from place-to-place and at the whim of the Narrator.

ACCOMMODATION

A Flophouse where you get a mat on the floor in a bunker full of derelicts costs 1C per night. A single room of the lowest standard costs 10C per night. A decent hotel will set you back 50C per night. Super-secure luxury establishments start at 100C per night for their most basic rooms. Prices escalate swiftly if you want even nicer rooms, or a suite. Long-term accommodation in apartments, hab-blocks and houses costs about one fifth of these prices.

FOOD AND DRINK

A basic meal usually costs 1C. You can pay up to 100x this for luxury foodstuffs, in very nice restaurants. One basic unit of alcohol, equivalent to a shot of spirits or a half liter of beer, also costs 1C. Once again, better quality can swiftly increase the price.

CLOTHING

Cheap rags bought second hand cost about 1C per item for shoes, shirts, coats etc. Standard clothes cost 10C per item. Extremely luxurious and/or fashionable clothing cost around 100C per item.

TRAVEL

Public transport in Waste World is neither safe nor reliable. In the great metrozones cabs cost approximately 1C per kilometer. Public buses and trains cost 1C per 10 kilometers, or part thereof, but show up only intermittently. A Narrator who is in doubt as to the actual distance of your journey can roll a d20 and that will be the number of kilometers for a short journey. Multiply this by five for long journeys. Passage on the long-haul convoys between the metrozones usually has to be negotiated with individual vehicle owners. Normally it costs about 1M to get from any of the other metrozones to Janus. This is the main transit hub for all convoys.

WORK

In order to survive, almost everybody needs to find a job. Beggars can earn d20C per day. Casual laborers can expect to pick up about 10C per working day. Skilled laborers can pick up 20 or more credits per day. Managers, officer types and others can earn about 50. Of course, most PC's will expect to earn their money in a more independant manner. Typical earnings for some of the seedier types of job are given below.



ASSASSINATION

The fee for hired murder varies according to the importance of the client. For a low-level victim with average security, you can expect a d20x10 credits. Characters with better security, like medium level gangsters, command fees of around d20x100. Really important individuals with great security come in at d20 M a hit.

BODYGUARDING

This varies according to the dangerous of the work. It normally works out at 20 credits per day for a low level gangster, small businessman etc. It rises to about 100 credits per day for people who need serious protection from the worst sort of heavy-hitters.

BOUNTY HUNTING

Bounty hunting is a dirty and dangerous profession. A typical felon will be worth approximately d20x10 credits. A really famous and nasty character will be worth d20x100 credits. A really big-time crook on the "most wanted" lists is usually worth d20 megacredits or so. Such characters usually take a lot of catching.

PROSPECTING

Prospectors roam the Wastes looking for caches of ancient artifacts. This happens more or less by chance, so the rewards here are really up to the Narrator.

MISSIONS

This is a catch-all category that can include anything from freeing hostages, couriering important documents, to spying for one of the great powers. Normally rewards are commensurate with risk. They start at around one megacredit, plus expenses, and are usually only paid on successful completion of the mission. A percentage of the fee may be paid in advance if the characters are regarded as reliable.

VIRUS DETECTION PROGRAM: ON	INITIATE SEQUENCE	GUNSTBERG OVERDRIVE	CORTICO QUASI-DEGRADATION
FLOW LINK QUASI PROTOCOL: INITIATED	NON-BIOLOGICAL RAW MATERIAL:	MICRO-OPTICAL MODULATOR: ON	?
FILE SUB-PROTOL: STANDARD	INTERNAL DATA CORRUPTION:	SILICONE SYNAPTIC SIMULATOR	SMART CHIP INSTALLED
NANOMECHANICAL INTERFACE:	LINGUISTIC MARKUP DIRECTORY	DYSFUNCTION	METHANE IMPULSE CATHETER
VALIDATE SIMULATION	MOLECULAR BINARY:	?	OCCIPITAL FLOW MODULATION: SINE

RULES

LOGIN:	SUB system COORDINATES	SEROTONERGIC OVERLOAD	BIOFEEDBACK MATRIX: XO
PASSWORD:	X1:131.31.4 X2:196.00.2	AMYGDALPTIC OVERWRITE	?
ACCESS GRANTED	Y1:612.33.1 Y2:010.34.1	SMART CHIP INSTALLED	AMOEBOID DRONE: PRESENT
SECURITY CLEARANCE LEVEL:	Z2: 21.89.2 Z1: 24.62.9	BIOMECH AUGMENTATION:	OVERVIRUS DETECTED
EXCESS GENETIC VARIATION:	ABBERANT CHROMA LEVELS:	NANOCCIPITAL DRIVER	STORYMODE INITIATING

It was the screaming that woke Panzer Bob, the screaming and the sound of the shots. He switched on his eyes and waited for the flickering of his optics to settle. It took a long time, and occasionally the pictures jumped. That worried Panzer Bob. He relied on his optics for targeting. Any malfunctions there reduced his chances of survival greatly. He had learned that somewhere, a long time ago.

He had no idea how long he had been dormant. His internal clock had been destroyed in a skirmish with some Wasteland raiders, and he had never been able to remember to get it fixed. There were a lot of things that he had never been able to remember to do. It was kind of sad.

He knew his positronic brain was nearly burned out. The neural networks were completely unreliable. He was old. He wasn't sure how old, but he knew it must be centuries. He had been built during the Armageddon Wars and that had been a long, long time ago.

Most of the time now, he just wanted to lie dormant. Maybe even to die, if that was possible. He had heard that old war-robots didn't die. They just shut down for good.

Sometimes, that was just what he wanted to do himself. It was too much effort to keep moving, to get the repairs done, to carry out his directives. Enough of that, he told himself. No time for thoughts like that.

He checked his internal power reservoirs. He was on emergency power. Well, that explained why he had been dormant. He had powered down to the minimum needed to keep his brain functioning. Now he was going through energy at a terrible rate. His main capacitors had been damaged somehow, and the solar cells were not recharging.

Things look bad for Panzer Bob, he told himself. Not much power. No mechanics in sight. No possibility of repairs. Maybe he should just power down again. He could perceive no immediate threat, and he was just wasting what little power he had left.

The screams echoed down the canyon again. They tugged at old memories and sent them flickering down his neuron paths. Those were human screams. He was supposed to protect humans. It was one of his prime directives: Protect the Civilians.

Slowly, painfully, Panzer Bob moved his arm. The corroded metal screeched. Gears ground, their action slowed by the sand and grit lodged in their cogs. He checked the action of his right-hand gun. The bolt clicked under the mental impulse. Good. It still worked, and the system checks said he still had ammo.

He put one foot in front of the other and headed for the screams. Sand crunched under his metal feet. Aged servo-motors whined with every step. He hoped the flickering of his optics would settle. He hoped the pain in his head would go away.

The ghost whispers of ancient memories haunted him. He felt dimly that antique software systems were coming online. Threat evaluation indices, tactical induction matrixes, live-and-learn firefight survival storage all clicked in. He fumbled to understand them, but as swiftly as they had come online, they went offline again.

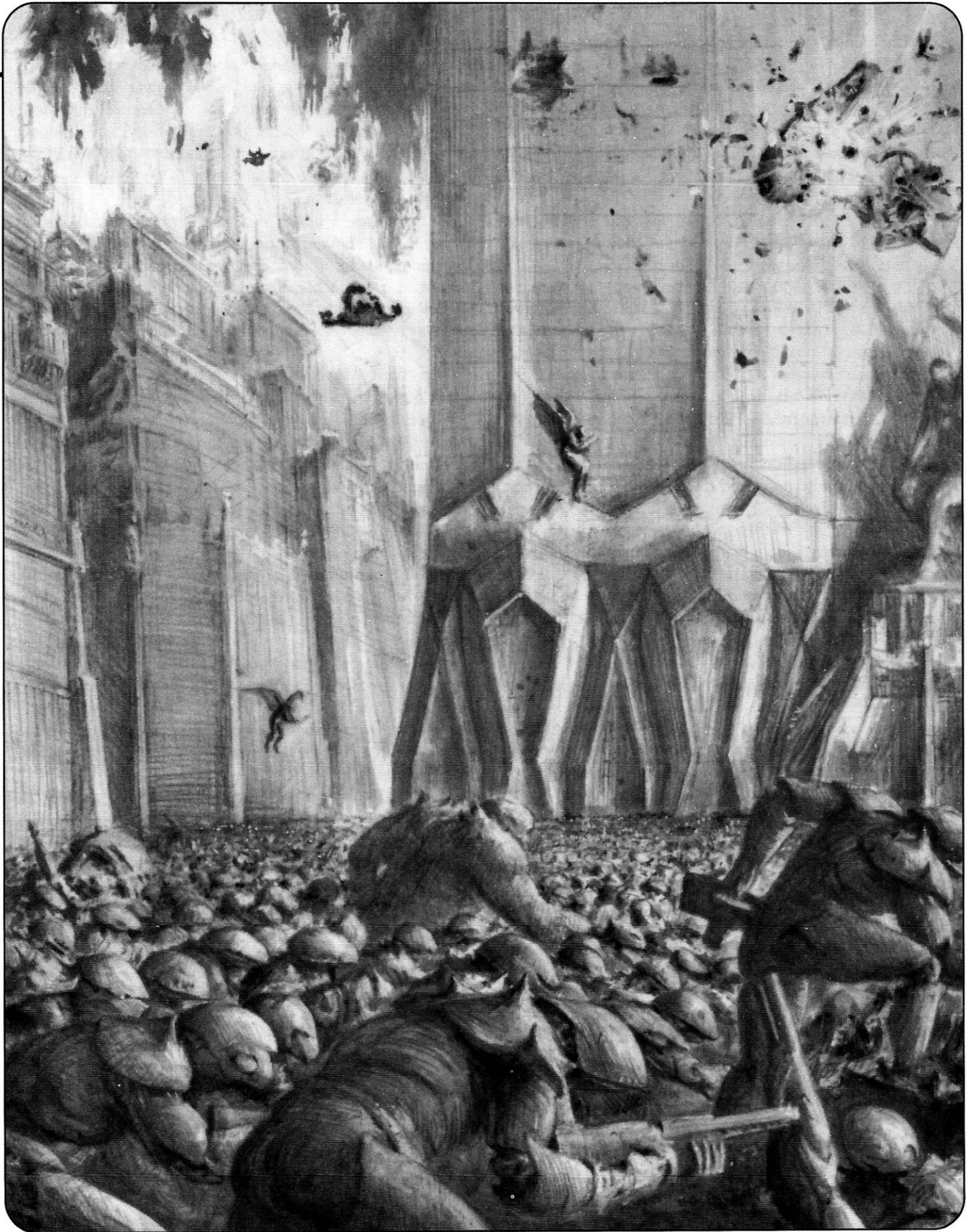
If Panzer Bob could have wept, he would have. It was a terrible thing to know that all the memories were still in there and that he could not reach them.

He emerged from the ravine and looked downslope at the source of the noise that had disturbed him. Three big, burly men stood near the remains of a burned-out truck.

One was tall and skinny, with metal bionic eyes. The second was short, squat and apelike, with two huge bionic arms. The third was monstrosly huge and carried a jackhammer. The skinny one was firing a blast pistol at the feet of a scared teenage boy and shouting: "Dance, scum-sucker, dance!"

A little girl was screaming as she watched. The corpses of an older man and woman lay nearby. Panzer Bob stood there for a moment and wondered what to do. His mind worked so slowly now that it was difficult to work out the best course of action. He wanted to tell the men to stop, to make the girl stop screaming. It took him a long time to find the words.

"No do that! No do that!" His amplified voice boomed out deafeningly. The three men looked up. Panzer Bob felt he better add something to his statement by way of explanation. "No hurt civilians. Bad! Bad to hurt civilians!"



The skinny man stared at him in surprise; "Furg! A Panzer! A scumsuckin' Panzer!"

The ape-man raised his gun and sent a hail of bullets heading towards Panzer Bob. They pattered off his duralloy skin like a light rain. Panzer Bob wondered what to do. He was confused. His primary directives were in conflict. He was supposed to protect civilians. He was supposed to destroy the enemy.

None of these people looked like the enemy. They wore no uniforms, carried no insignia. They were not military personnel. They were all civilians.

On the other hand. The men shooting at him were also hurting the other civilians and they WERE shooting at him. It seemed likely to Panzer Bob that this made them enemy, even if they did look like civilians. This application of logic made Panzer Bob feel a little better. He decided he'd better give them one last warning just to be sure.

"No shoot Panzer Bob! No shoot! If shoot Panzer Bob you enemy!"

The men looked confused. They even stopped shooting for a moment and gazed at each other questioningly. Panzer Bob moved down the slope towards the little girl. The teenager took her by the hand and moved into the shelter of Panzer Bob's massive form. Panzer Bob looked down at them. They seemed tiny. The boy was less than two thirds of Panzer Bob's height even though he was tall for a human. Panzer Bob did his best to nod reassuringly to them.

A huge clang and a malfunction warning brought Panzer Bob's attention back to the leather-garbed men. The giant had snuck up on him and smashed the giant pneumatic hammer into Panzer Bob's arm. Panzer Bob swung his gun to bear on the man and then realized it wasn't there. The man had knocked his arm clean off. The rust had been worse than Panzer Bob had thought.

The man found this amusing. He stood for a second laughing and then the other men joined in.

"That showed this spluggin' metal moron," he said, pulling back the jackhammer for another swing.

Panzer Bob's threat evaluation software sent him an urgent warning. Panzer Bob swung forward with his huge left fist. The man's bones and face crunched under the impact. He went flopping backward, overbalanced by the weight of his massive hammer. The hammer's mechanism activated. It pounded the ground, sending the man hurtling up into the air. He hit the ground dazed. Panzer Bob stood on his head, crunching it to jelly.

The apeman reached into his pouch and pulled something out. Grenade, Panzer Bob realized as it hurtled toward him. There was a click as the magnetic disc at the base of the grenade adhered to his body. Panzer Bob tried to swat it off, but he had forgotten he didn't have a right arm anymore. The effort almost overbalanced him. His gyrostabilizers whirled as they tried to compensate, then the grenade detonated.

Panzer Bob's optics flickered and went dark for a moment. His damage update told him he was hurt bad. Internal systems damage. Gyrostabilizer malfunction. Autorepair unavailable. He reeled around, trying to regain his balance, trying to avoid the sounds of the screaming girl, flailing with his good arm, hoping to hit one of the enemy.

He heard the gun stutter again, and he headed towards it. His optics kicked back in for a moment, and he saw the ape-man in front of him. The man looked surprised as Panzer Bob caught him by the throat and squeezed. His feet and fists beat ineffectually on the blasted crater in the giant robot's chest. Panzer Bob exerted his strength. The ape-man's neck broke. His head went in one direction. His body went in another. Blood painted Panzer Bob red.

He looked around for the last foe, saw that the skinny man had produced a long glowing weapon. Panzer Bob's threat evaluation software recognized it.

Forceblade! The deadliest of all close combat weapons.

The man sprang for him. Panzer Bob raised his other arm to knock the weapon aside. The blade caught Panzer Bob on the forearm and separated his hand from the wrist. Panzer Bob tried a blow with his stump, but the man avoided him lithely and carved a great swathe out of Panzer Bob's shoulder.

Panzer Bob knew he was doomed. He was too slow to kill this Skavenger, and he wasn't smart enough to out-think him. His damage evaluation software told him he was almost non-functional. His power circuits told him he had less than 30 seconds before dormancy anyway.

The girl screamed again. Panzer Bob knew he had to do something. The man was swinging the forceblade, aiming for his head. Panzer Bob backed away, hoping that something would occur.

Twenty seconds of power left.

Panzer Bob continued to move backwards as the Skavenger moved forward, blade humming a deadly dirge, leaving a blurred trail of light before Panzer Bob's optics.

Ten seconds.



Suddenly Panzer Bob knew what he had to do. He stumbled and allowed himself to fall forward. The man raised his blade to protect himself. As it carved through Panzer Bob's chest, the man smiled triumphantly and then, too late, realized his mistake. A ton of rusting duralloy fell on top of him and crushed him to death.

Just as the darkness of dormancy overcame him, Panzer Bob felt a slight thrill of satisfaction. His last act had been to implement his prime directive. He had protected the civilians.

Then he knew no more.

GAME RULES

The rules provide a set of simple mechanisms for resolving all sorts of actions within the game. They provide a fair and simple way of letting everyone know whether their action has been a success or not.

SESSIONS AND CAMPAIGNS

Waste World RPG games are normally played over a number of sessions. A session is simply an evening's play, run by a Narrator, and involving the player's characters. A number of sessions link up to form an ongoing campaign, during which the characters can learn new skills, participate in ongoing storylines and grow in power and ability. Assuming the characters survive, players keep the same characters from session to session. During the course of a campaign characters will change, retire and sometimes, sadly, die. This is all part of the fun of the game.

HANDLING TIME

During actual play, there are two types of time you should be aware of: game time and combat time. Both are equally important and affect the pace of the game.

GAME TIME

Game time is like time in a book. It advances at whatever speed the Narrator wants it to, and that best affects the flow of the game. For example, if your characters are crossing a vast expanse of empty Wasteland en route to their destination, the Narrator can decide to make game time pass quickly. Rather than make you play out every minute of every day, the Narrator may simply want to say: "After four days of constant travel, you reach the ruins of Kronus."



On the other hand, if he has various encounters planned along your route he may actually want to make time flow more slowly. He could describe what happens every couple of hours or at other intervals. For example: "You ride for three hours across a flat plain of poisoned sand. Off to the left you can see a few tumbled-down buildings. Looking at them through your magnoculars, you can see that they are empty and deserted. Suddenly, in the distance, you can see a great dust cloud, the sort that can only be raised by vehicles moving at speed. What are you going to do?"

COMBAT TIME

Combat time is what you enter when you use the combat system. It is used to regulate all actions whenever a fight breaks out. It can also be used on other occasions when time is critical, such as during chases. Game time can flow just as quickly as combat time. The Narrator may sometimes want to describe what is happening on a second-to-second basis even when you are not in combat. That is fine. Just remember that once guns start blazing, you are in combat time. This will be handled in the section on combat.



SUCCESSSES

In Waste World, most different types of roll involve rolling a d20 and applying various modifiers, both positive and negative. If the result is greater than 10, you are deemed to have succeeded.

However, there are times when the amount you have succeeded by is as important as simply succeeding. These are measured successes. Each point you get above 10 is one success. The easiest way of figuring out your successes is to look at your die roll after all modifiers are applied and subtract 10.

For example, you are making a roll to hit with a sword. You add your DX and your sword skill level. Your DX is two, your skill is four. You roll the dice and get eight. Adding your DX and skill makes this 14. You have succeeded. You subtract 10 to discover that you have four successes.

FAILURES

Sometimes it is important to know just how much you fail by. The amount you roll under 10 is a measure of your failure.

DIFFICULTY

Of course, your Narrator is allowed to add or subtract any difficulty number that seems appropriate to the task at hand. This could vary as follows:

Easy:	+3
Average:	No modifier
Hard:	-3
Difficult:	-6
Extremely difficult:	-9 or more.

DEGREES OF SUCCESS AND FAILURE

Sometimes it matters by how much you make a skill roll. For example, if you only just make an oratory roll, your listener may be only marginally convinced. If you make it by a lot, your listeners will leave utterly convinced of the rightness of what you said.

The number of successes you gain will tell you how well you have done.

7+ FAILURES

You have failed catastrophically and utterly. You have performed this task so badly, it is embarrassing, and it might even cause you physical harm. People will laugh at you, if this sort of task is performed in front of an audience, when failure is laughable.

4-6 FAILURES

You have failed badly. There could be no doubt in the mind of anyone watching that you did not succeed at what you attempted.

ROLLING DICE

Most die rolls in Waste World involve a d20. There are certain special rules for when you roll this dice. Virtually all d20 rolls in Waste World follow the Rule Of Ten. Basically you roll a d20, add any modifiers in your favor i.e. a high degree of skill, favorable conditions, etc. These are known as positive modifiers. You then subtract all the modifiers that make the task harder, such as those for the fact that it is dark, that you are cold and hungry, that enemies are shooting at you, etc. If the result of the d20 roll is 10 or less, then you have failed. If the result is greater than 10, you have succeeded.

FUMBLES

When you roll a one it is a fumble. A fumble always fails, no matter how good you may be when using a power or skill, and there may well be other penalties.

MEGASUCCESS

A roll of 20 is always a megasuccess. It always succeeds, no matter what the penalties are, and there may be other bonuses.

0-3 FAILURES

You failed, but only just. It was a worthy effort. If you got exactly 10 with your modified die roll the result is too close to call. The Narrator may call on you to re-roll.

1-3 SUCCESSES

You have succeeded by the skin of your teeth.

4-6 SUCCESSES

You have achieved basic success. The deed is done competently and unspectacularly.

7+ SUCCESSES.

You have performed your task brilliantly. You may claim some small benefit from the Narrator. He might rule that you take less time than usual, or that you perform spectacularly enough to impress any audience watching.

TYPES OF DIE ROLL

There are many different types of die roll. They are used under different circumstances. The major types are given here.

PERCEPTION ROLLS

You make these rolls when you must spot a hidden foe, or something you are not aware of. Roll a d20. Your IN and your awareness skill levels are positive modifiers. There may be many negative ones if, for example, your opponent is well concealed or has specialized equipment. The Narrator will tell you when this is the case. If the result is greater than 10 you have succeeded in spotting whatever it is you needed to spot. If the result is 10 or less you have failed. Perception rolls can be made for sight or hearing or smell. More occasionally, your Narrator may ask you to make one for taste or touch. For example, if a drink has been drugged you might make a perception roll to spot the subtly altered taste.

Under certain circumstances, the Narrator may make perception rolls for you, and only tell you the results if you succeed. One common instance of this is when you are about to be ambushed; asking you to make a roll might give that fact away.

CHARACTERISTIC ROLLS

Characteristic rolls are simple to use. A Narrator can ask a player character (PC) to make one whenever a simple raw characteristic is being tested. For example, if a PC is trying to roll away a huge boulder from the front of an exit, it may call for a ST characteristic roll. If a PC needs to remember some obscure fact, the Narrator may call for an IN roll. If the PC must grit his teeth and continue with his task despite enduring incredible agony, a PW roll may be in order. If the PC must perform a complex feat of manual dexterity this might call for a DX roll.



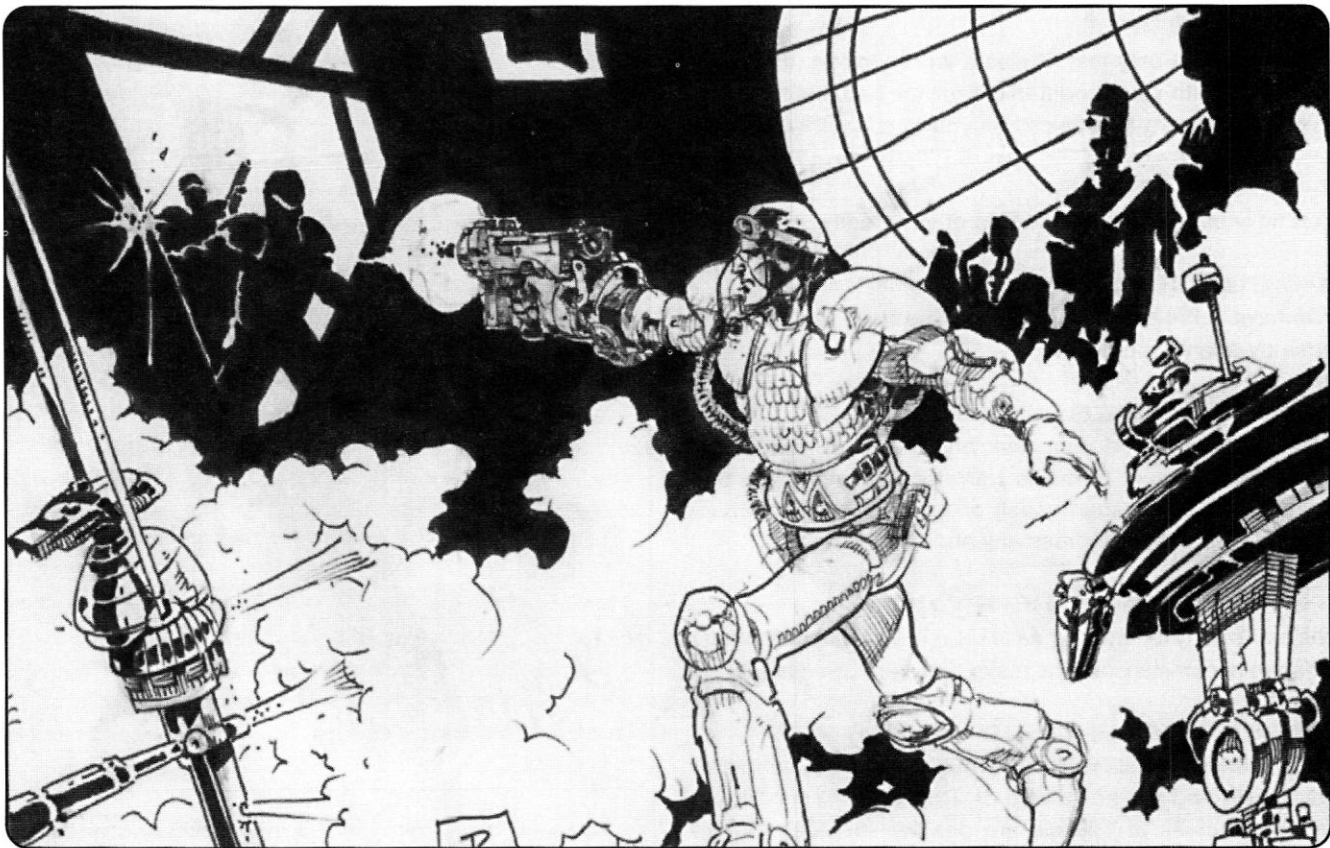
To make these rolls the PC rolls a d20 and adds the appropriate characteristic plus any positive modifiers that may apply. He then subtracts any negative modifiers that the Narrator thinks are appropriate. If the result is 11 or more, he has succeeded. If the result is 10 or less, then he has failed.

In the pages that follow, characteristic rolls are referred to by the name of the characteristic that applies. So where the text says make an IN roll, you are being asked to make an intelligence characteristic roll.

SKILL ROLLS

Your character will possess many skills, and during the course of his adventuring he will acquire many more. Many skills will work automatically, most of the time. Sometimes though, in moments of crisis, you will need to make a skill roll. This is a roll that will tell you if you have succeeded in using the skill.

You don't need to make a drive roll when simply flying your skimmerbike around town. You don't need to make a scholar roll when looking up simple facts in a library. You don't need to make a success roll when you pull out your pistol and let fly at the ceiling.



Your Narrator, however, is perfectly correct to ask you to make a skill roll when something critical or dangerous is happening. He may also ask you to make a success roll for even the most basic skills under special circumstances. It is, after all, one thing to remember your computer access code in the privacy of your own home. It's another thing entirely to remember a five digit number when it will disarm that bomb that's ten seconds from blowing you to kingdom come. Of course, there are certain modifiers to these rolls.

EFFECTS OF CHARACTERISTICS

All skills are based on a characteristic. The appropriate characteristic is added to any skill levels you make with the skill.

SKILL LEVELS

Your levels with a skill are all added to your skill roll. If you do not possess a skill, you may still be able to use it but there can be a non-proficiency penalty of -8. This is normally only the case for simple skills; like driving or shooting. If you do not possess a skill, such as pilot or nuclear engineer, you simply won't be able to fly that jet or shut down that reactor.

In the pages that follow, skill rolls are referred to by the name of the skill that applies. So where the text says make mek roll, you are being asked to make an skill roll using your mek skill.

MAKING A SKILL ROLL

Simply roll a d20 and add your skill level and any characteristic that applies. Your Narrator will subtract any negative modifiers that apply. If the result is greater than 10 then you have succeeded.

AUTOMATIC SUCCESS

A Narrator can declare any action to be an automatic success, just as he can ask a PC to make a success roll under any circumstances. He should do this when it suits the tale he is trying to tell, or when it is obvious that the player should succeed. For example, if a PC searches a room for something that is definitely there, he will eventually find it if he is thorough. The only real question left for the Narrator is how long this will take.

TO HIT ROLL

In combat situations you roll a d20 to see whether you have hit your foes in close combat, or with ranged weapons. These types of rolls are both called to-hit rolls. For more on these, see the section below on combat.

SUCCESS ROLLS

Success rolls are almost any type of roll where you have to use a d20, add or subtract modifiers and see whether the result is greater than or equal to 11. In the rules that follow, die rolls of this type will be referred to as success rolls.

CONTEST ROLLS

Contest rolls happen when two characters are pitting themselves against each other. When a contest roll is called for, both characters roll a d20 and add any appropriate modifiers. The character with the highest total is the winner. The amount by which one character beats the other's total gives the level of success.

For example, your character is arm-wrestling with a huge Scavenger controlled by the Narrator. The Narrator decides a ST contest roll is called for. Both of you roll a d20 and add your ST. If your total is higher, you win. If your total is lower you lose. If you both roll the same total, the Narrator decides that you are deadlocked and must roll again.

CONTRIBUTORY ROLLS

Contributory rolls work in conjunction with other die rolls. Mostly, they are used when a PC has a skill or ability that might contribute to success when making a roll. For example, if you have the alien lore skill: Stygian, and are performing healing on a (Stygian), you would make a contributory roll using your alien lore.

When you make a contributory roll, any success you have is used as a positive modifier on the roll it is contributing to. So for example, if you made your alien lore skill-roll by four, you would get a +4 modifier to your healing roll on the wounded Stygian.

CUMULATIVE ROLLS

Cumulative rolls are a special type of roll that are only used when dealing with actions that take longer than usual. With a cumulative roll, all your successes are added together until you reach a total assigned by the Narrator.

For example, you want to break down a door. Your Narrator tells you that you must make a cumulative ST roll with a total of 20. You get to make one roll per action phase as you shoulder-charge the door. Each success is added to the previous one until you reach a total of 20. For example, on your first action phase you get 15. That is a success of five. On your next you get 17, success seven. This gives you a cumulative total of 12. On your third phase you get four. No successes. On your fourth phase you get 11, one success. Your cumulative total becomes 13. This will continue until you reach a total of 20.

If more than one person is taking part in an action that requires cumulative rolls, then they both contribute to the total by making their cumulative rolls. For example, in the next combat round Panzer Bob joins you in knocking down the door. His total is 24; 14 successes. This brings the total up to 27 and the door bursts asunder.

OTHER TYPES OF ROLL

Sometimes the die roll your Narrator wants you to make will not fit in exactly with the types given above. He may ask you to make a skill roll without modifying it with a characteristic, or he may ask you to make a die roll without telling you what negative modifiers apply until after the result is reached. This is perfectly OK. As long as the die roll fairly reflects the situation, the Narrator is at liberty to apply any modifiers he likes - and not tell you.

Sometimes situations will arise that are not covered in these rules. Under these circumstances it is fine for the Narrator to make up a new type of die roll on the spot. You may be in a situation where there is an equal chance of something happening one way or another. It is perfectly all right for him to say: You've tossed that coin, there's a 50-50 chance of the way it will land. Roll a d20, 1-10 it's heads, 11-20 it's tails.



COMBAT

Combat is a dangerous and exciting part of these rules and so deserves a section all to itself. Whenever a combat is fought you enter the combat sequence, as given below.

COMBAT ROUNDS

All combat is fought in rounds of approximately three seconds.

The first thing you must do each combat round, is decide which side has the initiative. This tells you who gets to move and act first. Once every character on that side has acted, the opposing side gets to act.

During each combat round every PC and Narrator character (NC) gets a chance to act, unless they are unconscious or otherwise out of action. Once all characters have performed all their actions, a new combat round begins. The sequence continues until all of one side has run away, been killed or surrendered, or until both sides agree to end the combat.

SCALE

Some people like to use metal miniatures when playing Waste World. They can be helpful in illustrating where everyone is positioned. If you decide to use miniatures, the scale is up to you. If the area in which a combat is taking place is small and enclosed we use a scale of one centimeter equals one meter. If the combat is taking place out-of-doors, or over a long distance, we may make one centimeter equal to five or even ten meters. The thing to do is vary the scale for maximum ease of play in the area you have available.

If you are not using metal miniatures, then the Narrator must keep a clear idea in his head of everybody's position relative to each other. This is not as difficult as it sounds, but sometimes sketching little maps can be helpful.

INITIATIVE

At the start of each combat round all characters on both sides roll a d20 and add their DX characteristic to see who has initiative. Characters take their action phases in order of their initiative totals. The character with the highest total gets to go first. If two die rolls are tied, the characters should roll again to see who goes first between them. They keep their initial total for the purpose of determining initiative.

In some cases the Narrator might want to make a single roll for a group of characters. Basically all the characters who are part of the group roll take their action phases when their total comes up. This is useful when the Narrator is controlling a large group of NCs and doesn't want to keep track of every total. If he chooses, he can also decide to let some NCs make their own initiative roll and others be part of a group. For example, the leader of a group of eight Skavengers might make his own initiative roll, while his lackeys are covered by one roll.

Example: Two player characters, a samurai and a Panzer encounter a gang of mutants. The samurai has DX +3. The Panzer has DX zero. The mutant leader has DX +1. The remaining five mutants have DX -1. Combat begins and everyone makes an initiative roll. The samurai rolls an 11 and adds her DX for a total of 14. The Panzer gets a five with no DX modifier. The mutant leader gets an 18. His +1 DX modifier makes his total 19. The rest of the gang get five. This is reduced to four by their DX total. This means that the mutant leader gets to act first, then the samurai, then the Panzer, then all the remaining mutants.

SHOWDOWNS

Sometimes your characters will be facing a foe in the classic gunfight situation. Both have holstered weapons. Both have itchy trigger fingers. When this happens, don't use the normal initiative rules. Make a contest roll using both sides' quick-draw skill. Characters go in order of their rolls, highest going first, then the next highest, and so on.

ACTION PHASE

Each character gets a chance to act within a combat round. A character can move, shoot, use a skill, draw a weapon, use a special power or do anything else the Narrator deems reasonable. This subsection of a combat round is known as an action phase. Once a character has taken its action phase, the next character acts, and so on until all the characters in a combat have acted. The combat round then ends, and a new combat round begins. You can only perform one action in an action phase.

TYPES OF ACTION

There are many different types of action your character can perform. These cover virtually all the things that are possible in combat. There are certain other types of action which can only be performed under specific circumstances. These will be dealt with in the appropriate section.

ATTACK

You can attack with any weapon you have ready, against any foe who is within range. If you have a ready weapon in each hand you can attack with them both, subject to certain restrictions (see below).



DATA CORE ACCESS



SECURITY RISK ALERT

985.0300.2233.666.957.000.000.2



ALL SYSTEMS GO



INFODUMP WARNING

FLOWLINK INTENSITY 7

RULES



CHARGE

A charge is a special form of movement action. When you make a charge you run directly at your chosen foe, and attack them with any close combat weapon you have ready (or your bare hands if you have no ready weapon). You can sprint into combat at up to six times your MR. At the end of this you can make a close combat attack. You get a +4 bonus for your momentum and ferocity. You cannot charge if you are already engaged in close combat.

DRAW WEAPON

If you don't have a ready weapon, you may well want to draw one. Alternatively, you may want to drop the weapon in your hand and draw a new one. Both of these count as a draw action. If draw is your only action this phase, it succeeds automatically.

If you have the quick-draw skill you can draw the weapon and then make an attack with it, if your quick-draw skill-roll is successful. If you succeed, the weapon is drawn and you may attack. If you fail, the weapon is drawn but you cannot attack. If you fumble, the weapon is dropped.

FIRST AID

You can take an action to perform first aid on any wounded or unconscious comrades who are next to you. This means you can slap awake a comrade who has lost consciousness from shock (see below) or you can administer basic first aid using the healer skill if you possess it. To do this properly you must have the necessary tools at hand, or you will suffer the -4 penalty for their non-use. This means you may have to drop your weapons and draw your first-aid tools. If you do not possess the healer skill, then you will also get the -8 non-proficiency penalty. If you make this roll successfully, you will have stopped the bleeding, staunched your comrade's wounds, or whatever. If you fail, you will not have, but you can try again next round.

MOVE

Your character can walk, run or sprint up to its full movement distance, and still perform another action.

MOVE AND ATTACK

You can move up to your MR, and attack with any weapon you have ready, against any foe within range. When using ranged weapons there is a -2 to hit modifier if you walk, or a -4 modifier if you run. You cannot sprint and still attack.

RELOAD

You must take a reload action whenever you want to reload a weapon that has run out of ammo (see below). In order to reload you must make a weapon skill roll for the weapon you are attempting to reload. If you succeed, all is well. If you fail, your weapon remains unloaded. If you fumble, your weapon is jammed and may not be used again this combat.

USE PSI POWER

You can use any psi power you might possess during your action phase. It takes an entire action phase to activate one psi power, but you can begin to use the power in the same action phase as you activate it.

Once a psi power has been activated, it takes no action to maintain it, unless concentration is required. If a power requires concentration to maintain, you need to make a psi power action every action phase. Once you have activated an offensive psionic power, such as pyrokinesis, you can attack with it in the same phase. For more on psi powers see the section on psionics.

WAIT

If you take no other actions in your action phase, you can choose to wait and see what those around you are doing. You can choose to react at any time. However, there is a -2 penalty to all your actions because you waited and are reacting. If you are interrupting someone else's action, both of you must make a DX roll. The highest score gets to go first.

OTHER ACTIONS

This is a catch-all covering any other sort of action you can perform in three seconds. The Narrator has the final say on whether the action is possible within that time or not.

TYPES OF COMBAT

There are two types of combat in Waste World RPG; close combat and ranged combat.

Close-combat rules are used when the participants are close enough to strike each other with fists, swords, power stars or other close-combat weapons.

Ranged-combat rules are used when warriors are exchanging shots with rifles, missile launchers, ice guns or any other form of ranged weapon.

It is perfectly possible for both types of combat to occur in one fight. For example, if a horde of Swarm warriors charge your characters, the first part of the combat might use the ranged-combat rules, as the players blast away at the hideous insectoids. Once the Swarm is upon the PCs, close-combat rules will come into play, as the Swarm rip into the PCs with claws and teeth.

OFF-HAND

Sometimes in the descriptions below, you will come across references to the off-hand. This is the hand your character does not normally use. If your character is right-handed, then his left hand is the off-hand, and vice versa. It is up to you to decide whether your character is left or right handed. You can choose either. You can choose to be ambidextrous. This is an advantage, and usually must be purchased during character creation.

CLOSE COMBAT

If two characters get within striking distance of each other, they can engage in close combat. This happens automatically as soon as you move within one meter with the enemy. Normally, as soon as you are within striking distance of a foe, your movement ends and it is assumed you are in close combat.

You can try to move past a foe, but this counts as breaking off from close combat (see below). If you are engaged in close combat, you cannot perform any other type of action until you break away.

MAKING AN ATTACK

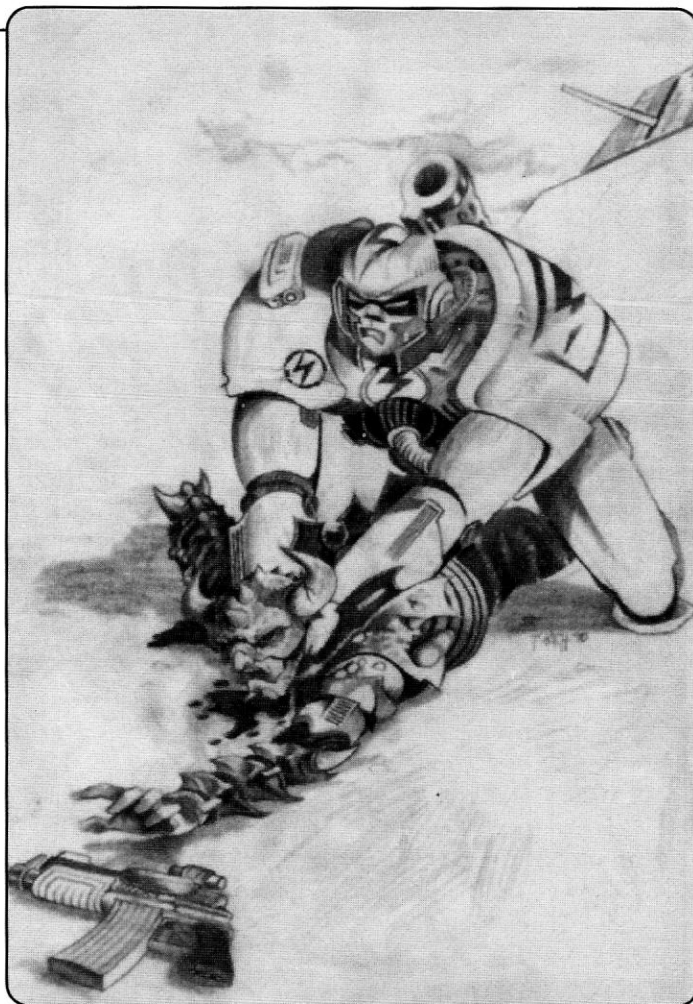
To perform a close combat attack; roll a d20, add your DX and your skill level with your close combat weapon. If the result is 11 or more, then you have hit. Count your successes, one for each point above 10 you have rolled. These will be used to calculate the damage you have done (see below). Your opponent now gets to make a defense action if he is capable of one.

FUMBLE

If you roll a one when making a close combat attack, you have fumbled. Your weapon goes flying from your hand. Roll on the deviation chart (see below) then roll a d6. This is the number of meters your weapon flies. If you are attacking with your bare hands, you must make a DX roll or you will end up lying on the ground.

RANGED WEAPONS IN CLOSE COMBAT

Once you are actually locked in close combat, it is all but impossible to use a ranged weapon larger than a pistol against your foe. You simply cannot bring them to bear fast enough. In order to be able to shoot a foe attacking you in close combat (or anybody else for that matter) you need to break away from close combat. You can use a pistol to blast someone you are in close combat with, but you cannot shoot anyone else.



BREAKING AWAY

When you are locked in close combat and try to break away, you are basically allowing your opponent to take a free swipe at you. As soon as you attempt to break off from close combat, your foe gets an immediate close combat attack, with a +4 modifier for striking at your back.

GRAB

A grab is a special type of close combat attack that does not do any immediate damage. Instead it allows you to hold your foe in place. If you grab an arm that's holding a weapon, then your foe must break free in order to use that weapon. In order to grab your opponent, you must have a free hand and make a normal close combat attack at -2 to hit.

GRAPPLE

A grapple is just like a grab, except that you must use two arms (or tentacles or whatever) to wrap up your opponent and prevent him from moving. In order to make any attacks with hand-held weapons, your foe must break free.



To grapple, you must have two arms free and make a normal close combat to hit roll at -4. On future turns, your opponent will automatically take d6 plus your ST damage, each turn. You do not have to roll to hit again, unless your opponent breaks free. Alternatively, you may choose to do this damage, and throw your opponent to the ground.

With both the grab and the grapple your opponent must break free before he can break off close combat.

BREAKING FREE

Breaking free is a special action you may find yourself having to take when grabbed or grappled with in close combat. It comes down to a trial of strength between you and your opponent. Make a contest roll using your ST against your foe's ST. If you succeed, you break free and in future turns may move without restriction (unless grabbed again, of course). If you fail, then you are still grabbed or grappled.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Many things can modify your chances of hitting in close combat. If you are above your opponent, you will find it easier to hit him, and he will find it harder to hit you. It is obviously far easier to hit a foe from behind, or by surprise, than it is to strike one who is fully aware of your attack. The sheer momentum of your charge into combat can bowl over a foe and cause you to strike harder than normal. These are all covered by special circumstance modifiers. They act as bonuses or penalties to your hit roll when you are in close combat. All special circumstance modifiers are cumulative.

Above foe: +2

Below foe: -2

Striking from behind: +4

Striking by surprise: +4

For each additional person locked in close combat with your foe: +1

Knocked down: you are at -2. Your foe is at +2.

(This is cumulative with the modifiers for being above or below a foe, as given above.)

UNARMED COMBAT

There are several modifiers to combat when one or both parties are unarmed. It is very difficult to parry a weapon with your bare hands, unless you possess the martial arts skill. If you are being attacked in close combat by someone with a weapon when you do not possess one, you can only use half your unarmed combat skill levels against their attack. For example, if they attack you with a sword, and you have unarmed combat six, you can only subtract three from their chance of hitting you when they roll to hit. If you don't have any skill levels with unarmed combat, you get a non-proficiency penalty.

IMPROVISED WEAPONS

Sometimes you will have to improvise weapons from bits of rock, sharpened sticks, old tools lying around, bricks, etc. Unless your Narrator tells you differently, improvised weapons do 1M-1 damage.

If you are carrying a ranged weapon in close combat, you can always use it as an improvised club. It will do 1M-1 damage, and you can use your bludgeon skill.

SWEEP ATTACKS

Sweep attacks can be performed by anyone with a skill level of two, or more, with a close combat weapon. When making a sweep attack you may attack any foe within range, provided no one on your own side gets in the way. (You can still perform the sweep attack if you wish, but you will hit your comrades as well.)



When making a sweep attack, there is a penalty of -2 to your to hit roll, for every additional foe you are attempting to hit after the first. For example, if there are three foes within sweeping range the penalty would be -4 to hit all of them. When making a sweep, you roll to hit your first foe. If you miss, then your attack ends. If you succeed, you can roll to hit the second foe. If you miss your attack ends. If you succeed you may keep on attacking, and so on.

If there a number of foes within range for a sweep attack, you may choose how many you wish to go for. Your targets need to be adjacent to each other. You cannot sweep a target on your far left, and on your far right, if there are foes in between them.

If you are armed with a forceblade, and none of your foes have a forceblade, or force fields, then you can make sweep attacks without the -2 per person penalty. Your forceblade can simply cleave through your unresisting opponents.

SHOOTING

In your action phase, you can shoot any ranged weapon you have ready. To hit, you must roll 11+ on a d20. You can add your DX and weapon skill level. If you roll 11 or more, you may have hit. Count your successes. Your opponent then gets to make his defense action.

There are penalties to hit with ranged weapons. All penalties are cumulative.

RANGE

Most weapons have an optimal range at which they can be used. This is called close range. When you aim at a target beyond this range, the weapon loses accuracy and hitting power. If firing above close range, subtract four from your chance to hit.

COVER

It is easiest to hit someone standing in open ground. Unfortunately, targets often aren't obliging enough to be there. Sometimes they hide in bushes. Sometimes they hide behind walls. This makes them more difficult to hit.

If your target is in soft cover, such as bushes or woods, subtract two. If your target is behind hard cover, such as a wall, subtract four. All penalties are cumulative.

MOVING TARGET

It is more difficult to hit a fast-moving target. If you fire at a target that moved more than 30 meters in its last combat round, you are at -2 to hit.



VISIBILITY

Visibility can affect ranged combat significantly. There is a -2 penalty for firing in rainstorms or dim light. There is a -4 penalty for shooting in darkness. Of course, sometimes visibility is so reduced that you will not be able to fire at all.

OTHER FACTORS

There are many other factors which can affect shooting. There is not enough space in a rulebook this size to go into them all. If, as Narrator, you wish to apply a modifier for firing a gun while running across a tightrope in a howling gale, it is up to you to decide what the modifier is. Our only advice is that in the case given here, it should be a big negative one.

TYPES OF SHOOTING

Not all weapons limit you to a single shot. Many are capable of firing more than one shot during a single action phase. Below is a summary of the different types. Note: most weapons which are capable of semi-automatic fire are capable of single-shot fire. Most weapons which are capable of full auto-fire are also capable of semi-automatic and single-shot fire.



SEMI-AUTOMATIC FIRE

Some weapons are capable of semi-automatic fire. To do this, you simply pull the trigger of your weapon repeatedly. Semi-automatic fire lets you concentrate a hail of bullets on one foe. You can fire up to three times with one shooting action. Just roll three dice, one after the other. You will run out of ammo if any of them comes up one. This means that you cannot make any further attacks, and must spend next turn reloading if you want to fire again.

FULL AUTO-FIRE

Some weapons are capable of full automatic fire. They let you hose your opponents with a stream of bullets. Roll up to five times. As always, if any of them comes up one, you are out of ammo.

FULL BURST FIRE ONLY

These weapons usually have belt-feeds or huge magazine capacity, or both. They throw out such a hail of fire that they can only ever be used on full auto-fire mode.

RECOIL MODIFIERS

When firing more than one shot from many projectile weapons, there is a certain amount of recoil as the force of firing causes the weapon to kick. To account for this we have a recoil modifier. You are at -1 to hit for every shot after the first, when you fire a normal missile weapon. This penalty only applies to weapons which fire physical projectiles.

Lasers and blasters do not have a recoil modifier, neither do mini-flamers or ice guns.

Stronger characters have less problems with recoil than weaker ones. Your ST is subtracted from any recoil penalty. If your ST is negative, it is added to any recoil penalty.

For example, you are blasting away with an assault rifle on full auto. Your first shot will have no negative modifiers for recoil. Your second shot will be at -1, your third shot at -2, and so on. If you have a ST 1, you could ignore the recoil penalty of -1, and reduce the -2 penalty to -1. Conversely, if your ST -1, you would have to increase the penalty by -1 so that the -1 penalty would become -2, and the -2 penalty would become -3.

TWO (OR MORE) WEAPONS

It is possible to use a weapon, ready in each hand, to attack. The basic rule is that each additional attack gives you a -2 penalty with all attacks that action phase. This simulates the difficulty you have in concentrating when using two weapons at once. These penalties are cumulative with other penalties, such as for using the off-hand.

If both weapons are guns, and you run out of ammo with one gun, you can keep firing with the other.

If you are carrying two weapons and have the quick-draw skill for each of them, you can quick-draw and fire both. You would have to make a successful quick-draw roll for each weapon. If you fail to draw a weapon, you can't use it.

You can burst fire or auto-fire with both weapons if they are capable of it, and you are in the mood.

You can use a close-combat weapon and a ranged weapon in the same turn, providing you do not violate any of the restrictions that apply. If you have claws, you can use one of them and fire a gun at the same time.

There are no penalties for the additional attacks granted for fangs, horns or tails or other such special powers.



TARGETING

When firing the different types of automatic weapons you can split your dice throws any way you want. You can concentrate all the dice on one target, or split them between multiple targets. Before any dice are rolled you must decide which way you are doing this.

The Narrator can place any restrictions on this that he deems appropriate. He may decide that if you automatic fire at one target, and kill it, you can only fire at the next closest target. This is perfectly reasonable. Of course it will vary according to each situation. Normally, if you want to fire at targets more than two meters apart, you will lose one die roll for every two meters that separate your targets.

For example, if you fire a burst of five shots at two targets with four meters between them, you will need to waste two of your shots bridging the three meters between them. So the pattern might be two shots at the first target, two bullets wasted tracking to the second target, and then the last shot at the second target.

Shots are only wasted if there is more than two meters between the targets. If you were firing at three targets two meters apart there would be no need to waste bullets. You could fire two bullets at the first man, track to the second man two meters away and fire one shot at him, then unload two shots at the last guy. Or you could fire three bullets at the first guy and one each at the second or third. Or any other combination that takes your fancy.

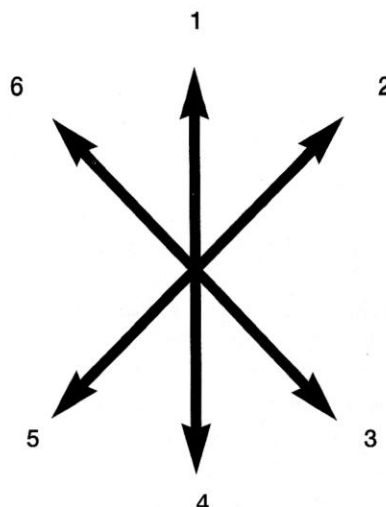
EXPLOSIVES

Certain weapons, such as grenades and bombs, and certain psi powers, such as pyrokinesis, are explosive. When they go off they will affect everything, friend or foe, within a given distance of their impact point. This is known as the blast radius. Normally, the further you are from the center of the blast the less damage you will take. You can reduce the damage taken from an explosive weapon by 1/2, if you are more than half the blast radius away from the point of the explosion.

Explosive weapons need not be targeted at an individual target. They can be aimed at any point of impact near where they are meant to explode. After that, you roll to hit as usual. This means your target's DX is not used as a negative modifier to your to hit roll. Cover provides no to hit modifier when used against explosive attacks. Instead, subtract the negative modifier given for cover from the damage done by the attack.

If you miss with an explosive attack, you must roll for deviation (see below).

DEVIATION DIAGRAM



THROWN WEAPONS

Some weapons, such as grenades and spears, are thrown. You can throw an aerodynamic weapon, such as a spear, for 20 meters plus five meters per point of ST you have over zero. You can throw grenades and rocks for 10 meters, plus two meters per point of ST you have over zero.

DEVIATION

If you miss with a thrown weapon, such as a grenade, you must throw for deviation. Roll a d6 and consult the Deviation Diagram to see in what direction they have deviated; roll a d20 and divide by five, rounding to the nearest number, then add your ST to see how many meters of deviation there was.

Ranged explosive weapons can also deviate from their point of impact with a miss. To see how far they deviate, check for direction on the Deviation Diagram and then roll a d20 for every 100 meters of range the projectile has traveled. This gives you the deviation distance in meters.

AMMUNITION

Gun combat in Waste World is full of warriors furiously blasting away, unleashing as many bullets as they can. There is no mathematical recording of bullets, and you don't have to keep track of every bullet you fire.

We prefer mindless violence to book-keeping every time, so we give you this simple rule: When you roll a one when firing, you're out of ammo and need to spend your next turn reloading.

If you thought your gun was fully loaded and this was your first shot, it jammed. Tough luck.

Because full-burst-only weapons have such great magazine capacity, you must roll a one twice for them to run out of ammo. This must happen either in the same action phase or in consecutive action phases. If there is a clear action phase between the rolls of one, then you don't run out of ammo. In this case you would start the count again with the second roll of one. You will only need to reload if you roll a one in the same round, or a consecutive round.

You might object that this means there is a chance for some guns to go on firing forever, like in the movies. Our reply is: so what? If you need to rationalize this to yourself, just imagine that sometimes your character gets everything together well enough to slam a new clip into his gun without wasting an action, and sometimes he doesn't. This simple rule should save you a lot of book-keeping.

Of course there are certain weapons, such as missiles and grenades, where you know you will only be carrying a certain, low number of them. You should keep track of these.

DEFENSE ACTIONS

Defense actions are a special type of action. Defense actions are designed to protect you from other people's actions. What makes them so special is that you can make them outside the normal turn sequence in response to another character's actions. If someone shoots at you, you can dodge. You can make any other response action that your Narrator allows, like diving out of the way if someone throws a grenade.

Certain factors govern all defense actions. You can only take defense actions against attacks you are aware of, so if you are attacked by surprise or from a direction you cannot see, you don't get the defense action. You can always choose which defense action you want to make against any given attack. For example, you might choose to dodge an incoming shot, then parry a swipe with a blade. You cannot dodge or parry if you are grappled.

DODGE

When you dodge, you are putting all your efforts into avoiding your foe's attacks, straining every nerve and sinew to keep yourself from taking damage. You duck, weave and throw yourself to the side.

You can dodge any ranged or close-combat attack, or the effects of psionic powers of a physical nature such as pyrokinesis, etc. You cannot dodge psionic attacks, such as domination or illusion, that affect your mind directly.

To do so, simply make a dodge roll, using your DX and dodge skill level as modifiers. If your dodge roll is successful, you may subtract your successes from your attacker's successes. If this reduces your enemy's total successes to zero or less, then you take no damage. Otherwise your attacker will inflict damage based on the reduced success total.

You can dodge any sort of attack, whether ranged or close combat, so long as you are aware of it. If you are taken by surprise, or the attack comes from an angle you cannot see, then you cannot dodge. You must be free to move in order to dodge, so you cannot dodge when grappled, immobilized or partially immobilized.

The easiest way to make a dodge roll is to make it at the same time as your opponent makes his attack roll. If your roll is higher than, or equal to, your opponent's, then you have clearly dodged the attack. Only if your total is lower do you need to use the procedure given above, comparing your successes, if any, with those of your opponent.

FUMBLE

If you fumble a dodge you must make a DX roll to regain your balance, otherwise you will trip and fall over.

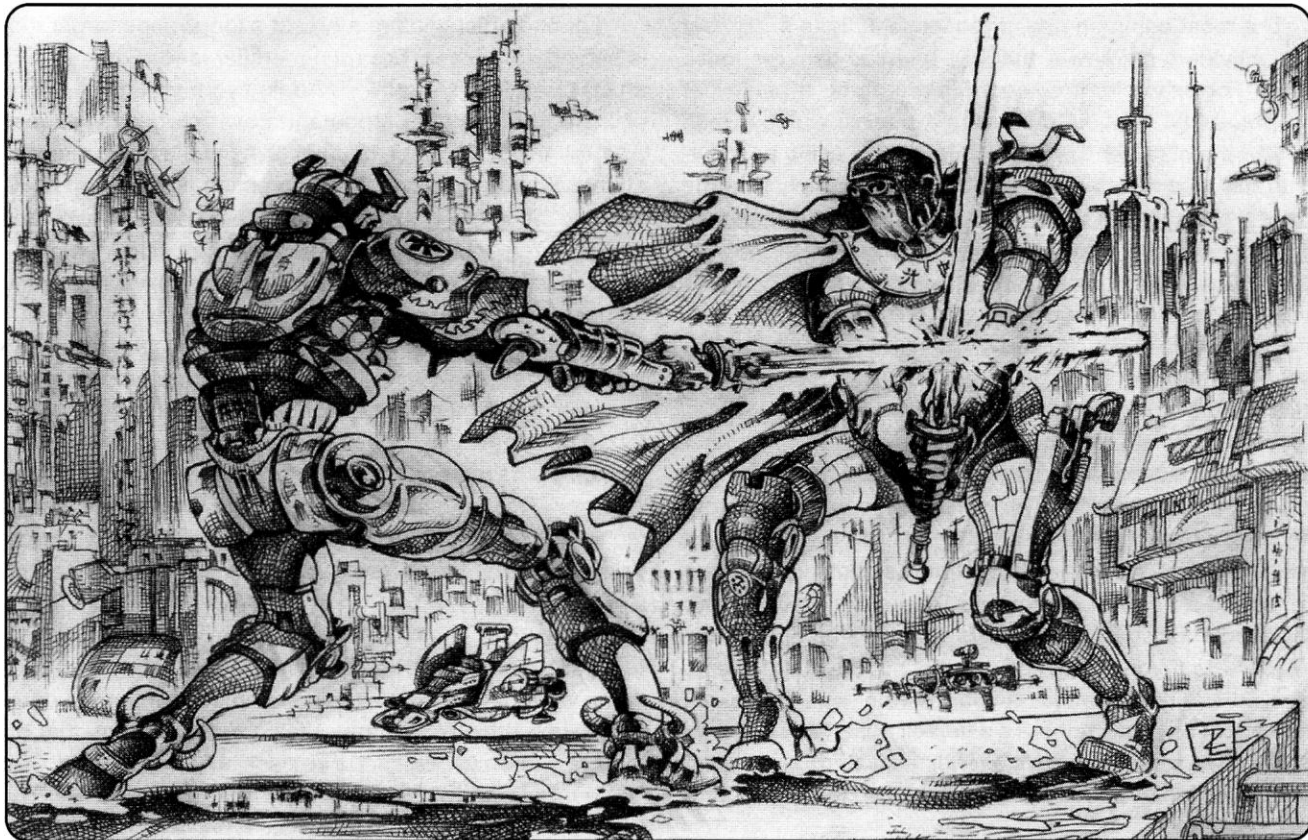
PARRY

Normally you can only parry close combat attacks. To parry, you must use your hands, a weapon or a shield to knock aside blows dealt by a foe. In order to parry an incoming blow, you must at least have your weapon or shield hand free to move.

Parrying is a response action, so you can parry outside your normal action phase. When you make a parry, you add your DX and your skill level (with weapon or shield) to your success roll. The number of successes you have is subtracted from your opponent's number of successes. If this reduces your opponent's total to zero or less, then he does you no damage.

MODIFIERS TO PARRYING

In close combat it is harder to parry multiple attackers. So for each close combat attacker after the first, there is a -1 modifier. If you are carrying a shield, there is a positive modifier: +1 for a small shield, +2 for a large shield.



PARRYING WITH YOUR BARE HANDS

Parrying weapons with your bare hands is difficult and dangerous. You must either strike the flat of the weapon or the arm that holds it, rather than the blade or striking surface. This means that unless you have the martial arts skill, there is a -4 modifier for all attempts to parry a weapon with your bare hands. If your foe attempts to strike you with his bare hands or feet, and you are armed, you get +4 to your parry attempt. In addition, if the success total of your parry is greater than your opponent's success total, you do damage based on your success total as if it were a normal attack. If this attack inflicts a critical hit, do not roll on the Hit Location Table. You will do damage to the limb your foe was striking with.

FUMBLE

If you fumble a parry, the result is exactly the same as if you fumble in close combat. Your weapon goes flying d6 meters in a random direction. Roll on the Deviation Diagram (see above).

RESISTING MENTAL ATTACKS

You can muster all your will power to resist certain kinds of psionic power. (It will say whether you can do this in the powers description.) When you resist a psionic attack, make a success roll using your PW and resistance skills as positive modifiers. If this roll is successful, you can subtract your success total from your opponent's success total. If this reduces your opponent's success total to zero or less, then his mental attack has failed. You do not have to be aware that a mental attack is about to happen in order to resist it. You can make a resistance roll even when surprised; however, you will not be able to summon your full power of mind. As a result, you get -4 to your resistance roll.

RESPONSE ACTIONS

Response actions are a special type of defense action, and are made instead of any other defense action. They can be any type of action the Narrator requires in response to an attack or other threat. For example, if a 10-tonne boulder is about to fall out of the ceiling and crush your character, the Narrator might ask you to make a DX roll to see if you can jump to one side.

The most common use of response actions in combat is to activate a psi power that can be used as a response action. For example, if someone starts firing a blaster at you, you might choose to activate a psionic wall between you and them, rather than dodge. Normally, using psi powers in this way does not require any sort of roll, unless the power itself calls for one. You cannot use as a response action a psi power that requires concentration. In the split second you have to react, there is simply not enough time to concentrate.

You cannot make any sort of offensive response action.

DISPEL

A psyker may attempt to dispel a power used by another psyker. Each psyker must possess the same power. For example, if you possess cryokinesis, you can dispel someone else's use of cryokinesis. Dispel can even be used against a power already in effect, such as domination. To do this: spend a point of PW, roll a d20 and add your PL and willpower. The negative modifier is equal to your opponent's PW plus PL. If you roll 11+, then your opponent's power is dispelled and has no effect. If you roll 10 or less, the power takes effect as usual. If there's a tie, roll again. You can only dispel with a power you have already activated.

The psionic power dispel can be initiated as a response action.

Dispels cannot be used against damage already caused by the effects of a psi power.

BLOCKING

Blocking is similar to dispelling in many ways, but entails using a different power to block a psyker's use of a power; you can use pyrokinesis to counter cryokinesis, and vice versa. It is not possible in all circumstances, but can be used with the permission of the Narrator. Blocking operates in exactly the same way as dispelling, only you use your PL with the blocking power.

You can only block with a power you have already activated.

DOING DAMAGE

All weapons have a damage rating. This is usually written like so: 1M+1, 2M, 3M+1 etc. The first number before the M is the weapon's damage multiplier. The second number (the one after the plus sign) is the weapons damage modifier. If there is no plus sign, then the weapon has no damage modifier.

When you roll to hit, your successes are very important. Multiply your successes by the weapon's damage multiplier, add the damage modifier, and that is the amount of damage you have done.

For example, you fire a gun at a long-range target that is behind soft cover. The total modifier is -6. For your skill and DX add four. You roll 17. Adding your skill gives a total of 21. Subtracting the range and cover modifiers reduces your roll to 15. Subtract 10. This gives you a basic success of five. Your opponent fails his defense roll. Your gun has a damage rating of 2+1. You multiply the damage by two, then add one. This means you have done 11 points of damage.

If you dodge an attack this can reduce the damage the attack inflicts.

For example, your opponent fires at you with a weapon that does 2M damage. He scores six successes. You make a dodge roll, adding your DX of one and your dodge skill of four. The result is 15. You have five successes. This is subtracted from your opponent's total of six, reducing it to one success. This is then multiplied by his weapon's damage multiplier. You take two points of damage. If you had made your dodge roll by six or more, you would have taken no damage.

RANDOM DAMAGE WEAPONS

Some weapons do not use this system for generating damage. When they hit, you must roll a die. Weapons that do this are written give damage as per the formula $xdx+1$. The number before the d tells you how many dice you roll. The number after the d tells you the die type. The number after the plus sign is the damage modifier that is added to the dice total.

If a weapon's damage is described as $2d6+1$, it means that you roll two six-sided dice, and add one. With such weapons, there is no bonus to damage based on how well you have hit. These weapons are known as random damage weapons. When you dodge random damage weapons, your success total for your dodge is subtracted from the weapon's damage roll. With some weapons, it is possible that a successful dodge roll will negate all damage.

MEGAHIT

Megahits are when you roll a 20. They simulate those incredibly lucky shots that hit weak points in armor, cause fuel tanks to explode, etc.

In combat, you can choose to roll again, using your success on this roll as a positive modifier on your next roll. If you roll another 20 you can keep rolling and keep accumulating. You roll again, using all the normal modifiers plus your accumulated success from the previous roll. Any fumble causes the attack to end.

For example, you are at +3 to hit with your rail-gun and you roll 20. This gives you a success of 13. You choose to roll again. This time you roll 13, which gives you 26 in total, for a total success of 19. If you had rolled another 20 on the dice, you would have had 26 successes and could have rolled again.



When you roll a megahit with random damage weapons, you automatically get maximum damage plus another damage roll. If this comes up maximum, then you can roll again. You can keep doing this until you roll less than 20.

STUNNED

The sheer shock and pain of being hit can often cause you to fall, drop whatever is in your hands, or even lose consciousness. Whenever you take damage above half your BLF, you must roll to see if you are stunned.

Roll a d20 and add your ST. If the result is 11+ then nothing happens, you are OK. If the result is 10 or less, then you're knocked down, dropping anything you might be holding in your hands. You will lie on the ground groaning, incapable of any actions until you make a successful ST roll and recover from being stunned. This ST roll is the only action you can make each action phase until you recover from being stunned. You cannot make any sort of defense action when you are stunned.

If the result is a fumble then the pain and shock knocks you out for d6 hours, or until a comrade slaps you awake or gives you first aid.

Robots such as Panzers are immune to some of the effects of stunning. They can still be knocked down by taking damage, but they will not be immobilized or knocked unconscious.

GETTING UP

When you have been knocked down you need to use the move part of any action to get to your feet, before you can move normally. However, a successful acrobatics roll will allow you to flip yourself upright and move normally in the same phase. If you fail the acrobatics roll, you will get up normally. If you fumble the roll you must remain on the ground until your next action phase.

ARMOR

Once you have established the amount of damage you have done, your opponent must subtract his armor rating from your damage score. The result is then subtracted from his body rating.

Continuing with the example above, your opponent is wearing carapace body armor with an armor rating of eight. This is subtracted from your damage of 11. Your opponent loses three points from his LF rating.

If a target's LF reaches zero then he is in big trouble.

HIT LOCATION TABLE

d20	Location
1-5	Legs
6-10	Torso
11-15	Arms
16-20	Head

When there are two possibilities for a hit (such as when you hit a leg or an arm roll) a d20. If the result is 1-10 you have affected the left leg or arm. If the result is 11+ you have affected the right leg or arm.

SIZE

If a creature is much smaller or larger than you are, it will influence where you hit it. If a creature is much taller than you are subtract 4 from the Hit Location Table. If a creature is much smaller than you then add 4 to the Hit Location roll. You should only do this if the creature is more than 50% taller or shorter than you are. In the case of truly gigantic creatures the Narrator may decide that you can only hit their legs. This is a perfectly acceptable application of the rules.

CRITICAL HITS

Once you have reduced your foe to zero LF, you can inflict truly terrible damage upon them. To do so, you roll on the Hit Location Table to find out where you have hit, and then make a critical hit roll, as described below. Roll a d20 and add the amount of additional damage, below zero, done to your foe. For example, if he is on four LF and you do eight points of damage, you have done four points of additional damage, and so you add four to your critical hit roll. If he is on three LF and you do six points of damage, you would add three to your critical hit roll, and so on.

Once you have rolled the dice, this is your critical hit total. Consult the Critical Hit Table for the appropriate location, and apply the result. If circumstances make it impossible for your opponent to suffer the result of the critical hit you have inflicted, increase the effect of the critical hit until you get a result that is appropriate. If you amputate your opponent's leg at the ankle and he has already had the leg amputated during this combat, then you would increase the result to amputation at the hip.

No one is ever reduced to below zero LF. If they take a critical hit and are still functioning, they count as having zero LF the next time they are hit.

MEGASUCCESS

As always, if you roll a 20 on your critical hit roll, this is a megasuccess. Roll the d20 again and add it to your total.

SPECIAL WOUNDS**2-10 WOZZY**

You are a little unsteady on your feet and all your actions in the next combat round will be at an additional -2 negative modifier.

11-12 KNOCKED OUT

You are simply knocked out for D6 hours.

13-14 BADLY KNOCKED

You are knocked out for d6 hours and when you wake you will be at -2 to all skill and Characteristic Rolls until you succeed in recovering all your LF. This counts as a minor wound.

15-16 COMATOSE

You are unconscious and will not regain consciousness without proper medical attention from someone with the Healing Skill. Even then it will be d6 days before you can do anything. After that you will be at -2 to all die rolls until you succeed in recovering all your LF.

17-18 BRAIN DAMAGE

Oxygen starvation has resulted in brain damage. Reduce your IN by 1 permanently. Reduce all your skills by 1 permanently. If this takes them below skill level 0 then you lose the skill entirely. Reduce BLF by 1

19-20 DEATH

You are dead. Its time to create a new character or cash in that Resurrection Contract.

FUMBLE

If you roll a one on your critical hit roll, your critical hit has no effect, no matter how much additional damage is added to the roll.

SUDDEN DEATH

Sometimes you will be told to roll for sudden death. This is an easy roll to understand. Roll a d20, adding or subtracting any modifiers that apply. If the result is 10 or less, you are dead, end of story. If the result is 11+ you are still alive. If you suffer from more than one wound that might cause sudden death then you must make the roll for both. If you roll a 20 on the sudden death roll, then the wound has some form of spontaneous remission and you do not need to continue rolling for sudden death.

SHOCK

Shock is a more serious form of stunning. If you take a critical hit you must make an immediate shock roll. This is a contest roll with your opponent's score, equal to the critical hit roll he just made. You roll a d20 and add your ST. If your total is greater than your opponent's critical hit total, then you are still conscious. If your total is less than that of your opponent, then you become unconscious for d6 hours. Of course, you can make a shock roll and still become unconscious as the result of the critical hit itself.

For example, your opponent scores a four on the critical hit roll, to your hand. This means you drop whatever is in your hand. You must also roll a d20, add your ST and hope for a result greater than four. Otherwise you will lose consciousness.

Robots suffer more seriously from shock than living things. If they fail the shock roll, then delicate internal systems have been damaged. They will be offline until they can be repaired by a robomancer.

SPECIAL WOUNDS TABLE

Sometimes you will be reduced to zero LF by "weapons" that don't do normal physical damage; poison, disease and drowning are all good examples of such weapons. Whenever you are reduced to zero LF, and take further damage from such weapons, you should roll a d20, adding any damage below zero you have taken, and then consult the special wounds table.

LEG CRITICAL HITS

2-10 STUMBLE

You lose your balance and stumble, dropping anything in your hand.

11 OFF BALANCE

Shock and pain throw you off balance. You can only parry or dodge next turn.

12 THROWN TO GROUND

Numbing pain sends you sprawling on the ground, dropping anything held in your hands. You can only lie there groaning in pain for your next phase. After this, if you wish to move, you must make a ST roll. If you succeed then you may move as normal. If you fail, then the phase is wasted.

13 NUMBING PAIN

Numbing pain reduces your movement rate by half for the rest of this combat. Bionic legs allow you to ignore this result.

14 DISLOCATED ANKLE

You fall to earth, dislocating your ankle. This is a minor wound. Your movement rate is halved until you recover full LF. Any bionic leg takes 10% damage and will suffer the movement penalty as above until repaired.

15 SERIOUS WOUND

Bones are broken, veins and muscles ripped. You must make a sudden death roll at the start of each phase until you receive medical attention. This is serious damage and will not heal easily. Even if you heal you will always have a limp. Lose one from your movement rate. This is a major wound. Your movement will remain reduced until all LF damage is healed. Any bionic leg takes 10% damage and will suffer the movement penalty above until repaired.

16 KNEECAP SHATTERED

The delicate cartilage of your kneecap is ripped and torn. Blood gouts forth. You must make a sudden death roll at the start of each phase until you receive medical attention. You will not be able to walk until you have had surgery. Forever afterwards you will need a leg brace and your movement rate is reduced by 1 permanently unless you find some form of bionic or prosthetic. Any bionic leg takes 30% damage and will suffer the movement penalty above until repaired.

17 LEG AMPUTATED AT ANKLE

Searing agony bubbles along your nerve ganglions as your foot is amputated at the ankle. You must make a sudden death roll at the start of each phase until you receive medical attention. Even, if you recover you will never walk normally again without some sort of prosthetic. You have acquired the Unusable Leg disadvantage. Any bionic leg takes 50% damage and will suffer the movement penalty above until repaired.

18 LEG AMPUTATED AT KNEE

Searing agony bubbles along your nerve ganglions as your leg amputated at the knee. You must make a sudden death roll at the start of each phase until you receive medical attention. Even, if you recover you will never walk normally again without some sort of prosthetic. You have acquired the Unusable Leg disadvantage. Any bionic leg takes 75% damage and will be unuseable until repaired.

19 LEG AMPUTATED AT THE HIP

Bones shatter into little pieces, arteries gout blood. If you fail your shock roll, you are dead. If you succeed then you are unconscious until you receive medical attention and must make a Sudden Death roll at negative modifier -5. If you recover, you will never walk again unless you acquire a bionicprosthetic. If you survive, you will lose a 1 LF permanently and you will acquire the Unusable Leg disadvantage. Any bionic limb is permanently destroyed.

20+ FATAL WOUND

A major artery is shattered. Blood fountains everywhere. You are, unfortunately, dead.

TORSO CRITICAL HITS

2-10 SCRATCH

You can ignore this flesh wound if you make a ST roll. If you fail this roll then the brief, intense pain means you are unable to do anything in your next combat round.

11 WINDED

All the wind is knocked out of you. You may do nothing during your next combat round except gasp for breath.

12 GROIN HIT

The shock of this bruising attack doubles you over. You may do nothing during your next combat round except recover from the searing pain. You drop anything held in your hands.

13 BOWLED OVER

The stunning force of this attack knocks you flat on your back. All the wind is knocked out of you. You may do nothing in your next combat round, and then must spend a movement phase climbing to your feet.

14 FLESH WOUND

This painful but non fatal wound causes you to receive -2 to all skill and combat rolls for the rest of this combat. This is a minor wound.

15 BROKEN RIBS

This attack breaks a few ribs. Make a ST roll or lose consciousness for the next d6 hours. If you succeed you will still be at -2 to all skill and combat rolls until you recover from this minor wound.

16 SERIOUS GROIN HIT

This hit causes exquisite agony. You must make a sudden death roll at the start of each phase until you receive medical attention. If male, you lose all possibility of breeding.

17 INTERNAL INJURY

This painful wound causes severe internal injuries within the stomach cavity. You must make a sudden death at negative modifier -2 at the start of each phase until you receive medical attention. If you make the shock roll and retain consciousness you are at -4 to all skill and combat rolls until these are treated. Every hour after the battle, you must make a sudden death roll until given surgery by someone with the Healing skill.

18 GUTTED

Warm entrails spill forth. You are still conscious. You can still fight, but you will die if you don't get medical attention. At the start of your combat phase make a sudden death critical roll at +4 to the roll. If you succeed you can fight on. If you fail you fall unconscious to the ground. Every hour after the battle make a sudden death roll until given surgery by someone with the Healing skill. Assuming you survive, you will lose 1 LF permanently.

19 RIGHT THROUGH THE HEART

This terrible wound bursts right through your heart and kills you instantly.

20 CHOPPED IN TWO

This awesome attack sends one half of your body falling in one direction, and the other half falling in another. Unsurprisingly, you are now very dead.



DATA CORE ACCESS



SECURITY RISK ALERT

985.0300.2233.666.957.000.000.2



ALL SYSTEMS GO

INFODUMP WARNING

FLOWLINK INTENSITY 7

RULES



ARM CRITICAL HITS

2-10 GLANCING BLOW

This glancing attack knocks whatever you were holding in this hand flying d6 meters in a random direction.

11 SHATTERING ATTACK

This attack smashes into whatever you are holding. Anything held in this hand is shattered and broken beyond repair. If you were holding nothing, then this attack has no affect.

12 NUMBING BLOW

This painful assault leaves your hand bruised and numb. You drop whatever you were holding in it. You may not use this hand to hold anything, or to strike, for the rest of this combat, or until medical attention is received, whatever comes first.

13 DISLOCATED WRIST

This attack leaves your wrist painfully dislocated. You drop whatever you were holding in the hand, and cannot use it again until medical attention is received. Any bionic arm suffers 10% damage and will cease to function until repaired. This is a minor wound.

14 SEVERED TENDON

This attack has severed a tendon, rendering this arm unusable until you receive surgical attention. Anything held in this hand is dropped immediately. Any bionic arm suffers 10% damage and will cease to function until repaired. This is a minor wound.

15 AMPUTATED FINGERS

You lose d4 fingers from this shearing attack. Anything held in this hand is dropped immediately. If you have lost all your fingers then the hand will be unusable for holding things. (Fairly obvious that!) It is time to consider prosthetics. Any bionic arm suffers 20% damage and will cease to function until repaired.

16 SEVERED ARTERY

Blood gushes forth from this nasty wound. Anything held in this hand is dropped. You can, if you are lucky, hold this closed with your other hand, or get someone to do this for you. If you do not, make a sudden death roll every phase until you get medical attention. Any bionic arm suffers d6 x 10% damage and will not function again until repaired. This is a major wound.

17 SEVERED FOREARM

Your arm is chopped off at the elbow. Obviously anything held in it is dropped. Make a sudden death roll with a negative modifier of -4 at the start of each phase until you receive medical attention. Even if you survive you will need some form of prosthetic replacement. You have acquired the Unusable Arm disadvantage. Any bionic arm suffers 50% damage and must be repaired before it will function again.

18 SHOULDER SMASHED

Black out automatically for d6 hours. Main arteries are torn. Make a sudden death roll at negative modifier -4 until you receive medical attention. You will be unable to use anything in this arm until you recover all your LF. You will lose 1 BLF permanently even if you survive. Any bionic arm suffers 75% damage and must be repaired before it will function again.

19 INSTANT AMPUTATION

Your arm goes flying d6 meters in a random direction. You lose the arm. You must make a sudden death roll at negative modifier -4 at the start of each phase until you receive medical attention. You now need advanced forms of healing or bionic prosthetics. If you survive you will lose 1 LF permanently and will have acquired the Unusable Arm disadvantage. Any bionic arm is totally destroyed.

20+ RIGHT THROUGH THE ARM AND INTO THE CHEST

This savage attack shears right through the arm and tears its way into the chest cavity, rupturing organs and stopping the heart. Death is instantaneous.



HEAD CRITICAL HITS

2-10 STUNNED

Pain and shock stun you for a moment. You may not act in your next combat round, but stand there, shaking your head and seeing stars.

11 LOSE SOME TEETH

Blood fills your mouth as you lose a d6 teeth from the splintering impact. You lose your next action phase as you spit out broken tooth and gobs of blood. You will be at -1 on all social skills until you get some dental work done.

12 KNOCKDOWN

The sheer force of this blow knocks you to the ground. Everything you are holding is dropped. You are prone and must use a movement action to rise to your feet.

13 KNOCKOUT

You are instantly knocked out for d6 hours or until medical attention is received.

14 BROKEN NOSE

Bones crunch as your nose breaks. If you remain conscious after the shock roll, you are automatically stunned. All skill rolls will be at -1 due to the pain until you get medical treatment. This is a minor wound.

15 BROKEN JAW

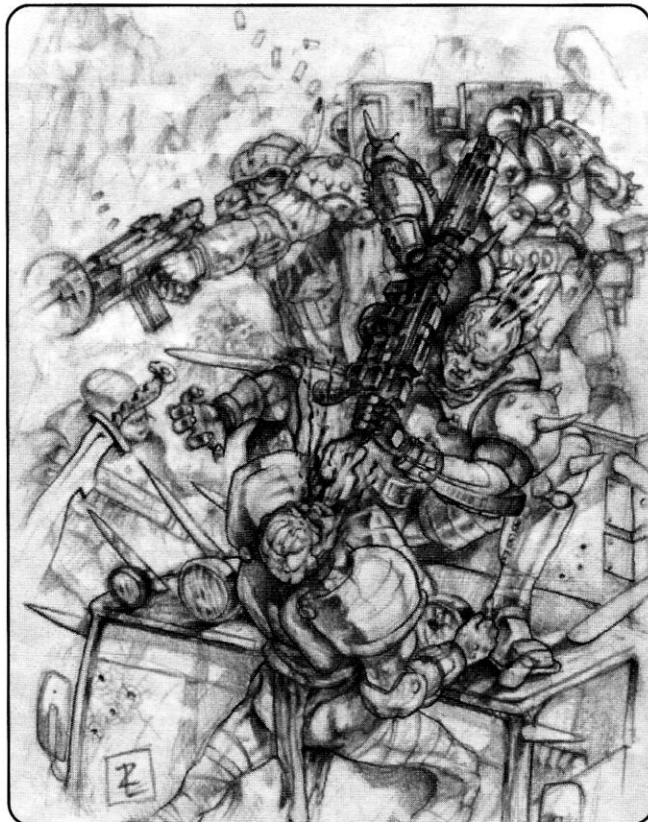
Your jaw is broken. If you remain conscious after the shock roll, you are still automatically stunned. Your jaw will remain broken and you will be unable to speak until you get proper medical treatment. All skill rolls will be at -2 because of the pain until you recover BLF. This is a minor wound.

16 CONCUSSSED

If you remain conscious after the shock roll, you are automatically stunned. You are at -2 to all skill and combat rolls until you recover all your LF. This is a major wound.

17 SKULL SMASHED

Your skull is shattered. The result is concussion, as above, but you must also roll on the sudden death table until you receive medical attention. If you lose consciousness due to shock you will be comatose until given attention by someone with healing skill. This is a major wound.



18 EYE LOST

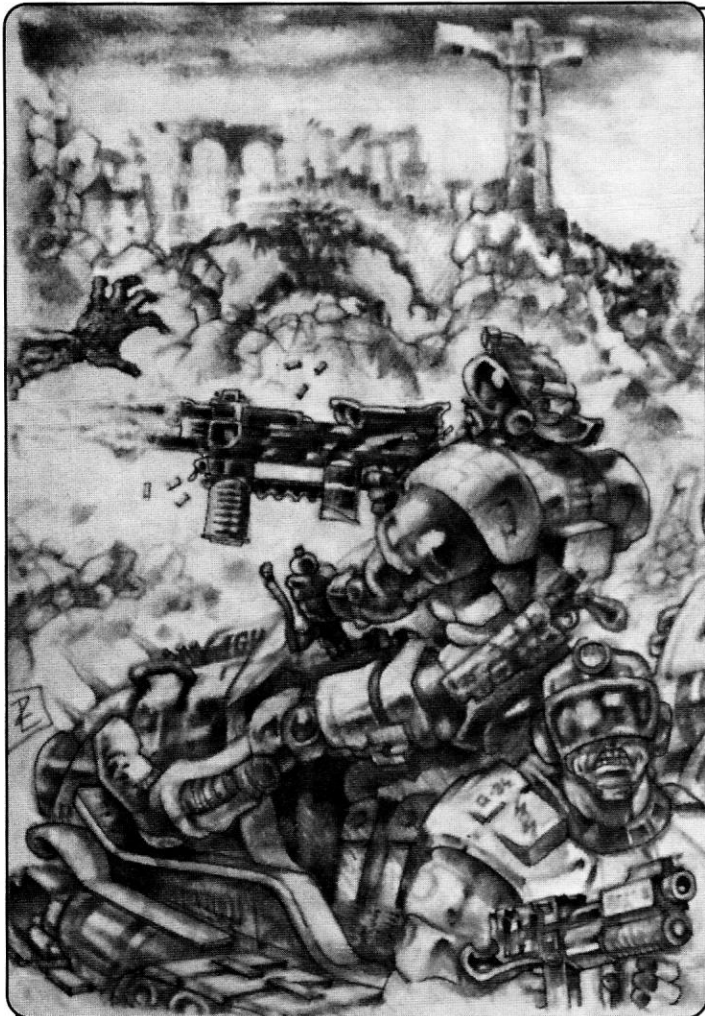
This horrible attack destroys your eye. -2 to all sight based attacks and skills permanently or until a bionic implant is purchased. If you lose both eyes, you are, of course, blind. (Unless you are a mutant with more than two eyes.) You have acquired the Missing Eye disadvantage. If you possessed a bionic eye, it is totally destroyed.

19 RIGHT THROUGH THE EYE

Attack goes right through eye and lodges in your brain. Instant death.

20 FATAL HEAD WOUND

You are dead. Your head is bloody pulp. Your brain jelly is oozing out through the fragments of your skull.



VARIATIONS AND EFFECTS

Sometimes a situation will arise where it is just plain stupid to apply the results of a critical hit, as it stands. For example, it is difficult to cut somebody in two with a punch (although there are some people in Waste World who could manage it - cyborgs with claws, martial artists, etc). When this happens, the Narrator should bear in mind one important thing: the descriptions are just there for color, it's the effect that counts. Basically, anybody receiving a type 20 critical hit to the body is dead, whatever happens. The other important thing to bear in mind is that combat in Waste World is supposed to be completely and unspeakably brutal, violent and bloody.

In the example above, in which the punch results in a type 20 critical to the body, just make up a suitably gory description. In this case it would run along the lines of: your sledgehammer-like punch breaks a rib and pushes the jagged-edged, broken bone through your foe's heart. He dies instantly.

MEDICAL ATTENTION

Sometimes the results of the Critical Hit Table tell you that something will happen up to the point where medical attention is received. This means that you will continue to suffer the negative effects of the critical hit until you are given first aid, or until someone uses the healing psi power on you.

NON-HUMANS

The hit location tables given above were designed with humanoids in mind. Usually it's simplest to assume that animals and monsters are out of the fight when their LF reaches zero or below.

Sometimes, however, you will want to know where a creature has taken a hit. Generally speaking, you can still use the hit locations given above with quadrupedal animals. Simply assume a hit to the arm indicates a hit to the torso. The position of the attacker indicates which set of legs gets hit. If, for example, the attacker is hitting from the front, then a hit to the legs will mean the forelegs. If the attacker is attacking from the creature's left, any hits will affect the left foreleg or hind leg. If the attacker is hitting from the back, the hits will affect the creature's hind legs, etc.

For creatures that are all body and head, such as a snake, roll a d20. If the result is 20, you hit the head; if it's 1-19 you hit the body.

For more exotic creatures of your own creation, feel free to make up your own Hit Location Tables.

ENERGY BEINGS

Energy beings such as Demons are treated differently when they are reduced to zero LF. They are simply destroyed. The very fabric of their being unravels, and they cease to maintain their form. Most energy beings will flee long before they reach such a state. You do not need to roll on any table to see what happens to them.

BIONICS AND ROBOTICS

There will be times when a hit affects a bionic part. If that happens and the result on the Critical Hit Table would leave you unconscious, just assume that the part is damaged until repaired. You will not lose consciousness. You don't have to make a system shock roll either. Sometimes characters with bionic limbs suffer slightly different effects from critical hits. When this is the case it will be mentioned in the Critical Hit Tables.

One good thing about bionics is that even if they are damaged or lost you cannot die from shock or blood loss. So ignore any results that call for sudden death rolls.

On the other hand, you will suffer other negative effects of the critical hit until the bionic is repaired. Bionic parts won't heal naturally, they will need to be repaired and this costs time and money. Usually the cost of repairing the part is the percentage of damage multiplied by the original cost of the part. So if a 500 credit limb takes 10% damage, repairing it will cost 50 credits. Percentage damage is cumulative. If a limb takes 100% or more damage, it is damaged beyond repair and lost. If this happens to a limb, you acquire the appropriate missing limb disadvantage.

Where the result indicates that some bionic part of your body is completely destroyed or amputated, such as an eye, then the bionic will be damaged beyond repair, as will any upgrades it contains. For example, if your bionic arm, which contains a forceclaw, is lost, then your forceclaw will also be lost. They will both need to be replaced.

Much the same thing applies to anybody with robotic body disadvantage. They do not need to fear death from blood loss, nor will they become unconscious through being stunned, although they can still be knocked down if they fail a stun roll. Shock for a robot is worse than for a normal person. They will be offline until repaired by a Robomancer if they fail a shock roll.

Any hit that would kill a living organism will also kill a person with bionic parts. Robots, too, become non-functional. Simply assume that the shot destroys critical components, and overloads the positronic brain. All of its previous skills and personality are gone. For a robot, this is the same as death.

For example, even though a robot does not have a heart, a type 19 critical hit to the torso will still destroy it.

HEALING

Once you have taken damage, you are going to need time to recover. This can be done in numerous ways. Let's look at them.

NATURAL HEALING

When you lose normal LF, this represents the fact that your body has been battered and bruised. It does not take much time to recover from this sort of damage. Normally your character will heal at the rate of 1 LF, plus 1 LF per point of positive ST per hour. (Negative ST has no effect.)

MINOR WOUNDS

Some results on the Critical Hit Tables tell you that you have suffered a minor wound. This means that you will suffer the ill effects of the critical hit result until your LF is, once again, back to its maximum. For example, the table tells you that the type 14 critical to the torso is a minor wound. This you will suffer a -2 penalty until you recover all of your LF in the normal way.

MAJOR WOUNDS

Some of the results on the Critical Hit Tables tell you that you have received a major wound. Major wounds take a lot longer to recover from than normal damage, and can have other serious side effects. Basically, until you receive proper treatment and make a recovery roll (see below), you will suffer the negative effects of the critical hit.

To recover from a major wound, you will need to make a successful ST roll. This is sometimes referred to as a major wound recovery roll. You can make this roll once per week. The healing skill of the doctor treating you is a positive modifier. If you are in a fully equipped medical facility, this roll may be made every day. You must make a separate long-term recovery roll for each long-term critical hit you have suffered.

In this case, by rest we mean lying around, moaning and whining, and doing nothing that will open old wounds. Your character can recover at half this rate if he needs to walk around or perform gentle exercise. You won't recover at all if you have to jog, run or perform strenuous exercise.

PERMANENT LOSS OF LF

When the Critical Hit Tables tell you that you have suffered a permanent loss of LF, that is exactly what they mean. The LF lost will never come back under normal circumstances. You will need to spend XPs to buy more.

DRUGS

There are, of course, numerous drugs which will accelerate your rate of healing. For more on these, see the appropriate section in the chapter on equipment.

LOSS OF LIMBS

Once you start taking critical hits you are, of course, talking about more than simple loss of LF. You may be talking about the need for surgery or bionic implants or other fairly invasive medical procedures.

Basically, when you take a critical hit that results in the loss of a limb or organ, you gain a disadvantage. You don't gain any extra points to spend for this disadvantage, but you do need to spend XPs in order to buy off the disadvantage. Until you do so, no substitute technology or medical procedure will work for you. You can spend the money on a bionic arm and have the operation performed, but you will not be able to use the implant properly until you pay those XPs.

If your Narrator is a generous individual, he might let you have the operation and pay the XPs later. If you are allowed to do this, you must spend all the XP you gain in the future to pay off the cost of the disadvantage. You will not be allowed to spend XPs on anything else until you do so.

It is perfectly permissible for your Narrator to have your implants malfunction at inconvenient moments until they are paid for. In fact, we encourage Narrators to do this.

Some critical hits result in minor sprains, twisted ankles, etc. Medical technology on Waste World is pretty good at dealing with such things. It is easiest to assume that once you receive medical attention, you will fully recover from them.

DEATH AND RESURRECTION

It happens. Bullets blow your character's brains out. Chainsaws part their heads from their shoulders. In the super-violent environment of Waste World, death comes all too easily. Fortunately for you, there are things that can help your character survive even this terrible trauma. If you have the foresight to prepare for this unfortunate eventuality, it need be nothing more than a temporary setback.

LAZARUS PODS

If your character dies, but has not been chopped into itsy-bitsy pieces, there is always the Lazarus pod. These incredibly sophisticated autodocs can repair almost any damage done by modern weapons, short of total disintegration.

If your friends can carry your body to one within 10 minutes, you can be brought back to life almost immediately. Unfortunately in the Wastes, it can prove difficult to find a Lazarus pod within 10 minutes' travel of a fire-fight. This is bad news. Because if more than 10 minutes elapse between the onset of death, and the hooking of your body into the pod, chances are you are going to suffer severe brain damage.

Fortunately, there is a way around this. If you have a nekrochip implanted, it will map the structure of your brain allowing the Lazarus pod to recreate it exactly, no matter how much damage you have taken. This is one of the ultimate insurance policies. Don't leave home without it.

In game terms, if your character is placed in a Lazarus pod, you get to make a ST roll. If this succeeds, your character comes back to life. If it fails, he is dead.

If your character died as the result of a major head wound, or if more than 10 minutes elapsed between death and placement, you must also make an IN roll. If you fail this, then you suffered brain damage. This means you increase all your mental disadvantages one level, and you deduct one from your IN or DX - the choice is yours. Also reduce all your IN and DX skills by one.

If you have a nekrochip attached when you are placed in the Lazarus pod, it will download your last stored memories, and repair your neural networks. Make a success roll with a +9 modifier. Unless you fumble this roll, your brain will be repaired perfectly, and you will suffer none of the effects of brain damage. Unfortunately, if you fumble this roll, you are mindwiped and become a mindless, mewling thing with no intelligence or memories whatsoever.

If you are successfully brought back by a Lazarus pod, you will have one LF and must heal normally. Lazarus pods only work on organic beings. They have no effect whatsoever on robots.

REINCARNATION

Sometimes your character's body will be so badly damaged that a Lazarus pod cannot repair it. If you possess a nekrochip or a karmachip, your character can be brought back in another way: reincarnation.

A previously donated sample of your character's DNA can be used to clone a new body in an accelerated growth tank. This new body will have your memories downloaded to it from the nekrochip or karma chip. It will be exactly the same as your body was at the time the tissue sample was taken. It will be a perfectly healthy specimen, with all of its limbs and organs intact (unless your character suffered from some genetic defect and thus passed on the disadvantage). It will not possess any of your previous body's bionics or implants. If your clone is your designated heir, it inherits your worldly goods and can be played just like your previous character. This is a provision that is normally included in any reincarnation contract, and is standard legal practice within the Shogunate.

It normally takes d6+1 weeks to grow a new clone body. The process of downloading memories takes less than a day.

DEATH AND EXPERIENCE POINTS

If you are resurrected by any of the means given above, you lose any unspent Xps that you may have had.

DAMAGE FROM OTHER SOURCES

Of course, there are more ways of taking damage than simply being hit. You can take damage from fire, falling, lack of oxygen, poison and many other sources.



FIRE

Fire does d6 damage per turn that you are exposed to it. Armor only gives half its defensive value against fire, unless it has been flame-proofed. (This adds 10 percent to the cost.) Once something is alight there is a 50 percent chance it will continue to burn each new combat round. This chance is reduced by half for each round the burning person, or his friends, try to extinguish the flames by rolling around, slapping at the flame, etc.

LACK OF OXYGEN

There will be many occasions when you simply can't breathe. You may be stuck in a cloud of poisonous gas. You may be underwater. You may be enveloped by choking slime. When this happens you will take one LF of asphyxiation damage per turn until you can get out of this situation.

POISON

Poison is one of the nastiest ways of dying, and there are many different ways it can afflict you. It must first work its way into your system, however.

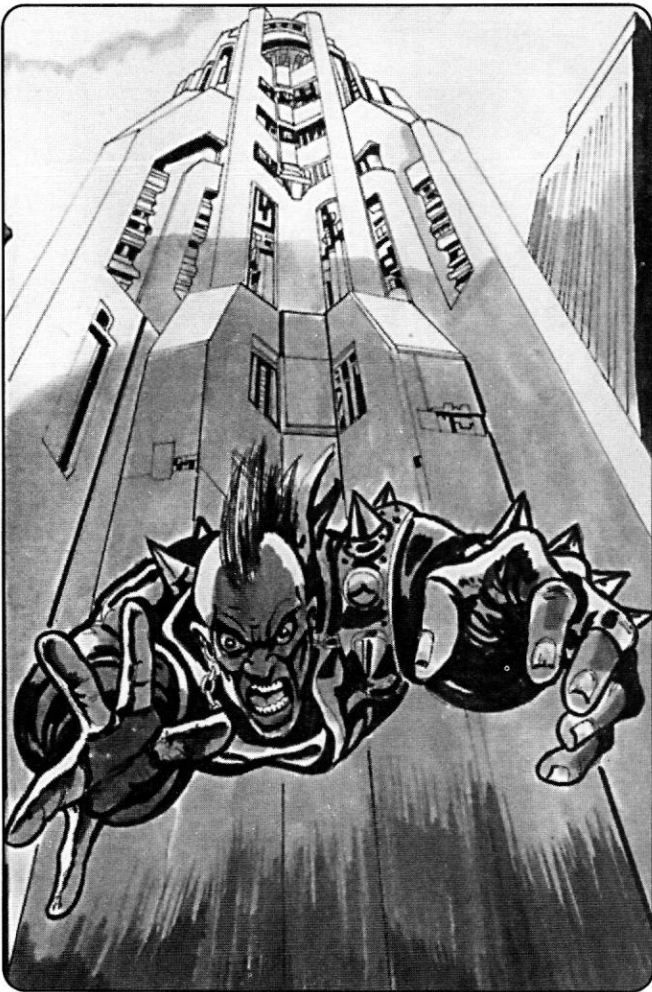
Note: whenever you hit someone who has bionic limbs with a contact or injected poison, you should roll on the relevant Hit Location Table to see whether you hit their bionic parts. If you do, the poison will have no effect. Poisons have no effect whatsoever on robots, Panzers and energy beings.

CONTACT

Contact poisons work by seeping through your skin. They are insidious. If your flesh is exposed to one, you will have to make a poison saving roll.

INJECTED

Injected poisons must break the skin to find their way into your bloodstream. They can be injected from fangs, hypodermics or poison darts, but in all cases something must break your skin. Normally this means it must get through your armor and inflict at least one point of damage. If this happens, you must then make a poison saving roll.



GAS

Gas is, of course, an airborne poison that gets into your system when you breath it. It can be colorless and odorless, in which case the only real defense is to be wearing a rebreather mask before the attack begins. Most forms of gas in Waste World are thick, cloying and very visible - so at least you have some warning. If you make a DX roll, you can hold your breath and try to put on your rebreather mask, if you have one. If you fail this roll, you have breathed the gas and must make a poison saving roll.

INGESTED

Ingested poisons are those that are stealthily infiltrated into your food and drink. They are very difficult to guard against. If you eat or drink poisoned substances, you need to make a poison saving roll.

RADIATION

Radiation is one of the subtlest all poisons in the Waste World. It varies in level from low to high, and characters can suffer its deadly effects just by being in an area which is radioactive.

Low-level radioactivity means you have to make a poison saving roll every day, or suffer d4 damage and the permanent loss of one LF. The Narrator himself should decide the strength of the radiation.

High-level radioactivity means the player needs to make a poison saving roll at least every hour.

Side effects of radiation poisoning include loss of hair and teeth, and bleeding from orifices. The effects of radiation can be reduced or prevented by protective clothing. For more details of this see the relevant equipment list and the section on bio-hazards.

FALLING

You will take d6 damage for every two meters you fall. Armor provides absolutely no protection against this. The maximum damage you can take from falling is 20d6.

Crashing is a very specific form of falling. If you are in a vehicle that crashes, you take d6 damage for every 15 kph your vehicle was moving at when it crashes.

POISON SAVING ROLLS (PSR)

PSRs are straightforward. All poisons have a strength. This is a negative modifier when you make a PSR. Your ST is a positive modifier. Roll a d20. If the result is 11+ you have succeeded. This will either reduce, or completely negate, the effects of the poison. For more on poisons, see the relevant equipment list.

OTHER TYPES OF DAMAGE

Obviously, it is impossible for us to come up with a complete list of the things that can damage characters during the course of play. When some unusual circumstances come up, the Narrator should decide on a figure that seems fair and reasonable.

VEHICLE COMBAT

Like characters, vehicles have LF and AR. The difference comes when they are hit. You should apply the rules below when your characters are targeting vehicles. For more details, see the chapter on vehicles.

If a vehicle is hit, the procedure is the same as for a character. You subtract the vehicle's AR from any damage, then subtract the damage from the vehicle's LF. When the vehicle is reduced to 50 percent of its original LF, its maximum speed should be reduced by 50 percent. When a vehicle is reduced to 25 percent of its original LF, its maximum speed should be reduced to 25 percent of its original maximum speed.

When a vehicle's LF reaches zero, or whenever it loses more than 10 percent of its original LF from one attack, you should roll a d20 and consult the Vehicle Hit Location Table.

EFFECTS OF CRITICAL HITS

Unlike with characters, there are no different levels of critical hit. You should check the location and apply the results listed below.

EXTERNAL MOVEMENT SYSTEMS

External movement systems are the means by which a vehicle actually moves: wheels, tracks, legs, etc. When this description comes up on the Vehicle Hit Location Table, one external movement system is damaged or destroyed. The exact effects of this vary, depending on what method of propulsion the vehicle used.

WHEELS

If the vehicle has two wheels, and one of them is destroyed, the vehicle goes out of control and crashes. The passengers and vehicle will all take crash damage. The vehicle cannot be restarted until the wheel is repaired.

If the vehicle has more than two wheels, it will become progressively difficult to handle with the loss of each wheel. The driver will be at -2 to all drive rolls. When the vehicle has lost 50 percent of its wheels it will go out of control and crash, as described above.

TRACKS

A tracked vehicle will become uncontrollable when it loses a track. It will either grind to a halt or go around in circles, forcing the driver to stop it.

WALKERS

Walkers behave in a very similar way to wheeled vehicles. Two-legged walkers will crash to the ground when they lose one leg. Multi-legged walkers will become less controllable, and will fall when they lose half their legs.

VEHICLE HIT LOCATION

D20	Location
1-4	Movement Systems
5-8	Drive
9-12	Power
13-16	Weapons
16-20	Passengers

SKIMMERS AND SUSPENSOR VEHICLES

With each drive node lost, a skimmer or suspensor vehicle will have its MX and CC proportionately reduced. A skimmer car with two drive nodes will have its MX and CC halved with the loss of one of its nodes. If it has four nodes originally, and loses one, it will have MX and CC reduced by 25 percent. If the vehicle is heavily loaded, and its cargo now weighs more than its carrying capacity, it will come to a halt and float to the ground.

DRIVE

Drives are a vehicle's power systems. Usually all but the largest vehicles usually have only one of them. A hit to the drive system will have very serious effects. Roll a d20 to determine the following results:

1-10 The hit is a glancing one, the vehicle can continue as normal.

11-15 The drive mechanism is seriously damaged. The vehicle becomes unpowered and grinds to a halt. Any flying vehicle will become unpowered and grind to a halt.

16-20 The drive explodes spectacularly, inflicting d20 damage on all passengers and the vehicle itself.

When a vehicle loses its drive, it is unable to move until the drive is repaired.

POWER

Power is whatever energy source propels the vehicle. When hit, it detonates, inflicting d20 damage on all within the vehicle, forcing the vehicle to suffer an immediate critical hit on the drive.

WEAPONS

Whenever a weapons system takes a critical hit, it is knocked out of commission until repaired. If the vehicle has more than one weapons system that can be affected, you should decide randomly which one is hit. If the weapon system is already out of commission, then this result has no effect. If your vehicle has no weapon systems, then re-roll this result.

PASSENGERS

A randomly determined passenger within the vehicle takes d10 damage.

HELPLESS VEHICLES

A vehicle is helpless when immobilized by a critical hit or reduced to zero LF. When this happens, the attacker can choose which location he hits.

UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES

There are a number of unusual circumstances that come up again and again during combat situations. Here are some suggested ways of handling them:

ANIMALS AND MONSTERS

When in combat, most animals and creatures listed in the Bestiary use their DX as a modifier to all combat rolls. If they get a bonus for a skill, it will say so in their description.

SURPRISE

It sometimes happens that you sneak up on a foe and take him offguard. Even if he is ready for combat, and prepared to fight, the suddenness of your appearance will take him by surprise. Such a shock can take a few, vital, seconds to recover from.

When you take somebody by surprise, you automatically get a combat round's worth of actions before your foe can make a response. This means, basically, that you get a free combat round in which to do anything you like before entering the normal combat sequence.

For example, you sneak up on a pair of sentries guarding a jungle outpost. You make your stealth roll, and they fail to spot you. You choose to attack by surprise, erupting from the undergrowth and using your chainsword to chop down the first of the sentries. This leaves one on his feet, so now you enter the normal combat sequence.

Sometimes two parties will come upon each other unexpectedly. If that happens, both sides should roll a d20, adding the highest DX on each side. The party that makes the highest roll gets the advantage of surprise. If the rolls tie, you go into the normal combat sequence.

When surprised, you cannot dodge, parry or make any other defense actions.

COUP DE GRACE

If you have an unconscious foe on the ground in front of you, or someone who is tied up and incapable of movement, you can always put a weapon to their head, throat or heart, and kill them. You don't need to make any sort of hit roll to kill a helpless foe.

COVERED

There are two situations that are noteworthy in this regard. First: you walk up behind someone and they are taken completely by surprise. You stick a gun to their head and say: One move and you're dead! Obviously, this is not a situation where the normal combat sequence applies. Unless your victim has some sort of special power that affects the situation, you should simply be able to squeeze the trigger and kill him.

Second: you have your gun out and your foe has not. You don't want to kill him, you want to talk first. You point the gun at him and aim, but don't pull the trigger. What happens now?

These are both situations where you have your foe covered. In the first, your foe is completely helpless, so you could claim the coup de grace rule and simply blow him away if he makes a hostile move. The second situation is more like normal combat. You have the drop on your foe, but he still can do something: throw himself to one side, go for a gun, whatever. Still, you deserve some advantage since you have got the drop on him.

When this occurs, you should make a normal to hit roll at +4 the moment you point your gun; that is, when you have aimed but haven't pulled the trigger. At any time from that point on, if your foe does anything, you can automatically apply the result of your to hit roll before your opponent has a chance to do anything else. He does not get a defense action. If he survives, you move into the normal combat sequence.

This rule applies equally to close combat weapons. You can place a knife to someone's throat, but not cut it. You can rest a forceblade over someone's heart, and not push it home.

This rule also works equally well in other situations. For example, you have someone covered with a sniper's rifle, but haven't yet got the signal to fire.

Of course, this is all very well when you've got the drop on your foe, but what happens when your foe gets the drop on you? Well, there's not really much to add. You'd better hope that your foe gets distracted by your comrades or by some external event. If he takes his eyes off you, even for a second, then you move into the normal time sequence.

DISARMING A FOE

There will be times when you want to disarm a foe. You might want to knock his sword out of his hand, or shoot his gun from his grasp. This is not easy in the heat of battle. You need to make a normal to hit roll at -4. Then your opponent must make a ST roll with a negative modifier equal to your damage/2. If he succeeds, he holds on to his weapon. If he fails, then whatever he is holding is dropped. If you are striking at a weapon held in both hands, your foe gets +2 to his ST roll.

BREAKING THINGS

Alternatively, you could try and smash whatever he is holding. To do this you must make a to hit roll at -4, but any damage you do is applied directly to the weapon or device. Fragile objects, such as most energy weapons and communicators, have 1 LF per kilogram in weight, and they have AR 0-3 (glass = zero, thick plastic = 3). More solid objects have AR 6 or more, and 2 LF per kilogram or part thereof.

When they take damage, any weapon or device with delicate components or moving parts must make a success roll using its remaining LF as a positive modifier. Otherwise they will cease to function. Weapons such as swords or clubs don't need to do this. All weapons and devices will cease to function if their LF falls to zero or below.

AIMED SHOTS

Sometimes you might want to aim at a specific location. For example, if your target has heavy armor all over his body and isn't wearing a helmet, you might want to try a head shot. This is possible, with the Narrator's permission. You can still use the Hit Location Table, even for non-critical hits. When taking an aimed shot, you can modify the hit location roll by plus or minus 2, for every -1 penalty you take on your to hit roll.

For example, if you were swinging at someone's head, and elected to take a -5 penalty to hit, you could modify the hit location roll by up to 10. If you rolled 9 on the hit location roll, you could add 10 to this, ensuring that the head location came up. If you rolled 4, you could choose to add 10 to the roll; the result of 14 would still, however, not be good enough to hit the head.

Sometimes you may wish to reduce the effect of a critical hit you inflict. This is also possible. You can lower the number of your critical hit result by up to your skill levels with the weapon you are using. This can be useful when you want to take an opponent alive, or geld them.



OTHER SPECIAL ACTIONS

In the course of play, characters will think up all sorts of actions they want to perform that have not been covered in these rules. When such situations arise, it is the Narrator's job to decide whether the action is, in fact, possible, and if so, what skills or characteristics will be used to resolve the action and what modifiers will apply.

THE MOST IMPORTANT RULE OF ALL

No set of rules can cover every situation, and no set of rules is perfect. There will be situations that arise during the course of a game where a legalistic interpretation of the rules will seem unfair, silly or downright stupid. There will be situations when strict application of the results of a die roll will result in outcomes that upset your sense of drama. In these situations don't hesitate to over-ride the rule and apply your own judgment to the situation. All rules given here are guidelines to ensure that you have fun. When they fail in that task you can simply ignore them.

This is the most important rule of all.

VIRUS DETECTION PROGRAM: ON	INITIATE SEQUENCE	GUNSTBERG OVERDRIVE	CORTICO QUASI-DEGRADATION
FLOW LINK QUASI-PROTOCOL: INITIATED	NON-BIOLOGICAL RAW MATERIAL:	MICRO-OPTICAL MODULATOR: ON	GANGLIAL ELECTRO-IMPLANT
FILE SUB-PROTOL: STANDARD	INTERNAL DATA CORRUPTION:	SILICONE SYNAPTIC SIMULATOR	SMART CHIP INSTALLED
NANOMECHANICAL INTERFACE:	LINGUISTIC MARKUP DIRECTORY	DYSFUNCTION	METHANE IMPULSE CATHETER
VALIDATE SIMULATION	MOLECULAR BINARY:	ARTIFICIAL NEUROSYNTHESIS	OCCIPITAL FLOW MODULATION: SINE

NARRATOR

LOGIN:	SUB system COORDINATES	SEROTONERGIC OVERLOAD	BIOFEEDBACK MATRIX: XO
PASSWORD:	X1:69822.5 X2:196.04.6	AMYGDALPTIC OVERWRITE	NEUROCIRCUIT FEEDBACK
ACCESS GRANTED	Y1:212.33.1 Y2:559.34.0	SMART CHIP INSTALLED	AMOEBOID DRONE: PRESENT
SECURITY CLEARANCE LEVEL:	Z2: 77.06.5 Z1: 66.42.5	BIOMECH AUGMENTATION:	GYROSCOPIC NOISE LOOP:
EXCESS GENETIC VARIATION:	ABBERANT CHROMA LEVELS:	NANOOCIPITAL DRIVER	STORYMODE INITIATING

Kirsten Delgado studied the armored hull of the wastekrawler. It was as large as a hab-block, big enough for several hundred people to dwell in comfort within. There was no obvious damage. Its huge tracks were intact, and all its hatches were sealed. Its sides were pitted with the scars of acid rain and heavy weapons fire, but it seemed perfectly serviceable.

At first glance, nothing appeared to be amiss. Just another huge vehicle abandoned by its occupants to the desert. Except that Skavengers never abandoned vehicles without good reason, particularly not ones of this size. And why was this one blocking their sandfleet's path? It was one of those unusual things the merchants back in Janus were paying Kirsten to look out for. It said so in her guild contract.

There was something wrong here; she sensed it. The giant vehicle shrieked of menace to her hyper-keen senses. She knew that she was going to have nightmares about it for weeks to come.

This krawler hadn't moved in days, which brought it to the attention of the scouts. This wasn't a simple breakdown. This krawler had not responded to any comm-signals.

Had some enemy infected it with the Viral Plague? Was it a trap? Did it contain raiders? The Scouts said this was not the case. There were no life readings within and no trace of biological weapons. Of course, given the thickness of the krawler's armor, it would be difficult for even their expensive city-built scanners to pick up life-readings anyway. She had tried her own form of scanning, but the vehicle was shielded. Her psychometric powers picked up only the barest hints of old fear and killing.

She turned and looked at Zandor. The Promethean renegade looked back at her with his one unwinking bionic eye. "What do you think, Kirsten?"

Kirsten shrugged, then came to a quick decision. The rest of the sandfleet was only a few hours behind now. They had best resolve this quickly. "Can't tell right now. Cordon off the area. We're going in."

She activated all the systems of her survival suit. The hood dropped into place over head. A translucent filter-cowl dimmed the sun's glare. She gestured for Zandor to follow and began to walk towards the Krawler, uncomfortably aware of the huge number of turrets and weapons pods that dotted the vehicle's sides. Zandor walked at her side, whistling tunelessly, seeming as carefree as if they were on a hike in the eco-domes of his home metrozone.

Sand crunched beneath their boots. The temperature dropped as they entered the krawler's shadow. By the Earth Mother, this thing was big. Its huge caterpillar treads were ten times as tall as Kirsten, and the vehicle itself loomed like some vast metal cliff.

She began to feel a little more relaxed when they reached the krawler's sides and still no one had opened fire.

"Look's like there's no one home," Zandor murmured. Kirsten checked along the krawler's underbelly till she found an emergency escape hatch. It could be reached by a set of metal steps running up the side of the starboard tracks. Zandor clambered up them as nimbly as any ape, completely unslowed by his bionic arm and legs.

He found the arming device and twisted. The hatch opened. An inflatable chute dropped out and fell to the sand. Zandor tore it away with a sweep of his claw and then swung up and inside. Within seconds a thin nylon line dropped from the opening and Kirsten pulled herself up into the wastekrawler.

As soon as they were inside she felt the wrongness of it. There was a chilling evil here. She felt almost unbearably nervous. The flickering of the red warning lights warning that hull integrity had been breached got on her nerves. Zandor fumbled with a control panel and stabbed two buttons with his human hand. In seconds, the shrieking sirens and flashing lights died away. The sense of wrongness did not.



DATA CORE ACCESS



SECURITY RISK ALERT

985.0300.2233.666.957.000.000.B



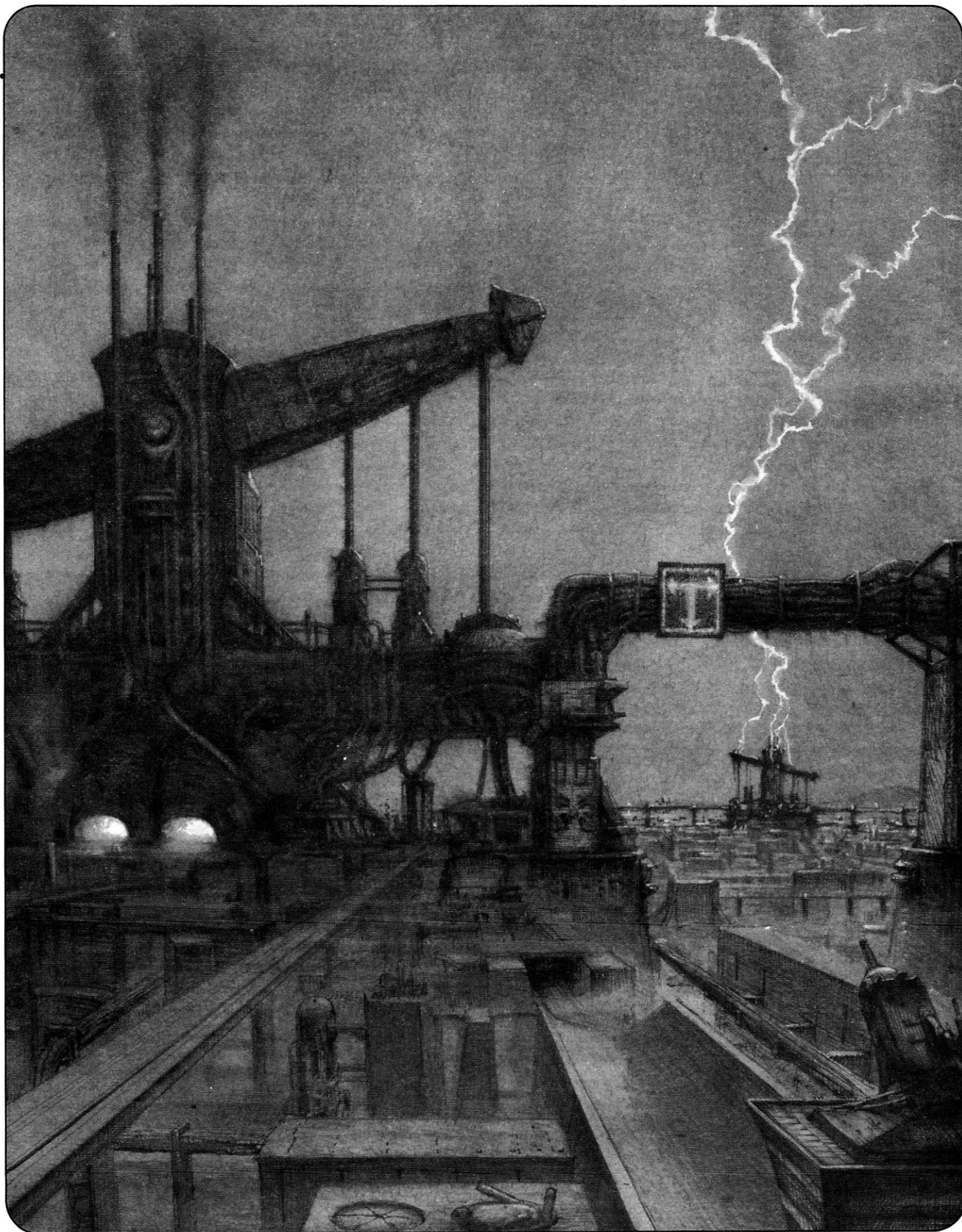
ALL SYSTEMS GO

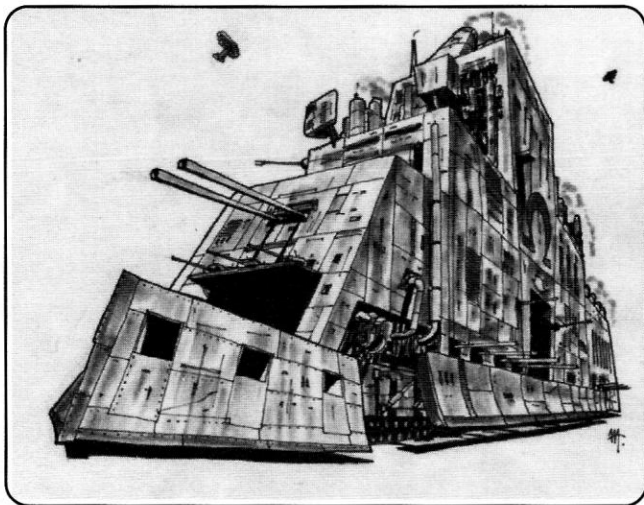


STORYMODE ACTIVE

PERSONA: DELGADO

NARRATOR





They were in a small cabin, lined with levers and spare rebreather masks. Survival packs hung unused against the walls. Whoever this vehicle belonged to had not used them to slip away unnoticed. Zandor twisted a circular handle, and the hatch swung open. They stepped out into a cramped steel-floored corridor. No glowglobes illuminated it. Kirsten swung her nightsight goggles into place. A click told her that Zandor had switched on his bionic eye's IR option. Whatever had made Kirsten nervous was affecting the Promethean too. He had produced his favorite pistol and was covering their line of advance with its barrel.

"Air is still in circulation," Zandor murmured. Kirsten nodded. She could hear the low whine of the fans and air pumps.

"They didn't suffocate," she said. She checked the console of the sensor system on her wrist. The air showed only the usual contaminants. There were no detectable signs of plague or chemical weapons.

"Where is everybody?"

"Don't know."

They moved on. Their steps rung slightly on the metal floor. They passed along a row of doorways. All the small cabins had been occupied.

Here and there were clothes piled on bunks or neatly hung on metal hooks. Pictures of scenes from across the great deserts covered walls. Little hologlobes told of places visited. The place had the flat, dead scent of recycled air.

There was something about this krawler that made her want to flee screaming back out into the desert. Instead she followed Zandor deeper into the abandoned metal giant.

They clambered up a ladder and through a circular hatchway. As she emerged, Kirsten felt Zandor's human hand fall on her shoulder. A strange musty scent hit her nostrils, and she looked up to see the corpse of one of the vehicles occupants. Her flesh crawled.

She moved closer and inspected the body. It had once been a Skavenger, no doubt about it. It was wearing thick leather protective gear and a rebreather mask hung round its neck. Two holsters hung from its side, attached to a thick bullet belt. It held a pistol in either claw-like hand.

A checkered bandanna circled its forehead. It had once been human. It had no visible stigmata of mutation. It had something worse.

The body looked as if it had been dead 1,000 years. It looked like the shriveled mummies Kirsten had seen exhumed from the cryovaults of the Ancients. Its flesh was thin and brittle as old dried parchment. It had flaked away in places to reveal thin atrophied muscle and gristle and bone. Its eye sockets were hollow caves. Shotgun fire had blown two huge holes in its stomach.

Kirsten pulled out a pair of tweezers and removed some pellets where they were embedded in the flesh. She checked its weapons and discovered that they had been fired. The magazines were half empty.

Zandor looked down at her. He seemed relaxed, but Kirsten could tell he was jumpy as an enraged devil kat and ready for action at any moment.

"This gets curiouser and curiouser," he said.

Kirsten nodded back. She wanted to summon the rest of the squad, but if what she was starting to suspect was true, it would do more harm than good.

She passed her hands over the corpse and picked up jumbled impressions of combat and fear and something else - something very old and very evil. She began to get a sense of what had happened here. She only prayed that she was wrong. She wanted to tell Zandor to go but feared what would happen to the Promethean if they got separated.

As they entered a long, low-ceilinged mess hall the smell of putrefaction hit their nostrils. Bodies were strewn all over tables, gutted with kitchen knives. Some had bullet holes blown in them. Some had faces blue from asphyxiation. These corpses smelled fresh. Clouds of flies buzzed eerily over them, and hungry rats scurried back into the shadows. There was another body here, mummified like the first, and she knew what had happened, and she knew the whole place was going to be a gigantic tomb. The hair on the back of her neck rose.

"You still have the amulet they gave you in the Legions," she asked Zandor.

"Sure. I always wear the Sacred Lightning Bolt."

"Good."

"You think there's a psyker involved here?"

"No - something worse, something far, far worse! A Demon."

Zandor looked pale beneath his tan. His fingers fumbled hastily over the protective amulet, checking it was still there.

"What was that?" Zandor asked.

"I didn't hear anything."

"Down there - beyond the galley."

She could hear it now. It was the sound of slow echoing footsteps, coming closer, one painful step at a time.

"Survivor?" Zandor inquired. Kirsten shook her head. She knew there would be no survivors by now. The thing that had wreaked this havoc would have devoured them all.

The footsteps rang on the metal floor. They sounded like the shuffling gate of an old and feeble man. Kirsten knew that whatever was coming would not be that.

There was a click as Zandor checked the safety on his gun. Then the door creaked and a wizened and half-consumed figure stood in the entrance. It looked like it had once been a man, albeit a man who had suffered a slow wasting illness. Its head was hairless. Its skin was gray and its eyes glowed a baleful red. It walked forward slowly, inexorably.

An energy beam blazed as Zandor opened fire. A nimbus of darkness flared around the creature. Its blackness swallowed the laser's brilliant beam, snuffing it out before it could do any damage. The thing continued to advance, reaching for Zandor. He reached out with his bionic claw and grabbed its arm, tearing it completely from the socket. The thing grabbed his throat with its other hand and began to squeeze.

Kirsten sensed a rush of psychic energy as the thing brought its powers into focus and slowly, one at a time, the corpses picked themselves up from the floor and began to shuffle forward. The air wheezed from their rotting lungs. Pale fires blazed in their dead eyes. Kirsten focused her own powers and tried to unwind the tendrils of psychic energy the creature had emitted. She was too late. The power was bound into them now. The best she could do was blast the nearest one.

A halo of light blazed round her head, and then a beam of pure white light emerged from her eyes. The first of the undead corpses blackened and withered away to charred nothingness. Two more leapt for her, pinning her arms. She lashed out at one with her foot, and a head separated from its rotten neck and rolled away across the floor. Still the zombies came on inexorably.

Zandor ripped the possessed creature's arm away from his throat, taking it off at the elbow. Something bright and glittering was clutched in the fist that fell to the floor. Two more zombies grasped the Promethean while the leader surveyed the stump of its arm with mocking, malicious eyes.



Kirsten knew it now. It was definitely a Demon. One that fed on the energies of the bodies it possessed while using those bodies to work harm on the living. She knew that it wanted them now, to feast on their life essence and use their bodies as hosts for its evil energies. She would not let that happen.

Desperately, she writhed free of a zombie's grasp and blasted the nearest of them with her own power. It fell to the ground smoldering. The Demon looked at her, and their wills locked. She felt a paralyzing chill flow through her body and she knew that if she did not act soon she was lost. She focused all her power in one mighty blast and unleashed it straight at the Demon. Beams of white hot energy bored into its eyes. They exploded. Then the thing's head burst as the brain inside its skull evaporated into superheated steam. She heard an eerie, evil shriek and a long wail as the Demon abandoned its host. Kirsten fell to her knees and stayed there panting.

After a while, she looked up and saw that Zandor stood there, looking at her oddly.

"Are you all right?" he asked. His voice sounded rather strange. He came closer and stood over Kirsten. The dazed psyker wondered what was so odd about him. She reached out to be helped to her feet, and Zandor's bionic arm smashed down on her head, flattening her to the floor. The last thing she saw before the darkness took her was the severed arm of the creature that had attacked Zandor.

It held his amulet of protection in its outstretched fingers.

THE NARRATOR

As Narrator, you play a very important role in the Waste World RPG. You are the storyteller and the director of the action. You play all the PCs' friends and foes. In fact, you play every person the player characters encounter.

You are the PCs' eyes and ears. Your descriptions tell the players what they see and hear. In many ways, as Narrator, you are the world. It is a big responsibility, but someone has to do it. Fortunately, there are some guidelines which make your job easier. There are three commandments for Narrators.

1) KNOW THE RULES

You don't need to learn all the rules at once, but you should at least skim through this book and find out where everything is. Don't be intimidated by the bulk of this rule book. You will be surprised how quickly you learn things once you begin playing.

On the other hand, don't get hung up on the rules. If necessary, when you can't find a rule, you can always wing it, inventing an appropriate die roll or response to fit the situation. It's always better to keep things moving than to stop the action and flick through the rulebook.

2) BE PREPARED

Have all your notes at hand. Have all the dice you need ready. Keep notes about what happened in the last session of play so you can pick things up where you left off.

One very important thing to have at hand is some scrap paper. You can use this to write down to the LF and main skills of the various NCs the players are fighting against during combats.

3) BE FLEXIBLE

The object of the game is to have fun, not to get bogged down in arguments and confrontations with the players. Don't worry too much if the players deviate from any storyline you have planned; improvise a response, and try to make it as exciting as possible.

REACTION ROLLS

Obviously, not all characters controlled by a Narrator are going to have the same personality as the Narrator, and not all of them are going to respond to the PCs in the same way. How different NCs respond to the players is determined by a number of factors: past history, the PC's advantages and plain old-fashioned chance. To help you while you are running your campaign, you should use the Reaction Table.

REACTION ROLLS

6-9 FAILURES

Extremely poor response, hostility.

4-6 FAILURES

Unfriendly response, veiled hostility.

0-3 FAILURES

Neutral but mildly negative.

1-3 SUCCESSES

Neutral but mildly positive

4-6 SUCCESSES

Friendly

7-9 SUCCESSES

Extremely positive or Friendly.

When you make a roll on the Reaction Table this is known as making a reaction roll. Reaction rolls can be used in many situations where the PCs encounter NCs and you need some basic guidelines as to how your NCs are going to behave.

Reaction rolls are not meant as a substitute for common sense or good role-playing on your part or the part of the players. When a situation arises as a result of a reaction roll that would be just plain nonsensical or stupid, ignore it or roll again, unless you can think of a particularly good rationale for it.

You should make a reaction roll whenever the PCs encounter an NC for the first time or whenever they are in a stress situation that might cause an NC to re-evaluate his or her relationship with the players.

Reaction rolls are similar to ordinary success rolls. You roll a d20 on behalf of the NC, adding any positive modifiers from advantages such as charisma, and for any previous friendship. You can subtract any negative modifiers that apply in the situation. For example, if the PCs have been behaving unreasonably or rudely, you might apply a large negative modifier.

If the result of the reaction roll is over 10, then the roll is a success. If the result is less than ten, it is a failure. As usual, the amount of success or failure is important.

INTERPRETING THE REACTION ROLL

The basic responses of NCs will vary depending on the situation. There is a big difference between negotiating over the price of an article in a market and facing down a gang of hostile Skavengers in the Wastes. However, one basic principle always remains the same.

The higher the roll, the better the response for the player characters. The lower the roll, the worse the NC's reaction will be. If the PCs achieve a lot of successes, the result will be close to what they want. If they get a number of failures, they will blow it. Obviously, we cannot cover every possible interaction between PC and NC that might happen, but if you follow the general principles laid down here, you won't go far wrong.

MODIFIERS

There are many modifiers to a reaction roll depending on circumstances. It is far easier to con someone if they are drunk or stupid. It is far easier to rally fleeing troops when it seems like your side is winning, and so on. This means that you can modify a reaction roll in any way you see fit, depending on the situation.

CHARACTERISTICS

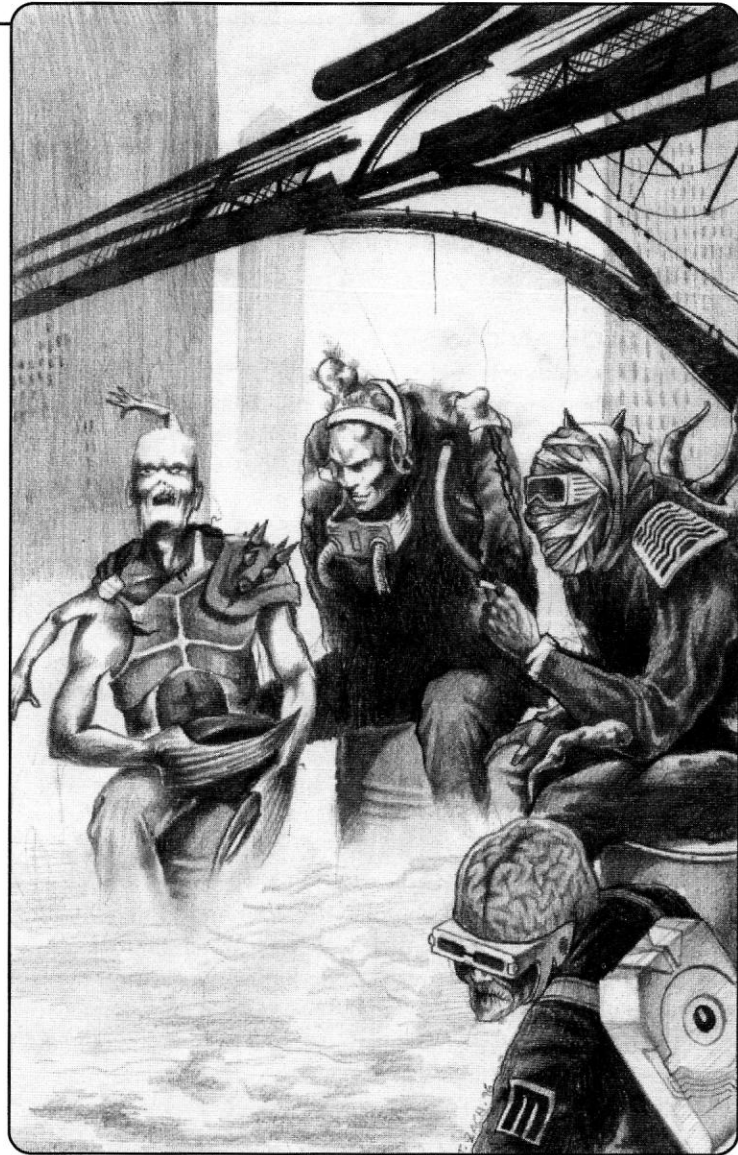
There are certain circumstances where an NC's IN might be a negative modifier, for example, when a PC is trying to con him.

SKILLS

There are many circumstances when skills might be able to directly influence the outcome of a reaction roll.

You might allow a PC to use his oratory skill as a positive modifier if he is trying to influence an angry mob. If he is trying to influence the mob to lynch someone that it already wants to hang, there might be a big positive modifier. If he is trying to influence the mob not to lynch that person, there might be a big negative modifier.

Alternatively, when haggling is going on, you might allow a PC to use his trade skill as a positive modifier. In this case, the NC's trade skill would act as a negative modifier. As Narrator, you have the final say as to what skills apply in these situations.



CIRCUMSTANCES

Sometimes circumstances are in your PC's favor, sometimes they work against them. If the PCs are trying to bluff a bunch of bandits out of attacking them, you would probably give them a big positive modifier if they outnumber the bandits. You would give a big negative modifier if the bandits outnumber the PCs or are if the bandits are obviously better armed. Scaring a bunch of superstitious civilians will be easier if your PCs come on them in a graveyard at midnight during a thunderstorm than it would be if the confrontation took place in a brightly lit building on a sunny day.

HISTORY

If your PCs have a history of past dealings with a particular NC or group of NCs, this too can influence a reaction roll. If their dealings have generally been on good terms, there may well be a positive modifier. If their dealings have inevitably been hostile then there will almost certainly be a negative modifier.

DISADVANTAGES

Certain disadvantages, such as prejudices, are designed to automatically affect a reaction roll. The situation would have to be pretty strange for a Promethean not to react poorly to a mutant and vice versa.

POTENTIAL CONFLICT SITUATIONS

If the situation is tense and your PCs are trying to face down a gang of enemies without firing a shot, then any positive result on a reaction roll will mean they have succeeded. Any negative result will mean that conflict erupts immediately. A neutral result will mean that the standoff continues, giving the players a chance to bluff, speak or do their own bit to influence their foes. The situation will probably drag on until one side or the other backs down or until a fight breaks out.

NEGOTIATIONS

There will be times when your PCs will need to negotiate with NCs in order to get their way. Here, reaction rolls can be a valuable guide to an NC's conduct. An extremely poor result will lead to the NC digging his heels in and absolutely refusing to budge from his position. A poor result means that he will be intransigent and unlikely to make any major concessions to the PCs. He might make a few minor ones, if they will. A neutral result means he is open to persuasion but is unlikely to deviate too much from his opening position except in response to major concessions from the PCs. A good response means he is willing to make concessions and come to an agreement quickly, provided the terms are fair on both sides. An excellent response means he may even give away major concessions in return for minor ones.

Many things can influence a negotiation. If the PCs are really offering a good deal and the other party knows it, then you should most likely give them a positive modifier to the reaction roll. If they are offering an obviously bad deal, then there should be a negative modifier.

SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

Social interactions cover a multitude of situations, from making friends to seductions. As always, the higher the score, the better the response. In seductions, how good looking the PC is, how well they are dressed, the state of intoxication of their intended partner and other factors can all have a significant effect.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

You should never let your players know the actual numerical result of a reaction roll. You should always role-play the NC's response and let them draw their own conclusions. If they are negotiating and the result is neutral then you should purse your lips, nod dubiously and say: "I don't know about that." If the result is negative, the NC will become sullen or hostile and you should role-play this. If the result is positive, smile and act benevolently. Of course, all of this should be influenced by the personality and character of the NC you are role-playing.

A wily NC might smile and appear agreeable while actually being hostile to the players. In such a case, his apparent goodwill will merely be a cover until the circumstances change. At the opposite extreme, a dour and gloomy person might seem hostile and sour even when they are trying to be friendly. You should try to let the situation and the character of the NC you are role-playing shape the response from the Reaction Table, rather than using a stock set of generic responses.

Likewise, you should reward good role-playing by the player characters. If a player gives a good or convincing speech in character, you should allow his PC a positive modifier on the reaction roll.

Finally, always use common sense and your own initiative rather than absolutely relying on the Reaction Table. Feel free to override any result if you think it doesn't work or that another reaction from the NC would be more interesting or result in a better gaming experience for you and the players. If you have a very strong conception of what your NC character is like, then try and think through the situation as if you were him, and react accordingly. This sort of roleplaying works better than any Reaction Table.

PANIC TESTS

Warriors are not machines. They can be overcome by fear, terror and panic. When all their comrades are being mown down around them, even the bravest will think twice about holding their ground. When their side takes casualties, all NC's take Panic Tests.



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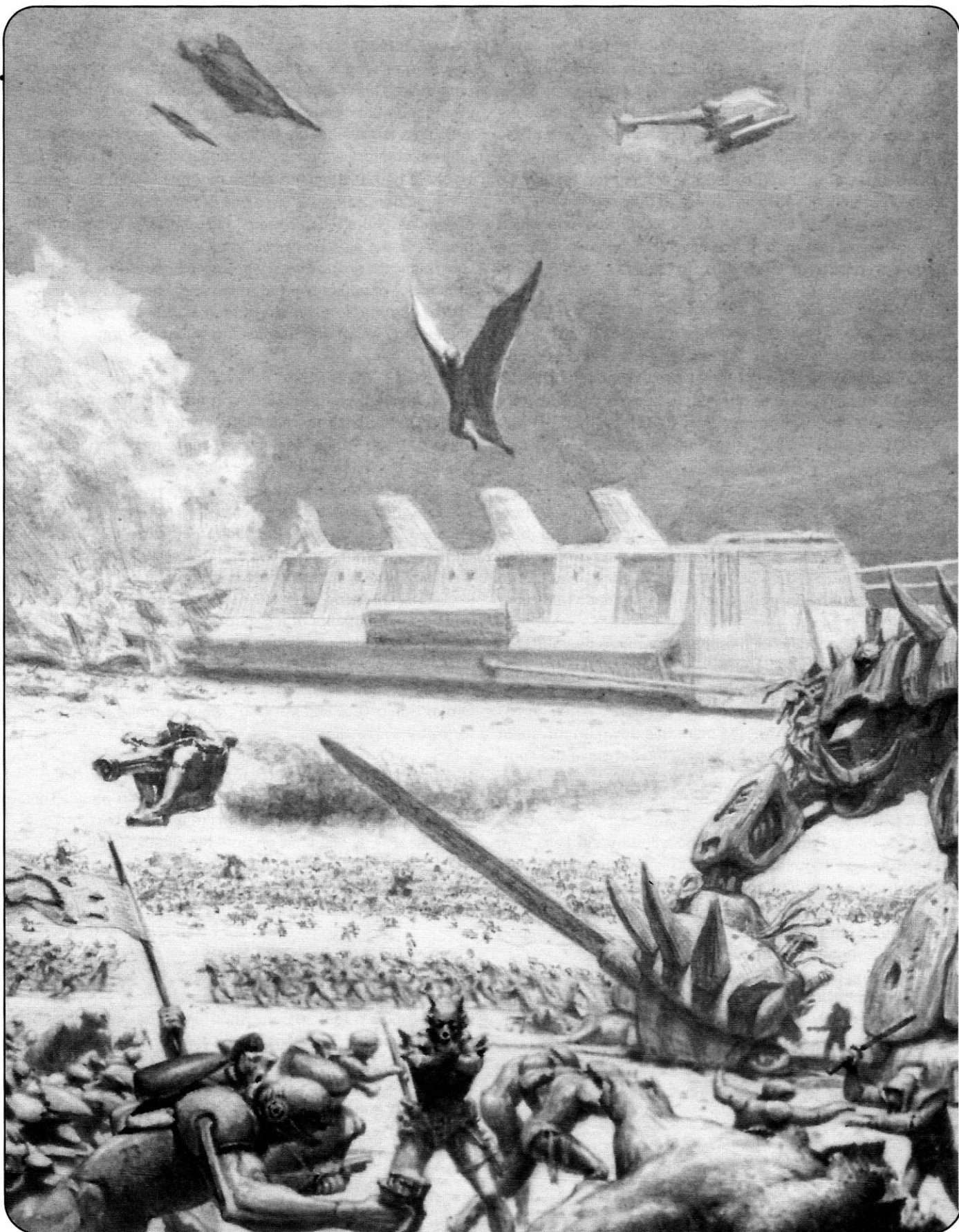


ALL SYSTEMS GO

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NARRATOR



WHEN TO MAKE A PANIC TEST

NC's will take a Panic Test after the first warrior on their side is killed, when their force reaches 50 percent of its original size and each time their force takes a casualty thereafter. As Narrator, you make the Panic Test roll at the start of the following combat round, before initiative is rolled. You do not need to tell the players the result of a Panic Test until the NCs start making their actions.

When a test is called for, every NC on the side which has to take a test must make his roll individually. (During large combats you may choose to make a Group Panic Test, see below).

HOW TO MAKE A PANIC TEST

Panic Tests are made as follows. The NC rolls a d20 and adds its PW. There are several possible modifiers. If the result is 11 or more, then the test is passed and there are no negative effects. If the result is 10 or less, then the test is failed, and the NC must flee from combat.

MODIFIERS

Many factors can modify Panic Tests. These include how many casualties an NC's side has suffered and how wounded they are. It is far harder to hold your ground if all your friends are dead or fled and you are trying to hold onto the entrails tumbling from your ripped stomach with your free hand.

There is a -2 modifier if the character's side has suffered over 50 percent casualties. There is a -2 modifier if the character has lost any life force. This rises to a -4 modifier if the character has lost over 50 percent of his LF. When an NC fails a Panic Test, you should mark this down on the sheet of paper on which you are recording the details of the combat.

FLEEING

If an NC fails a Panic Test, then he will turn and flee, even if he is locked into close combat. This can be a particularly dangerous time. Anyone engaged in close combat with a fleeing character gets a free hit at him as he turns to run. The fleeing character cannot dodge or use his weapon skills to parry and his attacker gets +4 to hit.

A fleeing NC will run as far and as fast as he can away from a combat and will not return unless rallied. If flight appears useless, and they are called upon to surrender, they will.

RALLYING

Any warrior who is not fleeing may try to rally his fleeing comrades. This is a special form of action. It must be made in the combat round immediately following the one in which his fellows decide to flee. The warrior attempting to rally his comrades makes a reaction roll using his charisma ability (if he has it) as a positive modifier. There is a negative modifier of -4 if his side has suffered over 50 percent casualties. If the roll succeeds, his comrades will return to the fray in the next combat round.

This rally only affects warriors whose nerve has just broken the previous combat round and who may yet be rallied by the heroic example of their buddies. Any NC who has already spent one turn fleeing will not return.

GROUP TESTS

In a particularly large melee, you may not wish to make Panic Tests for all the NCs under your control. You can make a Group Panic Test instead. These are rolled just like ordinary Panic Tests but the results apply to the whole group and not just individual NCs.

Use the highest will power of any NC in the group. If anyone in the group has lost life force, there is a -2 penalty. If anyone in the group has suffered more than a 50 percent life force loss, then there is a -4 penalty.

You can divide your NCs up into squads if you wish and apply the results of a Group Panic Test to all the warriors in a squad. Squads can be any size from 5 to 20 warriors. Squads are particularly useful if you are controlling a huge force and don't want them all to flee if they fail a Group Panic Test and yet don't want to make panic tests for every single NC.

IMMUNITY TO PANIC

Certain warriors and monsters are immune to panic. This means that they never need to make a Panic Test and will never flee. They will fight on until the death, if you wish it. As Narrator, you can arbitrarily decide that powerful NCs are immune to panic. Creatures that are immune to panic are covered in the Bestiary section of this book.

PLAYER CHARACTERS

PCs are immune to most forms of panic. It is up to the players to decide when their characters will flee. They never have to make a test, except when under the influences of certain psionic powers, gases or weapons. Certain monsters are so frightening that they will also cause even the most hardened of PCs to make a panic test or flee. This is a special power discussed in the Bestiary section.



THE ADVENTURE

At its simplest, the adventure is just an outline of the play session you intend to run. How you choose to create your adventures is up to you. Some people simply jot down a few notes on a piece of paper and then wing it. Others create long involved plots, writing down all the details and making dozens of little maps. Most people fall somewhere in between.

There are probably as many ways of writing scripts as there are Narrators. The trick is to find one that suits you. To help you, I can only describe here what works for me, and hopefully you will be able to adapt my methods to suit yourself.

WRITING AN ADVENTURE

When I begin to write an adventure, I get out my notebook or some sheets of scrap paper and I begin to jot down ideas. First, I decide on the overall plot. This is can usually be described in one sentence, but sometimes I let it stretch to a paragraph.

There is no shortage of ideas for plots: you can find them in books, films, comics, prepared scenarios, computer games, and of course from your own imagination. The idea should be one that creates a lot of opportunities for exciting confrontations, puzzles and challenges. It should have some sort of goal and some sort of opposition to your PCs.

For example, you may decide that your plot revolves around having your players find the map to a lost cache of ancient artifacts and then going out to seek them. The opposition may come from a rival group who also wants the treasure and of course, the treasure's current owners or guardians. This is one of the simplest of all adventuring plots but none the worse for that.

Alternatively, you might want to write a complex murder mystery where the players' characters look for clues, interrogate suspects, and hunt down a killer.

To get you started, here are some ideas I have found useful during my own career as a Narrator.

TREASURE HUNT

The PCs acquire a map giving the location of a cache of ancient artifacts. Of course, the Ancients did not leave their treasures unguarded.

BOUNTY HUNT

The PCs must seek out a group of wanted killers and capture or kill them for bounty.

THE CHASE

The PCs are, themselves, being hunted by a powerful foe and must find some way of turning the tables on them.

DELIVER THE ANTIDOTE

The PCs must cross the Wastes to deliver a vial of antidote to a terrible plague which is ravaging a habtown.

SCOUTS

The PCs are dispatched to a previously unexplored area to check out reports of Swarm activity in the area.

THE OLD MINE

Players hear reports of an abandoned mine. Perhaps, if they can get it working, they might be able to get some cash. Of course, first they have to deal with the monsters which caused the mine to be abandoned in the first place.

SPIES

The PCs must infiltrate an enemy organization and steal some valuable plans.

THE OPPOSITION

Usually the nature of a plot will suggest the opposition. The trick is to make the opposition logical in terms of the adventure. For example, in the treasure hunt described above, there could be two sets of opponents (at least!): rival treasure hunters and the treasure's guardians.

The nature of the first group will probably be determined by the initial setting. If the players are in Prometheus, it may be that priests of the Machine Gods have reasons of their own for wanting to find the Ancient's cache. If the players are in a small habtown on the edge of a toxic zone, then the opponents may be local Skavengers or desperadoes who have gotten word that our heroes are looking for treasure.

Let us, for the sake of this example, assume that my players ended their last adventure in the small town of Toxic Springs, so for this adventure, the rival treasure hunters will be the local Skavenger gang, the Skabby Gang.

The second adversary group could be anyone I like, as long as it is logical that they are guarding the treasure. They could be a unit of Panzers placed there by the Ancients. It might be that the players will arrive at the spot marked on their map and discover that a small Swarm Hive has been placed there. In this case, I decide that the map leads to an ancient arms dump, still guarded by a unit of functioning and hostile Panzers.

STRUCTURE

In all adventures, there are two areas of particular importance: the beginning and the end. I like to give as much thought as possible to these. Ideally, I want an opening that intrigues the players and a slam-bang climax which leaves everybody satisfied with the evening's session. Everything that happens in between is simply a way of delaying and prolonging the suspense between the opening and the grand finale.

THE HOOK

The hook is the thing that lures the players into the scenario and gives them reason and motivation for going through it. Ideally, it should be something that grabs the players' attention and compels them to get involved.

I have found that an appeal to the primary emotions works best: a plea for help from an old friend, a chance to get revenge on a hated enemy, the prospect of a huge heap of credits or of covering themselves in glory are all hooks I have used to get players into situations where, on considered reflection, they probably would rather not be. Other good hooks are appeals to a character's patriotism or family loyalty or ego.

Use whatever it takes. Be completely shameless and blatant in your attempts to manipulate the player's emotions. You'll be surprised how far a player will go to get revenge on the mutant gang who destroyed the family farm, killed his mom and dad, left him in the desert to die and who have just robbed the local casino of a stack of gigacredit chips.

By the time your players notice that their thirst for vengeance and loot has dragged them to the haunted ruins of a Swarm-infested city, it will be too late for them to do anything about it.

COMPLICATIONS

Basically, everything between the hook and the grand finale is a complication. These are obstacles to be placed in the players' way and make it more difficult to reach their final objective.

Complications don't have to take the form of warriors with guns, or large monsters, although they most often do. A complication can be anything that comes between the PCs and their goals, and which they must deal with. A good definition of a complication is anything that causes your players to stop and think or, heaven forbid, even role-play.

Let us say, for example, your players are in hot pursuit of the evil Skabby Gang. They come across a burned-out vehicle that looks like it has just recently been toasted, quite possibly by the ruthless Skavengers our heroes are chasing. As they move by, they hear a faint, feeble cry for help in a child's voice. This is a complication.

Will the players stop and to help, thus giving their prey more time to elude them? Is it a trap? What if there really is a kid in there, and she is the sole survivor of the massacre, do they take her with them? Take her back to civilization? Do they leave her to die, the scumbags? The decision is up to them.

In an ideal world, these complications build hooks for coming adventures. What if that screaming kid has wealthy relatives in Janus who will pay for her safe return? There is a future adventure right there.

Complications can also be used to foreshadow coming events or the grand finale. Maybe the kid remembers passing a place that is an ideal site for an ambush and can warn the players about it before they walk into a trap.

THE GRAND FINALE

Every session of play should come to a grand finale. This is the thrilling conclusion to the night's play which leaves everyone breathless and drained and looking forward to the next adventure.

You should aim to end your session on a high note. You should try and get the players' adrenaline pumping. The grand finale can be a huge showdown with the villain. Equally it could be a tense chase or a heroic escape. In any case it should escalate the level of tension.

If things were rough earlier, they get even rougher now. In general, save your biggest threats for last. That usually guarantees an exciting conclusion. Now is the time for the PCs to have that shoot-out with the massed hordes of the Skabby Gang. Or to find themselves facing off against a unit of Panzers when they expected only treasure.

It is usually best to resolve the grand finale by the end of the evening, but there are exceptions to this rule. If you are in the middle of a long session of adventures, you might want to stop playing just before the grand finale is reached. This sort of cliffhanger is a two-edged sword. Used occasionally, it can make your players really keen to come back for the next session of play. Used all the time, it can ensure that your players really hate you. Use this device sparingly.

Having decided on an outline for my adventure, I need to have some idea of what might happen during it, which brings us neatly to next section: scenes.

ALONG THE SCENIC ROUTE

All my adventures are divided up into scenes. These are just like the scenes in a film or play; they have a setting, they have characters and they have some form of opposition to the players. Before dealing with the construction of a scene, let us look at all these elements.

SETTING

In many ways, this is the easiest element. You simply decide where the action is going to take place and write a description of it. You can include any maps that you might deem necessary and any important bits of description. Personally, I like to provide a small piece of striking description for each of the characters' senses. This makes the scene much more real for the players involved.

If a scene is set in a bar, I try to mention the general look and atmosphere of the place. For example, if my players are going to a sleazy dive I might use something like the following description.

The floor is concrete stained with old blood and new vomit. An old neon sign over the bar flickers a welcome. The stench of cheap booze, coarse tobacco and unwashed bodies hits your nostrils. Drunken men roar argumentatively over the noise of loud music from the autoband. The floor feels sticky under your boots and something squelches when you walk. You order a drink and swig back a fiery liquid that tastes like cleaning fluid and burns the back of your throat. In the far corner a stranger wearing the spiked symbiotic armor of a Wasteland raider eyes you sullenly.

As you can see, I have tried to make the scene as vivid as possible, and in my quest for this, I don't hesitate to stoop to clichés. If I know that this particular bar is important, if, for example, I plan to have a fight break out there, then I will draw a little map showing where the exits are, what tables can provide cover during the shoot out etc.

Doing this can be quite useful since these locations can be used and reused and build-up characters as the campaign progresses.

CHARACTERS

Of course, there will be characters of some sort in almost every scene. There will be at least one player character and probably at least one NC. Quite possibly there will be many more.

In all scenes, there is a hierarchy of characters. Some will be much more important than others. The ones who are certain to interact with the players are the most important; all the rest can be regarded as extras.

The principle characters in each scene should be given a description that suits their role. They can be made as detailed as you like. I usually find it best to give these NCs a distinguishing feature or tick so that the players can remember them. This can be as simple as giving them a shaved tattooed head, a missing eye, a lisp, a stutter, a deep threatening voice or the habit of referring to themselves as "Big Jak" instead of "I".

The trick is to make these NCs vivid and memorable and to give them a bit of personality. This is particularly true if they are going to be long-running characters whom the players are going to meet again and again. You should make a note of all these details on the paper where you are outlining your adventure.

Extras are simply those people with a walk-on part in the scene: the barman who the players ask about Big Jak's whereabouts, the three drunken thugs looking for a fight. You can simply lift their templates from the appropriate sections of this book or you can just assume they have 10 LF, zero in all their characteristics and whatever skills and equipment you deem needful. They almost certainly will have no skill levels.

OPPOSITION

Usually, players will enter a scene with a definite goal, and you will have some idea what this is. You should be careful to put some obstacles in their way of achieving this. Otherwise, what is the point of having a scene? You should know what the characters will be seeking to achieve, in order to know what sort of opposition to set against them.

This opposition need not be violent. It can range from a horde of Panzers with autocannons to a little old man with a bad memory who cannot recall the information the players need.

Opposition is simply something that hinders the players and forces them to react. Of course, often the best and most exciting forms of opposition are violent and dangerous, but opposition can also provide possibilities to role-play and solve problems.

If the little old man's memory has really gone, the players must find some way to jog it. If the little old man is faking and trying to keep the players in one spot long enough for the enemy to arrive, they should be given a chance to deduce this and do something about it.

Opposition need not come in human or even animal form. It can be anything that makes the players' life harder. Opposition could come from deadly weather conditions or a fast approaching deadline.

For me, the best definition of opposition is anything that puts the players under pressure. I firmly believe that you can never have too much of this.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

So, for my scenario, let us assume I decide that the first scene is set in the bar described above. The hook is that the players must go there to meet Yorg, an old friend who has sent them an urgent message requesting their help.

At this point I know that Yorg has found a map leading to an ancient cache of equipment. Now it's time to throw in some opposition for this scene. While drunk, Yorg spilled the beans to Big Jak, a member of the notorious Skabby Gang, as murderous a bunch of Skavengers as ever robbed a blind cripple. Unbeknownst to the players, they are about show up in the bar just as Big Jak and some of the Gang try to grab the map.

This is scene one for my Adventure. So I make a note of the setting. I give the bar a name - the Broken Arms, write my brief description of it and draw a little map showing the rough positions of the booths, the bar and the exits.

Since the players have only just arrived in Toxic Springs I write a short description of the habtown. I decide that it's wild and lawless and that the local peacekeeper was killed months ago by the Skabby Gang, and no one else has taken the job. This means the players will be on their own when the going gets tough.

All of this aside, Toxic Springs is a standard habtown in the Wastes. I decide that the Broken Arms is in a cave in the mesa which makes it quite an interesting location and that there is a secret exit that leads to a flight of stairs through the back of the proprietor's office.

Next up, I need the characters. I need some details on the player's friend, Yorg, and I need Big Jak. I decide that since the adventure outline has already stated that the prospector told Big Jak about the map when he was drunk, this will form an important part of his character.

Poor Yorg is a drunk, down on his luck, and he needs money badly. He was once fairly tough, but now his skills have atrophied, and he needs the PCs' help. Yorg has zero in all his characteristics, hide armor, a skimmerbike parked outside the bar, some survival gear, and a blaster pistol. When sober he has +3 with all his skills. When drunk, he is useless. So much for Yorg's character template.



I also decide that Yorg is one particular PC's old military buddy, and that he once saved that PC's life. This gives the player some reason to help him. He could just as easily have been a kinsman, an ex-lover, a former partner. The important thing is to give the players some reason to help him out.

Now I need a physical description, which is easy. He looks like a standard Skavenger only gone to seed. He is skinny. His teeth are bad. He stinks of booze. His gear looks uncared for.

Now for Big Jak. The name suggests a huge and menacing guy. So I make him so. He has ST +3 and 20 LF. I decide he is a bruiser with a bionic hand and a shaven head. (The hand is just for effect; it has no special powers.) Jak is not too bright, so I deduct a point from his IN. Lastly, I decide that he has good armor and a big gun, just to frighten the players. Medium ceramic armor and a blaster pistol ought to do for indoor work. A chainsword scabbarded on his shoulder gives the right air of psychotic menace. When he talks, Big Jak never uses the word "I". He always refers to himself as "Big Jak."

I know Jak will need a few henchmen, so I give him a few ordinary Skavengers as backup. I then decide that there will be the same number in total as there are players. They all have autopistolss and swords and all their important skills are at zero. I give them zero in all characteristics and skills, hide armor and 10 LF. Jak and his lads all have skimmerbikes parked outside the bar, just in case they need to make a quick getaway.

Lastly, I make an important decision. The Skabbiess are a huge and powerful gang, led by a mysterious figure they refer to only as "the Boss." Whatever happens during the course of this adventure, the players will not eliminate the gang. They can annihilate whole sections of it, but the Boss and a significant number of his minions will remain offstage, ready to come on in some future adventure and seek vengeance. Keeping the Boss nameless and faceless in this way allows me to keep my options open for future scenarios.

The rest of the bar's customers are simple peons who will have nothing to do with any violence. The same goes for the bar staff.

So now I have all the elements. I just need to something to kick the scene off. I decide that the players have recieved an urgent message from Yorg to meet him at the Broken Arms. After some days of travel, they have arrived in Toxic Springs. As soon as they enter the bar, I will read them the description of the Broken Arms. When they look around for Yorg, they will see that he is being pinned to the wall by Big Jak, who is demanding the map. If the PCs try to interfere, Big Jak and his lads will strut and look cocky and make obnoxious comments on the PCs' appearances and general lack of toughness. The scene is set. It's up to the players to resolve it. I imagine that under the circumstances, there just might be a fight.

RESOLUTION

This seems like a good time to have a word about resolving scenes. Once you have set up a scene, it's really up to you to let the players resolve it. You should not railroad them into any particular path but should leave them to solve the problems you have set up. Of course, if you know your players, they may well react pretty much as you expect, but don't be surprised if they do not. Above all, do not take it as a personal insult if they don't. Waste World RPG is just as much about giving your players a chance to use their creativity as it is about giving you a chance to use yours.

Of course, in the situation above, there is an optimal ending. Assuming the PCs win and save Yorg, he will tell them that he has a map giving the location of a cache of ancient artifacts and he needs their help to get them, since the area is the haunt of the Skabby Gang, some of whose most prominent members our heroes have just given a sound thrashing. The players rescue Yorg, kill or drive off Big Jak and his lackeys and then set off to find the treasure. Of course, this may not happen. Big Jak may kill Yorg, get the map and run off. The players may surrender to him to avoid a fight, or get themselves captured. There are all sorts of potential resolutions. The trick is to have faith in your ability to deal with all the potential variations on the outcome.

If possible, have something prepared. It pays to have a contingency plan, even if it's just a few scribbled notes. If Big Jak gets the map and runs off, the alternative plan is pretty obvious. The players will most likely pursue him.

If the Skabby Gang wins and our heroes surrender, Big Jak may just bury the players up to their necks in the sand, take away their guns and rebreather masks and drive off into the sunset, taking the map with him. This will at least give the players a chance to escape and a good reason to go after him.

Of course, it is always possible that the PCs will die. In general this is a bad thing to happen at the start of an adventure, but sometimes it is unavoidable. If a PC dies, you can always let him take over playing Yorg, or allow a new character to appear and work his way into the adventure.

Anyway, I will assume the players triumph and get the map, and we can move on towards the location given on the map, having a few micro-adventures along the way. I write up a few potential scenes that I could throw at the players and decided to play them out in the best order that is suited the adventure. If in the end, I don't actually use all these scenes, it doesn't matter. I can always save them to use another day.

The first micro-adventure is an encounter with some more of the Skabby Gang. If the PCs killed Big Jak, the Skabbies are out for vengeance. If the PCs are chasing Big Jak, they are just trying to slow down pursuit. The location is any random stretch of desert. The basic conflict will be a fire-fight. The Skabbies use the same profile as those in the bar.

It will be a night time attack by a few skimmerbike-mounted Skavengers.

To make things interesting, I will get the players to sketch out the map, showing their usual camp layout and the order of the sentries. I'll make them do this just after they make camp for the first night so that when the attack comes, I will already have the details. Then, I run the hit and run attack.



I also sketch out an encounter with a pride of griffons, just in case things go too easily for the players. It involves the players crossing the griffons' hunting ground and going near their lair where there are cubs. The griffons are, of course, very threatening and protective of their young. The griffon profile is pulled straight from the Bestiary.

FINAL SCENE

This is to be the great climax, a descent into an ancient complex in search of treasure. For this, I need to draw a brief sketch map of the complex - nothing fancy, simply a few lines joining a few circles that represent the rooms with a key number beside each. I cross-reference this key number to a sheet of paper, showing what is in the area. I decide that there will be a good few Panzers and that they will be a bit of a surprise to the players since nothing was said about them on the map.

This tells me a little about the complex. Obviously, the crypt is old and musty and in poor condition. It was a secure complex, so the players will either have to blast away the door or use some security systems skills. Once inside, they will discover that everything is old and rusty and malfunctioning, even the Panzers guarding the place. This will not make it any less dangerous. In fact, it may make it more so. Lights are prone to flicker and go off with no notice. Ceilings can collapse. Anyway, rather than go through the entire process of creating a scene again, I will simply leave the design of the complex as an exercise for the reader.

It is time to decide upon the ultimate reward. I could, of course, decide to leave nothing and say that everything in the vault is all rusted and destroyed by time and corrosion, but this would be too cruel after all the trouble I have put the players to, so let us make this place an ancient ammo dump filled with interesting weapons and cartons of ammunition, roughly the value of 1,000 credits per surviving PC.

Lastly, since this is a long tense scenario full of trouble, I will let the players a base of three of XPs each for surviving it. Additional rewards for role-playing and puzzle solving may well be in order.

Having sketched out all my notes, all I need do is tidy them up, make sure I have everything written down in one place, and I am ready to go.

RUNNING AN ADVENTURE

You have the adventure outline all penciled out. You have your maps all drawn. You know where everything is. Your players are in front of you. Everybody is excited, ready to go. You have a great story all ready in your mind, and you are certain that your players are going to play through it. Forget it!

You may have the greatest epic since the Iliad in your mind but be aware that your players are probably going to trash it. They'll miss clues, fail die rolls and do exactly the opposite of what they should do at the crucial moment. That's players for you.

The thing to bear in mind is that this is all right - in fact it is half the fun of role-playing games. Your players are not characters in a book. Plots should not run on rails. It's your job as Narrator to be flexible and respond to what the players do, not to what you think they should do.

Remember, the players are the heroes of this story. It is not your job to make them feel small or dumb or prove your cleverness at their expense. This may make you feel good for a while, but it will ensure that they will never want to play with you again.

At heart, most players are simple creatures. They want to feel that what they do matters, and in the context of the game, it should. If this was a film, they would be the ones the camera follows when the action begins. They are the ones who will perform the death-defying heroics.

Never underestimate how attached players get to their characters. As Narrator, you have a whole world to play with and hundreds of characters to enjoy. Most players are going to put in a significant number of hours with the same character, sometimes hundreds of hours, sometimes thousands. This character will become an alternative persona for them. They will quite naturally want to make it shine. You should let them, and fortunately, by following these few simple guidelines, you can.

Rule one: never kill a player character out of spite or because you are in a bad mood. Try to avoid killing characters at all if it's possible. This is not to say that you should fudge every die roll so that the players survive the most impossible and foolish actions. There should always be a sense of danger. Players should always feel that if they do something daft then they will pay the price.

What you shouldn't do is set the players up so that all actions they might perform are stupid. Don't throw an entire cohort of the Apocalypse Legion against a group of beginning characters. There are characters who could survive this, but they have hundreds of XPs under their belts. When your players are ready for such epic confrontations, give them to them - but not before.

Always try to err slightly on the easier side when deciding on the opposition. When asking yourself the question *will I send two 1,000 point Megademons against that bunch of characters, or will I send one*, the answer should always be one. After all, if the opposition proves too easy for the players to blow away, then the Megademon's twin brother can always show up in the middle of things to make the fight more exciting. It's a lot easier to do things this way than to rationalize having half of the enemy suddenly vanish because you realize how tough they really are.

And at all costs, try to avoid having some super-tough NC character show up and bail the players out. Nothing makes players feel more incompetent. The bottom line is that you should gear the challenges you present to the level of your players, not expect your players to rise to the challenges.

Rule two: keep things simple. I have lost count of the number of times I have watched players miss what I thought were obvious clues. Usually I manage to forget that things are obvious to me because I already know the answer; players don't. What might seem to you to be a simple piece of information to spot may get lost in the general rush of details that the players are bombarded with. Unless your players are really sharp and like solving puzzles, it's better to bludgeon them over the head with clues than to give them lots of obscure details and hope they'll somehow stumble over the solution.

Which brings me to rule three. If your players are puzzlemeisters with a gift for solving mysteries that would stump Sherlock Holmes, then by all means, ignore what I have said above.

Give your players what they want, and they will always come back for more. If you have a bunch of rabid hack-and-slashers who like nothing better than wasting hordes of enemies, you really should equip them with heavy weapons and airdrop them into a Swarm Hive to find that missing entropic warhead before it detonates. They'll have a lot more fun doing this than if you make them role-play the negotiation of a vital peace treaty between Prometheus and the Shogunate.

Conversely, if they like high-level power politics and intricate role-playing, they'll get a lot more out of the latter situation. This is not to say that you shouldn't put players into alternative types of adventures as a change of pace, but in general you should do what all great entertainers do and pander to your audience.

You should also make sure that all of your players get a chance to shine, to display the skills and talents that make them unique. When I'm designing a scenario, I try to put in at least one opportunity for every character to exercise his specialist skills. If one of the PCs has psychometry power, I will try and put in a clue which can only be solved by him using his particular power. If one of the players is an unarmed-combat monster, I will try to include a situation where weapons have to be ditched or guards have to be taken out silently or a good old-fashioned bar-room brawl breaks out so he can shine.

All of this is not to say that you should roll out such situations like clockwork, since that becomes predictable and ultimately boring. Fortunately, most characters have an array of strong points so you can switch emphasis from adventure to adventure.

Above all: be entertaining. You are playing this game for fun and you should never forget it. Ham it up. Act over the top. Adopt different voices for different non-characters. If you have such stuff and you feel that it will add to help your player's enjoyment of the game, play some appropriate background music.

FORESHADOWING

Foreshadowing is one of the most useful storytelling techniques. It can be used to build tension, create suspense and clue the players in to the fact that something big is going down. Simply put, foreshadowing means that you give small warnings in advance that something is going to happen, so that events don't materialize suddenly and shockingly out of the blue.

At its simplest, foreshadowing can involve just asking players to make a perception roll as the bad guys sneak up on their characters. It can involve little scene-setting descriptions like telling the players the wind is rising, and the sky darkening in advance of a storm. If a bad guy the players are about to kill mentions the fact that his kin will avenge him, the players will be less surprised when his ten brothers and fifteen cousins show up seeking revenge. In the very long term, it can involve having the players uncover a small part of some great plot, learning more as their adventures progress.

At its best, foreshadowing can add depth and richness to any campaign. At the very least, it lends a sense of continuity and lets the players feel that you are being fair to them and not just dropping things on them out of the blue.

GIVE THE HEROES A BREAK

The players are heroes. They are the actors on center stage whose actions topple nations, save the world or, at least, let them win the day in a spectacular manner. Unfortunately, the dice are not always kind, and sometimes they are downright cruel. You could simply grin and bear it but you don't have to.

There are a few tricks you can use to shift the odds and incidentally make your life easier.

EXTRAS

Certain NCs can be deemed simple extras. They are not fanatics. They have spouses and children. They don't like pain. Maybe they are just plain and simple yellow-bellied cowards. Whatever the reason, they just don't have the grit and determination of players and major villains. This means that they leave a combat after taking one wound no matter how small. They may yell and flee. They may lie around on the ground groaning and whining. They may faint dead away or they may just plain die.

For whatever reason, extras are always out of the fight as soon as they take a wound. This lets the players overcome hordes of extras in a satisfying manner.

FLESH WOUNDS

When the flesh wounds rule is invoked, any wound from any weapon always does the minimum damage to a PC, usually one point of damage after armor is penetrated. You might add the ST bonus or the damage multiplier if you want to stop the players from getting too cocky, but generally damage is kept to a minimum. Usually only extras do flesh wounds. Major NCs use the normal combat system. This rule allows players to fight against seemingly overwhelming odds without getting slaughtered.

Lastly, when rolling for critical hits inflicted by extras and minor NCs, you can always assume that they will never do any worse damage than a type 16 critical hit, no matter what they actually roll. Treat any result greater than type 16 as a type 16. This will ensure that major villains still have a chance of ending your heroes' career, but PCs won't die when hit by a stone flung by a child.

WEALTH AND POWER

The PCs aren't throwing themselves into danger just for the love of it. (OK - maybe some of them are, but most will have an ulterior motive.) They are performing their acts of derring-do for a reason, and that reason is usually that they expect a reward.

Normally, the two great rewards players gain during the course of their adventures are wealth and power. Wealth can be acquired in lots of different ways. Characters can be paid for successful missions. They can find caches of treasure. They can rob NCs they encounter. In any case, no matter how it is acquired, wealth is a very useful thing for the players to have. It can be used to bribe NCs and buy new equipment, as well as keeping body and soul together.

On the other hand, players who earn too much can be a bit of a problem. They can tool themselves up with the heaviest hardware and hottest bionics. If you want this, that's fine. Normally though, I find it useful to keep the players hungry. I try not to let them earn more than 1,000 credits each per adventure, and most of them are suitably grateful when they get even that much from me. Just remember: PCs in poverty are much more likely to go seeking adventure than PCs enjoying room service at their local Ikorean pleasure palace.

The simplest measure of power is experience points. These can be used to purchase new skills and abilities and to improve old ones. XPs let a character grow in many different ways but they are not the only indicator of power. There are many more.

First off, a character may choose to employ bodyguards and mercenaries and acquire his own private army. He may acquire vehicles and estates which will give him a base of operations.

A more subtle indicator of power is the characters' relations with those NCs who wield power and influence. Having a powerful NC owe you a favor is never a bad thing. Such favors can often be used by the Narrator as a reward to the players for performing a successful mission.

As with wealth, you should try and keep Characters' experience rewards under control. If you make things too easy for players, they will swiftly become bored. Don't award them 5 XPs for mugging an old granny and her feeble bodyguard. Try and err on the low side when giving out money and XPs. As with most things on Waste World, scarcity makes XPs more valuable.

On the other hand, don't be too stingy either. If the PCs receive only one XP and a handful of rusty bullets for clearing out a complete Demon Hive, they won't thank you. They will swiftly become discouraged if such things keep happening. Try and strike a balance between being too mean and too generous.



RUNNING A CAMPAIGN

At its most basic, a campaign is simply a series of adventure sessions involving the same characters. This could mean that it is a series of unconnected adventures that happens to feature the same people, but it doesn't have to. A campaign can grow to be so much more. There are many elements you can introduce to your campaigns to enhance your players' enjoyment.

CAMPAIGN THEME

It can help if you give your campaign a basic theme. This theme can set the tone of the adventures you run, and give your players a common cause to fight for. The following list of themes is hardly exhaustive, but it should get you started and keep you going until you find what is right for you and your group of players.

WANDERERS

Your PCs are wandering adventurers, moving from place to place across the Wastes, seeking adventure and finding it in every new place they visit. They may be Skavengers or prospectors seeking a big Drakonium strike. Or maybe they have their own mission, hunting down the bandits who killed their family. Perhaps they are escaping from some dark secret in their own past. Whatever their reasons, they never settle for long in one place.

This is the classic picaresque campaign where the players are always on the move. Its advantage is that your players are never short of adventures. Just getting from place to place can be life-threatening enough for most travellers. Enemies can range from monsters to wandering bandits.

BOUNTY HUNTERS

Your PCs are bounty hunters; they roam the dangerous Wastes and the mean streets of the metrozones in search of their criminal prey. Their employer is the Hunters Guild. Their rewards are the bounties they collect. Their enemies are the people they are tracking down.

This is one of the easiest of campaigns to get into. The players always have a reason for hanging out together, and finding an adventure is as simple as studying the wanted notices on the computer terminals of the nearest guildhall. Of course, it also means that none of the PCs can start off wanted by the law.

AGENTS

Your players are employed by some powerful organization. This might be a Promethean priesthood, one of the Hydran Towers, a Shogunate clan or a Janusian trading kombine. It is their task to seek out information useful to their patron and perform assassinations and acts of sabotage at its behest. Their employer acts as the paymaster and source of information about upcoming missions.

This is another easy campaign to get into. Waste World is full of competing factions, all of whom employ many different types of people to act as their agents. Sharing an employer gives the group a reason to stick together and to know each other.



NEKROPOLIS RAIDERS

The players seek out the old abandoned places of the world, looking for fragments of ancient technology, abandoned Drakonium stores and all sorts of alien artifacts. This is profitable work, but dangerous. The old ruined cities are invariably home to mutants and Skavengers and sometimes worse things. The Ancients left many security systems behind to protect their goods and perhaps most dangerous of all, there are always rival bands of raiders.

This can be a challenging and fun campaign to run. Roaming the ruins is only half the work. Players will have to find them, searching through old libraries, tracking down clues and the sources of rumors, getting provisions and supplies together for the expedition while avoiding the attention of their rivals. And of course there can always be hidden cults and other entities who do not want these places disturbed for reasons of their own.

MERCENARIES

The PCs can start out all belonging to the same Janusian mercenary company. Where the company goes, they go. They are subject to military discipline, and they share in the risks and rewards of the company's business. Of course, the PCs may well be a team of specialists who are often given detached duty for covert operations, infiltration, sabotage and assassination.

REBELS

Lets face it - most of Waste World's governments are pretty repressive. Your players might choose to be rebels seeking to overthrow the Promethean Imperator or the present Shogun, or they might simply be innocents caught up in the struggle between a rebel group and such a government.

In either case, they will soon find themselves facing a powerful and almost invincible enemy with enormous resources at its disposal. This is a good campaign for people who like desperate adventure, political intrigue and a constant sense of danger. Rebels can never relax or let their guard down for even a moment. This should engender a healthy sense of paranoia and give the campaign a distinctive atmosphere.

EPIC HEROES

The PCs are heroes, and it is their job to save the world or their nation or home from some suitably titanic threat. This might be an ancient conspiracy to rule the world or to exterminate all organic life. It might be their task to avert a threatened all-out war between the metrozones.

The trick is to personalize and localize their opponents. If the players are seeking to avert Doomsday, it may be that an ancient autofac for manufacturing Apocalypse Legion Panzers has come online, and the players must find it and destroy it before it can create an overwhelming number of robotic warriors.

Make sure the Doomsday device's robot slaves all have some suitable schtick - garb them in black and silver, and give them faces that look like human skulls. Give them a leader who is larger and more powerful than the rest and whose positronic brain contains some unique element for guiding the robotic horde. If the players destroy this robot then the army will be leaderless until it can be recreated.

If the players are facing off against that classic conspiracy of immortal sorcerors, make sure that each of the sorcerors has a distinctive appearance, personality and gimmick. You can be as cliched as you like. Create a red-robed, red-haired pyromancer with a quick temper. Or design a pale-skinned, blue-haired cryomancer with icy blue eyes and a slow, languid way of talking. And give them hordes of the appropriate lackeys.

ONGOING STORYLINES

An ongoing storyline is an adventure that stretches over many sessions of play. It is a quest in which the PCs seek to perform some long and difficult mission. Normally an ongoing storyline features elements that are too large or complex to be resolved in a single session. It might involve an attempt to find and destroy some evil madman, or it might be a transcontinental trek on a konvoy between Prometheus and the Shogunate. It might be a tightly plotted adventure, or it might be a loosely knit series of encounters. What matters is that they all fit together and move towards a satisfying resolution.

INTERLOCKING STORYLINES

There is nothing to say that you can only run one ongoing storyline at a time. It can be much more satisfying to run two or more interlocking tales. You can switch the emphasis from session to session between the stories as you would in a soap opera. As the players trek across country in their konvoy, there might be a series of raids and sabotage attempts which they need to solve. This detective story might lead to the uncovering of a master villain who is traveling with them. In some sessions, the storyline might rotate around thwarting a sabotage attempt. In others, it might involve dealing with characters that the konvoy encounters as it travels.

RUNNING VILLAINS

Running villains are the guys the players love to hate. They never seem to stay dead, and they are always planning the downfall of our heroes. They hold a grudge against the PCs just as the PCs do against them. A good running villain is worth his weight in gold. They always seem to have hordes of lackeys who prevent the players from getting to them. They have secret escape hatches that allow them to get out of their exploding headquarters. Or maybe they just have a good Lazarus Chip contract. For whatever reason, you can wheel them out to fight another day.

PROBLEMS, PROBLEMS

There are a few problems that come up time and time again in running campaigns. There are as many different solutions to these as there are Narrators. Here are some of mine.

GETTING THE PARTY TOGETHER

This is a perennial problem in the paranoid and violent atmosphere of Waste World. Often, the players will come from different backgrounds or from factions that are eons-old enemies. How are you going to get a party together that consists of a mutant, a Promethean and an Ikarean noble?

There are several solutions. The first is to limit the character types your players can design to those that can work together. You can insist that they all play Skavengers or mutants or some other group.

Or you can ask for your players' cooperation. This will take a little work, but it can be rewarding. Maybe the Promethean character is a renegade who does not share the common prejudice against mutants, perhaps because his own wife became one. If all the players make these little compromises, then you will end up with a party which can work together.

Having got a party which can work together, your next problem is to get them together. How did this disparate group end up in each other's company? The first and easiest way is to have them start the game all belonging to the same organization or group. Maybe they are all part of the same Skavenger band, or they are all Guild Hunters.

Or how about that old stagecoach scenario? The players are all traveling in the same vehicle when it is attacked by Skavengers. Maybe the skimmer they are on is shot down by a Skavenger band, and they are the only survivors of the crash, stranded in hostile Wastelands. That should bond the party pretty quickly.

Another method is what I call the connections method. All of the players know at least one other member of the party in such a way as they have some excuse to get together. For example, your players have designed two Skavengers, a Promethean cyborg, a Janusian trader and a mutant. How are you going to get all these together? Well, the two Skavengers might be brothers. Maybe one of them was in the same mercenary unit as the Promethean PC. Maybe the Promethean in turn worked as a bodyguard for the Janusian trader, and the trader did business with the father of the Mutant, who has now come to him looking for work as a bodyguard. All the PCs could thus come together as bodyguards for the trader.

The method you choose should reflect the kind of adventures you want to play. Pick a method that your players are happy to cooperate with, and your life will be a whole lot easier.

DUMB DECISIONS

This is a tough one. What can you do when the players insist on doing something absolutely stupid, like insulting the Shogun in the middle of his audience hall while he is surrounded by his Ebon Guard?

Don't laugh - sooner or later, some idiot is going to do something exactly like this when you are running an adventure. If you apply the rules literally, the Shogun is insulted, the samurai charge, and mass character death ensues. If ever there was a situation for fudging a little, this is it. Normally, when a player is about to do something really, really idiotic, I ask them if they really want to do that. If they still say yes, I let the dice fall as they will. If they reconsider, I let them. Of course, maybe you are just not as kind-hearted as I am. In that case, go ahead and toast the stupid scumsuckers. They probably deserve it.

LAST WORDS

Feel free to ignore everything I have said in the last chapter. These are simply my ways of running a game. I know many people who use different methods, and I have played with them and enjoyed it. You paid good money for this game. Use it in any way that makes you happy.

HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

To help you understand how a game works we have provided this short example of play. The Narrator and his friends are all sitting around a table in a comfortable room. The Narrator has a folder set up as a small screen to hide his die rolls from his players and prevent them from reading any of his notes he does not want them to see. The players, Paul, Rachel and Tim each have their own characters. Tim is playing a Stygian Predator, Paul is playing a Panzer and Rachel is playing a Janusian Psyker. The session has been running for a few minutes and the Characters have just traveled from their home base to the ruins of an abandoned metrozone.

Narrator: Your Skimmerbikes top the ridge and you see the ruins of Kronus glittering in the sun below you. The city looks huge. It stretches to the horizon, a jumble of fallen towers and blast craters. It seems obvious to you that Kronus suffered badly during the Armageddon Wars.

Tim: Any sign of radiation or Chem Clouds or any other Bio-Hazards. I have a Bio-Hazard sensor.

Narrator: *(rolls a dice, just to make the players think, he's checking. He already knows there are no bio-hazards but he wants to keep the players worried.)* None that you can detect as this range.

Rachel: I check the map we got from the dying prospector. Can I see the break in the walls that's supposed to be there.

Narrator: Yes. There are several gaps in the Stormwalls just like on the map. It looks like they've been there for a long time.

Paul: OK- we ride on down towards the city, keeping our eyes peeled for any signs of life or ambush. I'm making sure my heavy blaster is within easy reach.

Tim: I keep checking my sensors every few moments to see whether any reading change.

Narrator: OK! You proceed down towards the city. As you get closer you begin to get some feel for the scale of this ancient place. The broken Stormwalls are almost a kilometer high and the steel skeletons of the burned out skyscrapers tower above them.

Tim: I keep checking my sensors

Narrator: Fine. Still no danger signs even as you move through the gap in the Stormwalls. You can see that the streets are deserted. Here and there are ancient bones bleaching in the sun. Some of them have flowed into the rock and concrete itself.

Rachel: E-Bomb effects?

Narrator: Yes! And not the only ones. Some of the stonework around you has crystallized just like the walls of Kimera when you visited with that Konvoy.

Tim: I keep checking my sensors. I'm looking for any danger readings.

Narrator: *(chuckling evilly to enhance the mood of growing paranoia among the players):* No danger signs of any sort. Rachel make a perception roll.

Rachel: *(rolls a d20)* 13. My IN is + 3. That makes the total 16.

Narrator: You don't spot anything but you can hear the wind whistling through the rusting girders.

(Once again the Narrator knows that there is nothing there yet. He just wants to get the players into the habit of rolling dice and making perception rolls so that tension builds. Of course, the fact that Rachel hasn't spotted anything despite making a really high roll is making the players even more paranoid.)

Tim: I activate my camoarmor and rev up my Skimmerbike ready for a quick getaway.

Paul: I unlumber my blaster and scan the surroundings.

Rachel: I draw my pistol and watch the other side from the Panzer.

Narrator: You still don't see anything. Make another Perception roll. All three of you.

All three players make high rolls.

Narrator: You can hear stealthy sounds coming closer. They seem to be coming from the direction of a tumbled down building off to your left.

Paul: I keep the exit to the building covered.

Rachel: I still keep looking around in the other direction. I'm trying to make sure no-one sneaks up on us.

Tim: I'm getting off my skimmerbike and stealthily moving into cover. I'm keeping any eye open for anybody who might be watching me.

Narrator: You don't see anybody. Make a stealth roll and tell me how much you make it by. Tim makes the roll and the Narrator notes the results. He will use it as a negative modifier if anyone tries to spot the Stygian later.

Paul: Can I see anything yet.

Narrator: No

Paul: I get off the skimmer and begin to move towards the door.

Rachel: Don't. We don't know what's there!

Paul: I'm a Panzer. I fear nothing.

Narrator: Just as you reach the door a horde of ragged ugly mutants bursts forth. You can see long loping rat-like shapes, lizard-men, folk with translucent skin. Folk with two heads. Some of them are carrying autopistols and assault rifles. Most of them have clubs or swords or bits of rock.

Paul: I blast them!

Rachel: Wait. They might not be hostile towards us!

Paul: No but I am hostile towards them. Dakka-dakka-dakka!

Narrator: Right everybody roll for initiative. We're going into combat rounds.

The Combat sequence begins.

VIRUS DETECTION PROGRAM: ON	INITIATE SEQUENCE	GUNSTBERG OVERDRIVE	CORTICO QUASI-DEGRADATION
FLOW LINK QUASI-PROTOCOL: INITIATED	NON-BIOLOGICAL RAW MATERIAL:	MICRO-OPTICAL MODULATOR: ON	GANGLIAL ELECTRO-IMPLANT
FILE SUB-PROTOL: STANDARD	INTERNAL DATA CORRUPTION:	SILICONE SYNAPTIC SIMULATOR	SMART CHIP INSTALLED
NANOMECHANICAL INTERFACE:	LINGUISTIC MARKUP DIRECTORY	DYSFUNCTION	METHANE IMPULSE CATHETER
VALIDATE SIMULATION	MOLECULAR BINARY:	TACOP SIM RUN	OCCIPITAL FLOW MODULATION: SINE

BESTIARY

LOGIN:	SUB system COORDINATES	SEROTONERGIC OVERLOAD	BIOFEEDBACK MATRIX: XO
PASSWORD:	X1:131.22.1 X2:000.45.3	AMYGDALPTIC OVERWRITE	NEUROECIRCUIT FEEDBACK
ACCESS GRANTED	Y1:642.33.1 Y2:929.34.4	SMART CHIP INSTALLED	AMOEBOID DRONE PRESENT
SECURITY CLEARANCE LEVEL:	Z2: 74.12.9 Z1: 77.25.1	BIOMECH AUGMENTATION:	FINAL SEQUENCE RUN
EXCESS GENETIC VARIATION:	ABBERANT CHROMA LEVELS:	NANOOCIPITAL DRIVER	STORYMODE INITIATING

"Remember, while we're in Kimera, eat no food, drink no water. Even if it looks pure - don't touch it. Not unless you have a hankering to stay here forever." MacGruder spoke calmly into the wastekrawler intercom system. He looked over at his copilots to make sure they had got the message. Their scarred faces showed fear and nervousness, and these were not people normally given to such emotions.

Many times he had tried to impress upon his crew the dangers of the City of Mutants. This was his last opportunity to ram his point home. Everything in Kimera was contaminated by entropic fallout. The stuff practically caused instant mutation, and he would have no mutants in his crew. He would strand any fool in Kimera rather than have one of the Tainted aboard his wastekrawler. He hated mutants with a passion. If it hadn't been so profitable running guns to Kimera, he would have given the whole accursed place a wide berth many years ago.

The folk in the cramped cabin of the huge machine cleared their throats nervously. Mikal looked at him questioningly but MacGruder flexed the meat-hook fingers of his great bionic claw and the questions died unasked.

"Man your posts, ye sand-dogs! Action stations!" He roared and tapped the butt of his holstered pistol to make his point. He glanced into the surveillance monitors and saw that throughout the monstrous vehicle the crew raced to obey. When his evil moods were upon him no sensible man crossed Black Jack MacGruder. He checked the length and breadth of the craft on the internal monitors.

The whole length of the old wastekrawler swarmed with activity. Engineers strapped themselves into bucket seats overlooking the fusion microcore. Gunners took their positions on the autocannon mounts in the wastekrawler's side and began to arm their weapons. Mercenaries stood ready to repel any boarders who might crawl in through the emergency hatches.

MacGruder sank back into his command chair and laid his hand on the huge tripswitch that would bring the microcore reactor up to full power.

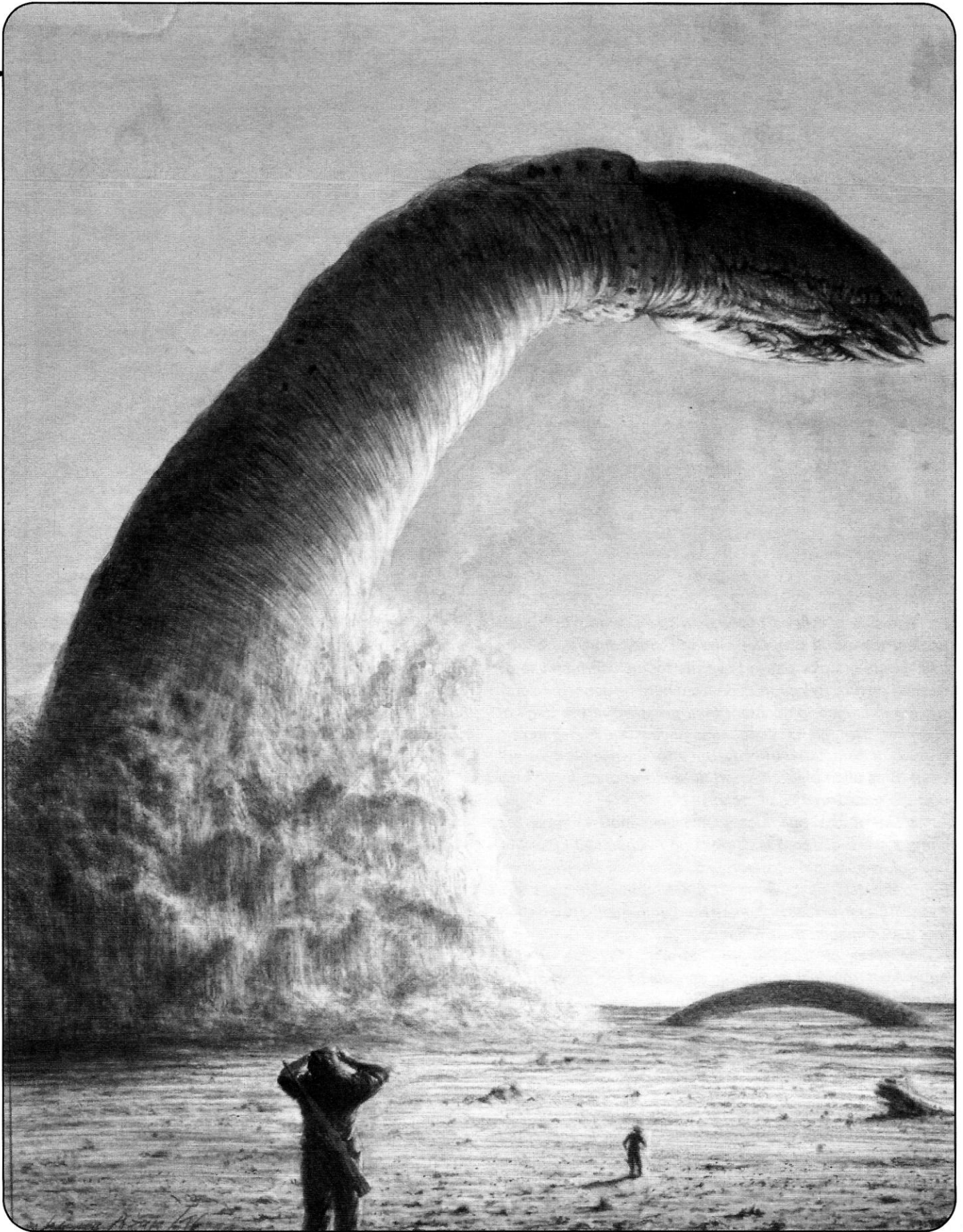
"Engines arming! Make ready!" he bellowed. The crew grabbed whatever was available, hooked their arms around bracer rings or clipped their belt lines to elaborately molded guardrails. MacGruder threw the switch.

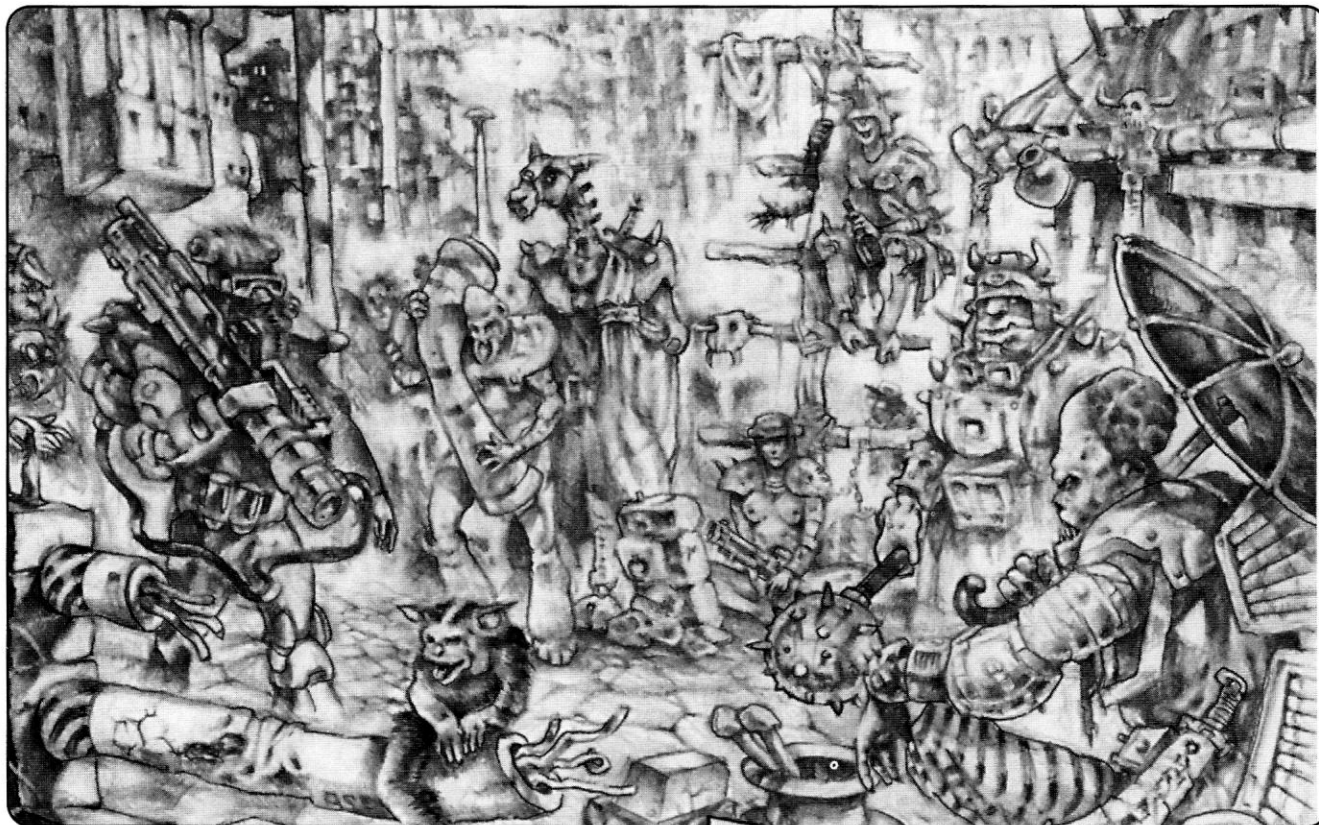
A blue spark appeared as the contacts linked. A hint of ozone reached his nostrils. The roar of the turbines erupted from behind the command deck. The wastekrawler surged forward. Its huge treads sent clouds of toxic sand hurtling into the air. The whole vehicle shuddered with unleashed power.

The wastekrawler gained speed, surging forward over the glittering sand. This was the time MacGruder loved - then he was in full control of his ship. He fought back the urge to throw the command lever into the red zone. Instead he reined back the power and brought her back down to a fast cruising speed. There were many treacherous drops in the dunes around Kimera that could throw a ship down and break her hull before the driver could compensate.

The captain gazed into the gargoyle-encased monitor which showed him the view through the antique cameras lodged in the eyes of the wastekrawler's nose. Lines of ancient alphanumeric script marred the top of the picture. MacGruder had never learned to read them. He just knew that the figures in the top left had something to do with speed and revs. They changed every time he made minute adjustments to the wastekrawler's position and bearing.

He heard gasps from the newer cabin crew as the wastekrawler lurched over the last great dune and Kimera came into view. He didn't blame them, the sight of the horrible place always filled him with superstitious dread. It rose like some monstrous apparition from the polychromatic wastes.





The Eye of Khaos hovered in the sky above twisted ancient towers. It was like a huge moon, dimly visible by day. Swirls of color passed over its reddish surface like oil floating on bloody water. Even from here he sensed its corrupting influence, a constant faint pressure at the back of his mind. The Eye of Khaos was always the first thing he noticed. It dominated the city, but after a while his eyes got used to its alien presence and he realized once more how odd the metrozone itself looked.

Most of the buildings were blackened stumps but some towers glittered with poisonous chemical colors. A few glowed bright as neon with their own internal light. Enormous islands hovered in the air between buildings. Bat-winged flyers, disturbingly human in outline, swarmed the skies between the buildings.

"A place of ill omen, eh Captain," Max, the copilot, murmured from just behind his ear. His hands clutched the second set of steering sticks nervously.

"Aye, lad. That it is."

MacGruder kept his hands on the controls, making constant tiny course corrections as they slowly traversed the downward slope of the dune.

It was always best to go for a direct approach, to prevent a sudden loss of traction on the slopes. Dunes could crumble so easily, and then the ship could skid and tumble, breaking its back or ending up buried in the sand. With an old wastekrawler like this it made sense to be cautious.

The sound of autocannon fire startled MacGruder. He glanced at one of the side screens to see who was firing. It was Lothar, one of the new boys. Nothing showed in the rest of the external monitors. MacGruder clicked the switch that over-rode the gun. The firing stopped dead. He leaned forward and spoke into the microphone.

"What were you firing at, lad?"

"I thought I saw something, sir!"

"Well, next time you think you see something wait until you get an order from me. Those bullets cost money. Waste them and I'll skin you alive with my own hooks. Is that clear?"

He heard the boy gulp. "Aye, sir."

"Anybody else think they see something?" he asked, switching the comm-system to general broadcast.

"Nothing, sir," came the chorus of replies.

"Good. Hold your fire till I give the order. We'll be hitting the edge of the shanties soon and I don't want you starting a riot."

Kimera loomed in the main monitor. Now he could see the tens of thousands of small shacks that surrounded the city, dwarfed by its huge ancient walls. Slowly the scale of the place became evident. The broken towers were a hundred times as tall as a man. The intact ones were twice that. Those crumbling walls must be fifty times his own height, and broad enough so that he could navigate the wastekrawler along them with plenty of room to spare, if he could ever get her up there.

He made another course correction, swinging the wastekrawler in a long arc around the nearer shanties, aiming for the cleared area that led through the gap in the walls into the docks. Best to avoid crushing the hovels under the vehicle's treads, MacGruder thought. No sense in starting a riot.

The cabin rocked slightly on its suspension springs as he brought her round. Crewmen swayed as they adjusted themselves to the ship's motion.

"Disturbance to port, sir."

He flicked his gaze to the port monitor and tapped the magnification switch with his hooks. Each tap increased the magnification by a factor of ten. The shanties swelled into view.

He saw a horde of mutants emerge from their jerry-built homes. He saw women with transparent skin whose muscles, veins and bones were clearly visible. He saw children with three eyes, and faces which looked as if they had melted and ran. He saw men with scaly skin and great crests of flesh rising from their heads. The whole crowd was naked or clad in filthy rags. Briefly, before he could suppress the thought, he wondered if his father was there.

He could still remember the night his father had begun to change. The old man's face had grown gaunt and thin and a mad glitter had come into his eyes. Over the next few days, his skin had begun to ooze and suppurate and thousands of boils had swollen all over him. Those boils had grown and become little heads, each with tiny, evilly glinting eyes. His mother could take it no longer and left. MacGruder had stayed in the house until the neighbors came bearing torches and guns. His father had told him to run and then fled himself. It was the last he had ever seen of the old man. He had been ten years old at the time.

MacGruder cursed the memory. That had been the worst time of his life. He had starved and begged and stolen scraps in the warrens of Prometheus. He had been hunted by the persecutors through the tunnels and alleys. He had known terror, for if he was caught, it was the Arena or exile for sure.

Eventually he had made his way to the docks and there found something he could attach his life to. He had loved the great wastekrawlers that came and went across the desert. Towering ten times the height of a man, they spoke of adventure and travel and a life of exotic pleasures. He had stowed away on one, been caught and so began his second life as a crewman.

He had been many places and seen many things. He had seen the towering spires of the Shogunate and the ruins of Kronus. He'd watched the sky turn crimson as ashstorms approached, and listened to the howling of hundred-kilometer-per-hour winds from the observation deck of a gargantuan transit rig. He'd seen the Towers of Hydra and he'd watched the sunrise splinter over the toxic Wastes thousands of times.

He'd fought many battles. He'd wrestled with Skavengers in the burned-out shell of a dead krawler. He'd been hunted by mutants in the glowing ruins of lost cities. He'd fled before the uncountable hordes of the Azure Swarm.

He'd seen and done many things on his rise to captain but always, always, in the back of his mind, was the secret fear that he would turn out like his father, that the curse of mutation ran in his veins. On some dark nights, he even wondered if this was why he still did the Kimera run. The place had some hold over him, that was clear. And it was said that all mutants made their way here eventually.

"See anything, captain?" Max's soft voice broke into his reverie.

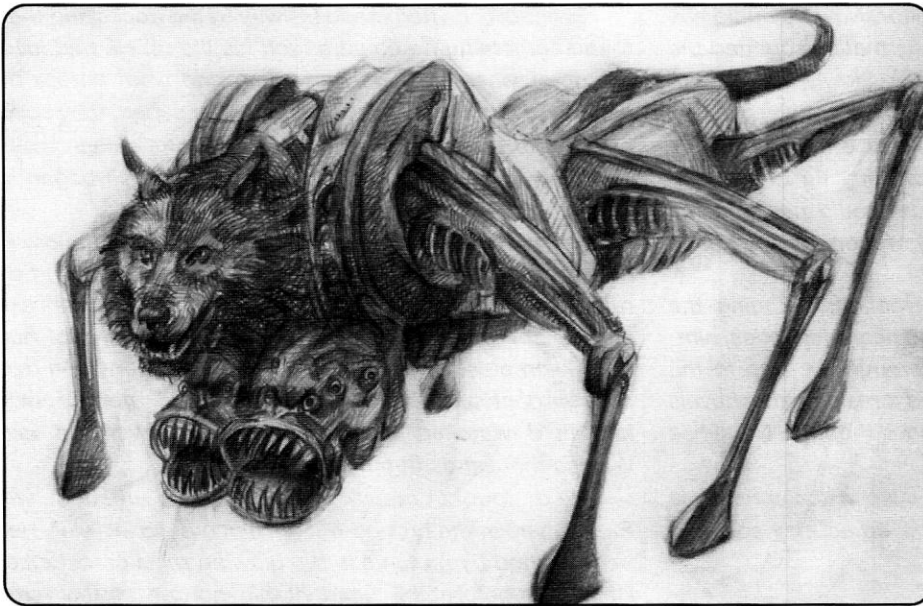
"Just a crowd gathering to watch us. I guess they don't see too many wastekrawlers here. Hold your fire lads! If a riot starts in the shanties we don't have enough bullets to kill them all."

Now another disturbance attracted his attention. Plumes of sand rose from the desert to starboard. Vehicles were coming, raising great tails of ash in their wake. He upped the magnification of the starboard viewers. He saw dune buggies and skimmerbikes, all festooned with weapons. Great machine guns swiveled on the roll bars of the buggies. Autocannons protruded from the chassis of the bikes. Behind the vehicles came a horde of mutants, wrapped in bandages, brandishing primitive clubs and black Tartarean autopistols.

"Looks like some local warlord has decided he doesn't want to pay for our cargo," murmured Max.

"Then we'll make him pay in blood."

Even as MacGruder watched, he saw one of the mutants in the lead vehicle begin to grow. Its muscles swelled till they were ten times normal size. The mutant's height doubled and his features flowed together. The bellow of his voice was audible even over the kilometer that separated them.



MacGruder leaned forward and spoke into the mike: "Hold on, lads. We're going to make a run for the walls. Rear turrets - fire at will! All hands prepare to repel boarders."

He wrenched the wheel and the wastekrawler slid round in a tight turn. He threw power into the turbines and the engines roared as they thrust the vehicle forward, far faster than a man could run. He risked a glance at the rear monitor. The dune buggies were still closing, although not so quickly. The skimmerbikes were almost upon them, flashing like rockets over the sand. MacGruder heard bullets ping off the hull of his vehicle.

In the monitor he saw a mutant biker pull along side and make ready to leap aboard. If he found an emergency hatch he might be able to blow it and gain entrance. MacGruder heard the wastekrawler's own weapons open up. Autocannons roared. A rocket flashed from the rear hard-point, blowing a dune buggy to smithereens. Kimera expanded swiftly in the front monitor.

It was going to be a close run, MacGruder thought, and cursed the day he had ever set eyes upon the city of Kimera.

BESTIARY

In this section you will find descriptions of many of the creatures and inhabitants of Waste World who will oppose your players. Each description uses a standard template that tells you all you need to know about the creature. They are given in the following format:

NAME

This tells you the name by which the creature is commonly known on Waste World. Beneath the name are the creature's characteristics. When a star (*) appears in a characteristic it means that there is something special about it which will appear later in the description. When a dash (-) appears in a characteristic it means that it does not apply.

MOVEMENT RATE (MR)

This tells you how fast the creature can move. These are normally divided by a slash. The first number is its normal movement rate. If there is a second number then it will be the flying rate, if the creature can fly. A blank space after the slash means this does not apply.

ARMOR RATING (AR)

This tells you the amount of protection the creature has against attacks. For humanoids it is simply the average armor worn by the creature. For animals and monsters it may represent the actual thickness or toughness of its hide.

ATTACKS

This tells you the number of attacks the creature possesses and the damage it does with them. Where it is with weapon, you should use the statistics given for weapons in the creature's description of the equipment section, if there is one. If there is no weapon listed, give the creature whatever weapon you want.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

This tells you any special abilities the creature may have. These can range from poisons to psionics and are covered in more detail in the appropriate sections. Where a creature has random special abilities you can choose the appropriate ones yourself. For example, if it says the beast has d4 cybernetics, roll a d4 and note the result. This is the number of cybernetic systems you can give to the creature.

DESCRIPTION

This tells you about the creature's appearance and habits.

ANIMALS

There are many different types of animals in Waste World. Few natural creatures have survived in the toxic Wastes, but the many forms of mutation and symbiotes have allowed some life forms to survive where they otherwise might have become extinct.

In addition, there are many creatures who have survived alongside mankind in the great metrozones, either as pets or running wild. Rather than attempt to give statistics for all of these, we will merely give broad guidelines for most types. Narrators should feel free to make any modifications they like to these statistics.

SPECIAL POWERS

Many mutant creatures can be created by taking these outlines and modifying them with several special powers. One common mutation is to give giant forms of common smaller creatures such as rats and spiders. These are covered in their own section. Generally speaking, small mutant animals can be given d4 special powers and larger ones can be given d6 or greater special powers. If you want to create a giant form for any creature given here, simply increase its LF, Damage and ST until you are happy with the result.

CYBORGIZED BEASTS

Many animals have been cyborgized in order to make them better guards or attack beasts. Normally only creatures dog-sized or larger can be given powerful bionic limbs. Smaller creatures can be given bionics such as eyes and metal claws.

SYMBEASTS

Just as Wastelanders have acquired symbiotes, so have certain other inhabitants of the Wastes. This was not necessarily by design, although a few scientists have speculated that the Ancients may have done this so that at least some life on Waste World survived.

It is possible that these beasts were taken over by symbiotes looking for hosts when their human hosts died. They may have acquired a mutant form of symbiote which has become adapted to their species.

Whatever the case, such symbiotes have proved to be powerful aids to survival in the deadly Wastelands, allowing the creatures to go for long periods without food and water as the symbiote photosynthesizes food and recycles their waste products.

This does not mean that carnivores no longer exist. They still hunt for food when they need additional biomass or the water contained in blood. And do not forget that many beasts in the Wastes are mad or suffer from the berserker disease that causes them to madly attack any living thing they see without thought for their own safety. Symbeasts resemble the creatures from which they are descended but tend to have horny, spiked chitinous skins. Many also possess special powers.

A symbeast will be able to survive in the Wastes for up to a month without food and water. In addition it will be immune to any poison used against it. All symbeasts have at least AR 3 and may, at the Narrator's discretion, have even greater protection.

RATS

There are many forms of rat in the deserts and megacities of Waste World. These range from small voracious beasts little different from their ancient ancestors to all manner of mutated creatures.

PACK RATS

DX	ST	IN	PW	LF
0	+3	*	0	1

MR: 6

AR: 0

Attacks: Special swarm attack (see below).

Disadvantages: -

Special Abilities: Swarm attack; pack intelligence.

SWARM ATTACK

Pack rats swarm over their victims, biting and clawing at any exposed flesh. Anyone who isn't totally encased in body armor who is over run by a swarm of pack rats will take d10 damage per turn. The pack does not need to roll to hit. Armor does apply. The victim will be totally encased in a seething, squeaking, chattering mass of rats. When you do damage to a pack you will kill two rats for every hit point of damage you inflict. Area effect weapons will kill 10d10 rats for every square meter they affect. It is much better to take on a pack with grenades and flame-throwers than with swords and bullets.

PACK INTELLIGENCE

When a swarm of pack rats has over 100 members it has intelligence equal to that of a human being. It can make plans, lay traps, etc. When its number falls to less than 100 it will become just an ordinary pack of vicious rats. When two packs of less than a hundred meet and their combined numbers exceed one hundred, a new pack will form.

DESCRIPTION:

These deadly swarms of carnivorous rats share a kind of telepathic communal intelligence which allows them to coordinate huge swarming attacks on their victims. The pack itself seems to be quite bright and able to learn as fast as any human.

As the pack takes casualties, it becomes less and less intelligent, and if it is reduced to less than a hundred its members are no more bright than ordinary rats. There are tales of packs exceeding a million in number wiping out entire habs towns or sectors of megacities before being killed or dying off through lack of food or new victims. In general, pack rats look much like ordinary rats, only slightly larger. Their teeth are very sharp and when they possess sufficient numbers to achieve pack intelligence their eyes glitter knowingly.

SKAVENGER RATS

DX	ST	IN	PW	LF
0	-2	-	0	1

MR: 6**AR:** 0**Attacks:** Bite (1M).**Disadvantages:** Animal intelligence.**Special Abilities:** Poison bite.**POISON BITE**

-4 to the victim's saving throw if the rat manages to inflict damage. Poison does d10 damage if poison saving throw failed.

DESCRIPTION:

These nasty creatures are pure white, with glittering red eyes. Their bite is extremely poisonous and hard to counter with traditional antidotes. They have two snakelike fangs in the sides of their mouths, through which they inject their poisonous brew.

GIANT RATS

DX	ST	IN	PW	LF
0	-1	-	0	1

MR: 6**AR:** 0**Attacks:** Bite (1M).**Disadvantages:** Animal intelligence.**Special Abilities:** Vicious when cornered.**VIOIOUS WHEN CORNERED**

+4 to hit in close combat when cornered with no way to escape.

DESCRIPTION:

These creatures are about the size of a dog and far more vicious. They are sometimes kept by Skavengers as guard beasts, but in general they are far too vicious for most people's liking. They are insanely ferocious, especially when cornered.

KING RATS

DX	ST	IN	PW	LF
0	0	0	0	5

MR: 6**AR:** 0**Attacks:** Bite (1M).**Disadvantages:****Special Abilities:** Vicious when cornered.**VIOIOUS WHEN CORNERED**

+4 to hit in close combat when cornered with no way to escape.

DESCRIPTION:

These are massive rats with bulging foreheads and highly developed paws. They have their own strange language and runes and can use primitive tools with their paws. They tend to shun humanity and make their nests in abandoned buildings and other places where they can scavenge materials. Like all giant rats, they are exceptionally vicious when cornered.

KATS

Felines too have survived the terrible carnage of the Armageddon Wars in many shapes and forms. All are recognizably descended from the cats of pre-entropic times but they have adapted or been adapted in many different ways.

HOUSE KATS

DX	ST	IN	PW	LF
+1	-2	-2	0	5

MR: 6**AR:** 0**Attacks:** Bite (1M).**Disadvantages:** Animal intelligence.**Special Abilities:** 50% chance of d4 cybernetics.**DESCRIPTION:**

These are similar to ancient panthers only much smarter. Many can talk in a limited way and some are as bright as a human. They are kept as pets in many megacities and are regarded in the Shogunate as bringers of good fortune. This may be because they are very swift to spot dangers and flee, giving their owners some warning of gas leaks and intruders.



DRAGON TIGERS

DX	ST	IN	PW	LF
+2	+4	-	+2	25

MR: 6

AR: 3 (6)

Attacks: Bite (1M); 2 claws (1M).

Disadvantages: Animal intelligence.

Special Abilities: Wild dragon tigers have a 50 percent chance of d4 mutant powers. Domesticated dragon tigers can be equipped with cybernetics.

DESCRIPTION:

These are the great mutated hunting tigers found in the Shogunate and kept as pets by many Samurai. They are often cyborgized and are extremely vicious. They are usually given dermal armor and neurolinked to their handlers. They are often used in combat and for hunting in the Wastes. The statistics in brackets are for domesticated tigers that have been enhanced.

DEMON KATS

DX	ST	IN	PW	LF
+3	6	-	+3	50

MR: 10

AR: 3+d6

Attacks: Bite (2M); 2 claws (1M).

Disadvantages: Large size.

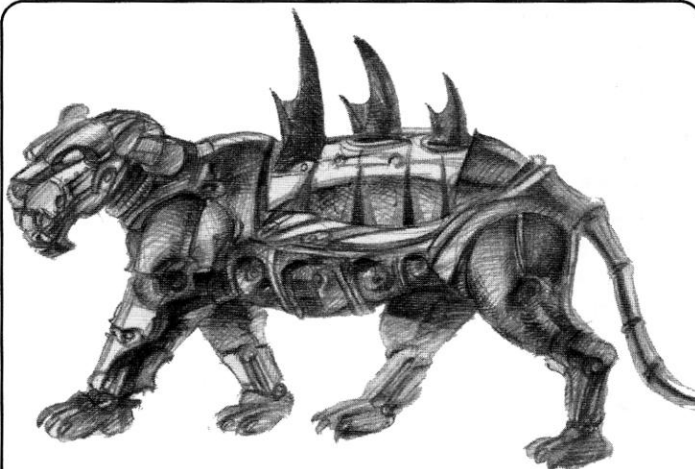
Special Abilities: 50% chance of d6 special powers; berserk killing frenzy.

KILLING FRENZY

When they reach 50 percent of their usual hit points, demon kats go into berserk frenzy and get +4 to all close combat rolls until they are dead.

DESCRIPTION:

These are the largest of the great hunting cats, often reaching a height of two meters at the shoulder and a weight of over a ton. Vicious, very often insane, they are among the most deadly and voracious of predators. Many are found in the wild, bonded to symbiotes and grown to huge size. Demon kats are particularly prone to mutation and are often possessed by Demons, which may account for their name.



HOUNDS

There are many forms of canine, both wild and domesticated. Dogs remain mankind's closest ally among the animal kingdom. They are particularly valued by the Skavengers who use them as guard animals and for hunting. They are kept as pets in the metrozones and are often used by law enforcers to track down criminals, mutants and psychers.

GUARD-DOG

DX	ST	IN	PW	LF
0	+1	+1	0	10

MR: 6**AR:** 3**Attacks:** Bite (1M).**Disadvantages:** Animal intelligence.**Special Abilities:** Can track by scent. 50% chance of d4 cybernetics.

DESCRIPTION:

These are the standard pets kept by city dwellers to guard their property and their lives. They have been genetically engineered to be quite bright and very loyal and are often cyborgized as well. Some of the poorer urban areas are haunted by packs of wild feral dogs who are perfectly capable of tearing a man limb from limb. Those led by pack leaders of enhanced intelligence can be particularly dangerous.

ROBOHOUND

DX	ST	IN	PW	LF
+1	+4	+1	+1	15

MR: 6**AR:** 6**Attacks:** Bite (2M).**Disadvantages:** Animal intelligence.**Special Abilities:** Track by sight; d4 cybernetics.

DESCRIPTION:

These dogs have cybernetically enhanced senses and brains and are often used as trackers and guard-dogs. Their steel-trap jaws often contain duralloy teeth capable of biting through all but the strongest armor. They are often neurolinked to police handlers to hunt criminals and other undesirables.

WASTEHOOUNDS

DX	ST	IN	PW	LF
+1	+3	+1	+1	15

MR: 6**AR:** 4**Attacks:** Bite (1M).**Disadvantages:** Animal intelligence.**Special Abilities:** 50% chance of d4 special powers.

DESCRIPTION:

These giant beasts are ferocious, voracious and deadly. They are the favored pets of Skavengers. Many grow to weigh over two hundred kilos and in packs they are capable of bringing down even the great demon kats. All have chitinous armor courtesy of their symbiotes. Wild wastehounds roam the wilderness in packs and are threats to all who encounter them.

BIOHOOUNDS

DX	ST	IN	PW	LF
+1	+3	+1	+1	25

MR: 6**AR:** 6**Attacks:** Bite (1M+3).**Disadvantages:** Animal intelligence.**Special Abilities:** Track by scent; locking jaws.

LOCKING JAWS.

Once a biohound has a victim in its grip it does not need to hit again. It will continue to do d10+3+ST damage every round until it or its target is dead. Obviously, it cannot attack another target under these circumstances.

DESCRIPTION:

Biohounds are not, strictly speaking, dogs. They are a strange hybrid of canine and Swarm genetic material manufactured by the Genarchs of Hydra who have created one of the fiercest and deadly of all the Waste World's creatures. Biohounds combine the tracking ability and intelligence of dogs with the armored hides, terrible jaws and insane combativeness of the Swarm warrior. They are often used as sentinels and watchdogs by the Hydrans.

Biohounds resemble a six-legged cross between a predatory insect and a pit bull. They have six legs, a massive armored carapace, a huge head, and enormous jaws containing row after row of sharp, shark-like teeth. They can bite through duralloy armor. Although short-sighted, they can follow a scent that is days old unerringly and relentlessly. Indeed, once a biohound finds a trail it will not give up until it is ordered to stop, the trail is lost, or it is dead. They have the unnatural vitality of a Swarm warrior, which, when combined with their thick armored hides, makes them very hard to kill. They are usually controlled by special handlers who use a ganglionic umbilical to link their nervous system to that of the biohound. They are at their most fearsome when encountered in massive packs. Some biohounds have escaped into the wild, where they have swiftly become terrible and terrifying predators.

AVIANS

Most of Waste World's birds exist on the sufferance of humans. Hawks are kept as pets by the samurai of the Shogunate and the corsairs of Janus. Very often they are granted steel claws and bionic eyes and neurolinked to their owners. Such beasts are regarded as useful scouts by the Skavengers of the Wastelands.

Most avians only have two speeds. They waddle along on the ground or they fly. That is why there are no jogging or running speeds given.

DEATHBIRDS

DX	ST	IN	PW	LF
+3	0	+1	+1	10

MR: 6/48

AR: 0

Attacks: Bite (1M).

Disadvantages: Animal intelligence.

Special Abilities: Cybernetics; swoop; neurolink.

CYBERNETICS

Deathbirds may be equipped with cybernetics by their owners.

SWOOP

In this special attack the deathbird drops from the sky at an amazing speed and impacts on its foe with both claws, doing an additional +4 damage. A swoop can only be used in the opening round of combat or if the deathbird breaks away from combat and spends a round gaining altitude.

NEUROLINK

Deathbirds are often neurolinked to human masters. If this is the case they will pick their targets and use tactics with humanlike cunning.

DESCRIPTION:

These are eagle-sized predatory birds used by the corsairs of Janus as mascots, pets and eyes in the sky. They are usually neurolinked to their owner and will fight on his command.

SKAVENGER KONDORS

DX	ST	IN	PW	LF
+1	+5	+1	+2	30

MR: 4/60

AR: 3

Attacks: Bite (1M+1).

Disadvantages: Animal intelligence.

Special Abilities: 25 percent of Skavenger kondors lack the animal intelligence disadvantage. Of these, 50 percent can speak the human tongue.

DESCRIPTION:

These are the mightiest of all surviving birds and one of the few capable of surviving in the Wastes. They spend most of their lives airborne, drifting on the winds and looking for prey. They are capable of carrying off a grown man in their mighty talons. There are several mutant variants, some of which exhibit an almost human intelligence.

LAMMERGEYERS

DX	ST	IN	PW	LF
+3	6	+1	+1	40

MR: 6/50

AR: 6

Attacks: Bite (2M); claw (1M+3).

Disadvantages: -

Special Abilities: Wingslash

WINGSLASH

A Lammergeyer can approach its target, slash it with its razor-sharp wings and then move on. It can attack multiple targets in this way, with a -2 modifier for each attack after the first.

DESCRIPTION:

These mighty robotic birds are products of the Ancients. Many of them survived into the new age, although few now know how or why they were built. Some speculate that they were experimental scout robots. Others think they were merely a whim of some ancient machine mage. For whatever reason, several hundred of them can be found hovering over the deserts of Waste World.

They resemble huge silver eagles made of duralloy and argentium. They look mechanical, for their eyes are jeweled and their talons are enormous cybernetic claws. Their wingspans often exceed ten meters. They are capable of carrying two grown men aloft on their backs or held in their claws. They do not fly by simply flapping their wings. Within their bodies is a powerful suspensor unit capable of holding them aloft. On the ground, with the unit disabled, they weigh over a tonne.

Lammergeyers are intelligent. Their brains are powerful neural networks and they are capable of understanding and speaking human speech. They often hire out as scouts in return for repairs, spare parts and energy sources. Several have entered into permanent partnerships with adventurers, which have proved beneficial for both sides.

In combat Lammergeyers are terrible foes. Their sheer size and strength, combined with their razor-sharp beaks and talons make them formidable opponents, and many have been modified to incorporate sophisticated weapons systems.

RAPTORS

DX	ST	IN	PW	LF
+1	0	+1	0	5

MR: 6/40**AR:** 0**Attacks:** Bite (1M).**Disadvantages:** Animal intelligence.**Special Abilities:** Vicious; flock.**VICIOUS**

Raptors are exceedingly vicious and get +2 on all their close combat attacks.

FLOCK

If there are more than 20 raptors in a flock, they will flutter around their targets en masse as they attack. This shifting cloud of wings and slashing beaks helps confuse their opponents. You are at -2 to hit if in close combat with a flock.

DESCRIPTION:

Flocks of wild raptors prey on all who move in the Wastes. Though small, they are also fast, voracious and deadly, resembling a school of devil piranha more than any sort of predatory bird. Their sheer numbers and their unquenchable viciousness make them one of the Waste's most formidable predators.

Raptors nest in the great mesas and ancient ruins that abound in the Wastes. They emerge in flocks of thousands and sweep across the deserts until they find suitable prey. Then they descend upon it with their talons and beaks, attempting to blind and immobilize their prey before tearing it apart and devouring it. So vicious are they that they will, in feeding frenzy, dash themselves to death against the armored sides of a wastekrawler. They know no fear, only a terrible unending hunger for flesh and thirst for blood.

In shape and size, raptors resemble small hawks. Their plumage of bright metallic colors camouflages them in the desert. They move in flocks of up to several thousand, hoping to slaughter everything in their path.

MUTANT BEASTS

There are many wild and dangerous form of mutant beasts which roam the wilds of Waste World. These range from the hideous chimera to the mighty manticore, and include the nomadic tribes of mutants who plague the more remote sectors.

CHIMERA

DX	ST	IN	PW	LF
+1	+5	0	+1	40

MR: 6**AR:** 6**Attacks:** Bite (2M); 2 claws (1M+1).**Disadvantages:** Animal intelligence.**Special Abilities:** d6 special powers. Choose them yourself.**DESCRIPTION:**

These awful hybrid mutant beasts resulted from the fallout of the Armageddon Wars. They often appear as lethal and unnatural combinations of two or more creatures. Often they are intelligent and savage, with a hatred of all that live and a mad ferocity that will cause them to attack any other living thing they come across. Many possess potent psychic abilities; still others are possessed by Demons who find their powerful and deadly physical forms very useful.

DEVIL SCORPION

DX	ST	IN	PW	LF
0	+5	-1	+1	40

MR: 6

AR: 9

Attacks: 2 claws (1M+1); poison sting (1M+ poison).

Disadvantages: Animal intelligence.

Special Abilities: Poison sting.

POISON STING

If the poison sting penetrates his armor, the victim must make a poison roll at -4 or take an additional 3d6 damage for d4 rounds.

DESCRIPTION:

These enormous mutant scorpions can grow until they are the size of an armored truck. They have powerful claws which can cut through armor and their stings contain one of the most virulent poisons known to man. Many giant scorpions have symbiotes encrusting their massive chitinous hides and are capable of spending long periods in the deep desert without food or water. They are ferocious hunters when aroused, never giving up the trail of their prey until either they or their chosen meal is dead.

GRIFFON

DX	ST	IN	PW	LF
+2	+4	+1	+2	30

MR: 6/36

AR: 3

Attacks: Bite (1M+1); 2 claws (1M).

Disadvantages: No manipulative ability.

Special Abilities: Flight; 10% chance of d4 psionics.

DESCRIPTION:

Griffons are another fancy of those ancient genetic engineers. They have the wings and head of an eagle and the feather-covered body of a lion. Their legs end in razor-sharp birdlike talons; they can fly and are powerful telepaths. They prefer to lair in remote areas far from mankind and can range far and wide in their hunting. While not actively hostile to humanity, they can be very dangerous if hunted, threatened or hungry. Some have, however, been befriended by the nomad clans of the deep Wastes and serve them as scouts.



MANTICORE

DX	ST	IN	PW	LF
+3	+5	+1	+2	45

MR: 6

AR: 6

Attacks: 2 claws (1M); tail (1M+ 1).

Disadvantages: -

Special Abilities: Poisoned tail spikes.

POISON TAIL SPIKES

When a manticore hits with its tail, its victim must make a poison saving throw at -2 or take an additional 2d6 damage for d6 rounds.

DESCRIPTION:

Manticores are a gigantic hybrid of man, lion, and other entities created by the Ancients. They have long canine fangs, and huge humanoid heads framed with great golden manes of hair. They have the bodies of lions, although their forepaws have been somewhat modified to allow clumsy manipulation. Many have vestigial wings which appear useless. All have a large spiked club of bone on their tails, the spines of which are often smeared with poison. Manticores have humanlike intelligence although they cannot make or use tools. They have very highly developed senses and are fierce and deadly foes. They are entirely carnivorous and very well adapted to the Wastes, storing food and water in an internal second stomach for lean times.

These gigantic creatures may be descendants of the strange creators bred before the Entropic War, which escaped from those ancient pleasure parks and zoos when civilization fell. Though bred to be intelligent, docile and tractable, the intervening millennia have forced them to adapt to the ruthless savagery of the new world. They roam the lands in prides consisting of one male, several females, and their children. Manticores rarely threaten mankind unless they are themselves threatened or very hungry; when this occurs they can become very threatening indeed. There are, of course, a fair number of mad and mutant manticores.

SLIME SERPENTS

DX	ST	IN	PW	LF
1	9	-2	0	50+3d20

MR: 6**AR:** 6**Attacks:** Bite (1M).**Disadvantages:** Animal intelligence.**Special Abilities:** Poison bite; crush.**POISON BITE:**

If a slime serpent's bite breaks through armor, its victim must make a poison saving throw at -4 or take 4d6 damage for the next d6+1 rounds.

CRUSH:

Slime serpents love to entangle their victims in their coils, immobilizing them and slowly crushing them to death. At the start of a combat round the slime serpent can decide to crush any single target. It does not need to make a roll to hit. The victim must make a DX roll using the slime serpent's DX as a negative modifier. If he is successful he has eluded the coils. If he was unsuccessful he is entangled. To break out from the coils he must make a successful ST roll using the slime serpent's ST as a negative modifier. Until he succeeds in making this roll and freeing himself, he will take one point of damage for every point by which he fails the roll. Armor counts against this until the crush first inflicts damage, after which the armor is crushed and gives no protection. A slime serpent can only crush one victim at a time, although it can go on biting other foes while it does so.

DESCRIPTION:

These huge snakes are most common in the slime jungles and swamps of the South. They resemble enormous pythons with poison-dripping jaws. Their venom is incredibly deadly. Their long sleek bodies are coils of pure muscle, capable of crushing powered armor. Their scales of metallic greens and blues make them very difficult to spot in their natural habitat. The largest of them can grow up to 35 meters long and weigh up to ten tons.

REPTARS

These mighty lizards are among the most successful of the alien transplants to the toxic soil of Waste World. Brought there as food and beasts of burden by the Kroks, since the Armageddon Wars they have done quite well in the wild. Since the homeworld of the Kroks is arid and scorchingly hot, reptars are well adapted to the basic nasty conditions of the Wastes. They can store water and food within their bodies and exist without eating or drinking for long periods. They are also capable of descending into a state of suspended animation when times are truly hard, not awakening until conditions are more favorable.

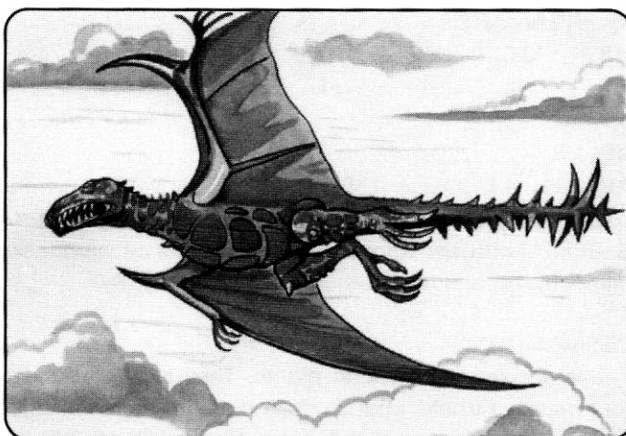
There are four basic types of reptar. All can be domesticated but are extremely dangerous in their wild state.

REPTODONS

DX	ST	IN	PW	LF
-1	15	-2	+1	250

MR: 6**AR:** 3**Attacks:** Stomp (3M).**Disadvantages:** Animal intelligence.**Special Abilities:** -**DESCRIPTION:**

Huge long-necked herbivorous quadrupeds which can be found in the slime swamps and the jungles of the South. They stand up to fifty feet high and weigh nearly a hundred tons. They are sometimes converted into haulage beasts by adding great mechanical exo-skeletons which can be fitted with armored howdahs and weapons pods. In battle, reptodons can be fearsome, trampling all who oppose them underfoot.



REPTOR BATS

DX	ST	IN	PW	LF
+1	+4	-2	+1	25

MR: 6/42

AR: 3

Attacks: Bite (1M).

Disadvantages: Animal intelligence.

Special Abilities: Flight.

DESCRIPTION:

These massive pterodactyl-like beasts have been genetically engineered to carry passengers at speed. They have a wingspan of nearly 15 meters. They are extremely bad-tempered and very, very carnivorous.

SADDLE REPTARS

DX	ST	IN	PW	LF
+1	+3	-2	+1	30

MR: 8

AR: 3

Attacks: Bite (1M); claw (1M).

Disadvantages: -

Special Abilities: -

DESCRIPTION:

Saddle reptare are bipedal and carnivorous. They have long slender tails and necks and small forearms. They stand about three meters tall and seven meters long with their tails and necks outstretched. They weigh about one ton and can quite comfortably carry a full grown man while racing along at full speed. They are vicious-tempered, and famous for turning on riders who cannot control them. The favored means of guiding these brutes is with an electric shock prod and electro-spurs.



SAND DRAGONS

DX	ST	IN	PW	LF
+2	9	-1	+2	150

MR: 8/60

AR: 6

Attacks: Bite (3M); 2 claws (2M); tail (3M).

Disadvantages: Animal intelligence.

Special Abilities: Wings

DESCRIPTION:

The largest and most physically powerful of all the great carnivorous reptars. Sand dragons are quadrupedal carnivores with enormous bat-like wings, spiky tails and huge fanged maws. They can grow to be up to 20 meters long and weigh over 20 tonnes. They are among the most vicious and formidable predators in the Wastes, carefully avoided by all except the most heavily armed convoys.

XENIDS

Xenid is a catch-all term for all the alien life forms which were brought to Waste World before the Interdict and which have since carved their niche in its strange eco-system. Many are truly terrifying to human eyes; their alien nature just makes them all the scarier.

DEVIL SPIDER

DX	ST	IN	PW	LF
+3	+4	-2	+1	25

MR: 12**AR:** 6**Attacks:** Bite (1M).**Disadvantages:** Animal intelligence.**Special Abilities:** Poison bite; cocoon.

POISON BITE

If the devil spider's bite successfully penetrates armor, its victim must make a poison saving throw at -4 or be paralyzed within d6 rounds. This paralysis lasts d10 hours.

COCOON

Female devil spiders wrap their victims in cocoons of super-strong webbing which will hold all but the strongest (ST 6+) immobile. They store these victims in their lairs and use them as host bodies for their eggs; baby spiders are implanted in the victim's body and eat their way out, completely consuming the victim in the process.

DESCRIPTION:

Another alien creature brought to Waste World from the stars during the Age of Diaspora. They were kept in zoos and by private collectors before the Armageddon Wars but escaped when the bombs started to fall. They swiftly adapted to the terrible conditions of the Wastelands and now pose one of the most terrifying threats to the traveler in the Wastes.

Devil spiders resemble huge armored spiders. Their exo-skeletons have been reinforced to support their weight, and they glitter with poisonous metallic colors that blend in well with their surroundings. They can grow to be up to 8 meters across and to weigh over a ton. They move with a horrid scuttling gait and their tiny eyes glisten with alien malice. Poisonous venom drips from their mandibles. They are partially carnivorous but also subsist on elements extracted from the Wastes around them. Even their blood is poisonous. Their foes should be careful not to get splashed by it.

KARNOPLANTS

DX	ST	IN	PW	LF
-1	+4	-1	+1	45

MR: 6**AR:** 9**Attacks:** 4 tentacles (1M).**Disadvantages:** Cannot perceive stationary opponents.**Special Abilities:** Immune to the effects of camoderm, camocloaks, and most other forms of invisibility.

DESCRIPTION:

These are strange walking plants. They move around on four massive trunks and can lash out with their sharp tentacles. They do not see but can sense vibration in the ground and (to a lesser extent) in the air. It is possible to escape their attention by standing absolutely still. Any movement at all will result in the karnoplant lashing out. Karnoplants drink their victims' blood and ingest their biomass through long hollow tentacles.

OOZE

DX	ST	IN	PW	LF
0	0	0	0	30

MR: 6**AR:** 0**Attacks:** Engulf (see below).**Disadvantages:** -**Special Abilities:** Engulf; immunity to impact weapons.

ENGULF

Ooze engulfs its victims, trapping them in layers of its alien substance, which then hardens. A victim will find himself in what feels like quick-drying concrete, being eaten away by the ooze's digestive juices. Anyone encased in ooze must make a ST roll at -6. While encased he takes d10 damage per round, which first eats away his armor. When the victim's AR is reduced to zero, the ooze begins to eat his flesh.

IMMUNITY TO IMPACT WEAPONS

Because ooze spreads or splinters and reforms under impact, kinetic weapons such as swords, bullets, clubs, etc., have no effect on it. Heat, flame, and energy weapons have normal effects, as do acids. Poisons have no effect on ooze's alien metabolism.

DESCRIPTION:

Ooze resembles a great mobile puddle of liquid plastic. It is difficult to spot, since it can blend in with the multicolored sands of the Wastes; it flows across the landscape and usually exists by consuming the silicon in the sands. It reproduces by fission. Ooze is not hostile, but if a human becomes trapped in it, he can be enveloped and devoured by its digestive acids. A victim's struggles to escape usually only irritates the ooze and cause it to secrete its juices at a faster rate.

SAND KRAKEN

DX ST IN PW LF
0 9 -3 +1 200

MR: -

AR: 9

Attacks: 8 tentacles (3M); bite (4M).

Disadvantages: Animal intelligence; immobile.

IMMOBILE

Sand kraken are rooted to the spot and cannot reach foes who are outside the reach of their tentacles (30 meters).

Special Abilities: Tentacles; tentacle crush.

TENTACLES

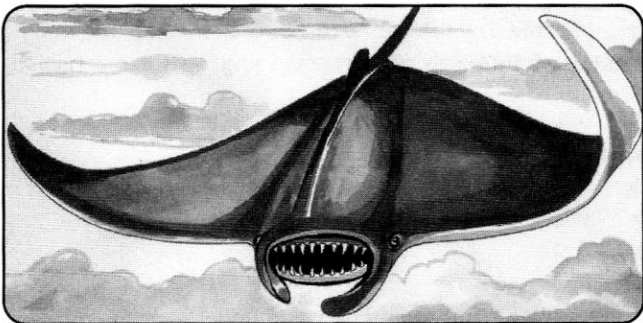
Each tentacle can be treated as a separate attacker, as each has its own eyes and biting leechlike mouth. Each tentacle has 25 LF. Larger sand kraken can be given more tentacles and a corresponding increase in LF.

TENTACLE CRUSH

Each tentacle can wrap itself around a victim and either crush him or drag him down into the sand kraken's maw. At the start of a combat round, instead of making a bite attack, the sand kraken can decide to crush any single target. It does not need to make a roll to hit. The victim must make a DX roll; if successful, he has eluded the coils, if unsuccessful, he is entangled. To break out from the coils he must make a successful ST roll using the sand kraken's ST as a negative modifier. Until he succeeds in making this roll and freeing himself, he will take one point of damage for every point by which he failed the roll. Armor counts against this until the crush first inflicts damage, after which the armor is crushed and gives no protection. A sand kraken can only crush one victim at a time and it may not bite other targets while doing so. On the round after he has been crushed a victim can be drawn into the sand kraken's maw and bitten. The sand kraken is at +9 - (the victim's ST) to hit under these circumstances.

DESCRIPTION:

These gigantic creatures lurk beneath the sands of the Wastes. In some ways they resemble enormous squids, with their bulbous body surrounded by many tentacles. The difference is that they lie upside down and between their many tentacles is a great flat membrane of flesh surrounding a three-meter-wide leechlike maw. This is usually closed as the sand kraken burrows into the sand. However, if anyone steps upon the fleshy membrane, the creature's tentacles erupt from the sands like gigantic serpents, to grab the victim and pull him down into the maw. Few survive its powerful rending jaws and potent digestive acids.



SANDRAYS

SMALL

DX ST IN PW LF
+1 +1 0 +1 15

MR: 6/36

AR: 3

Attacks: Tail (1M).

Disadvantages: Animal intelligence.

Special Abilities: Flight.

LARGE

DX ST IN PW LF
+1 +4 0 +1 25

MR: 6/36

AR: 3

Attacks: Tail (1M).

Disadvantages: Animal intelligence.

Special Abilities: Flight; electrical sting.

ELECTRICAL STING

This powerful shock does an additional d6 damage which ignores uninsulated armor. Forcefields protect against it.

DESCRIPTION:

These creatures may be descended from the ancient flat manta fish which used to haunt the seabeds of the ancient world. They are broad flat creatures whose skins are speckled with toxic chemical colors which provide perfect camouflage in the billowing dunes of the deserts. Suspended by their own repulsion fields, they float along a couple of millimeters above the sands, and they move with a peculiar blurred and rippling motion.

The smallest of them are mere inches across, the largest can have a wingspan of up to 20 feet. All are relatively harmless, although some of the larger ones are capable of generating a powerful electric charge and releasing it through their stinger tails. Some of these have been domesticated by the nomads, who use them as transportation, controlling them by tugging on their sensitive eyestalks.

SHOHOG

DX	ST	IN	PW	LF
+3	+3	+3	+3	50+

MR: -/24**AR:** 6**Attacks:** One smother attack per round.**Disadvantages:** -**Special Abilities:** Smother attack; immunity to impact weapons.**SMOTHER ATTACK**

Shohogs engulf their foes, cutting off their oxygen supply and shocking them with their strange energies. Any victim engulfed by a shohog will smother. He will also take d6 damage per turn from its alien energies. No form of armor will prevent this, and only forcefields can stop it. A shohog does not need to roll to hit. Its victim must make a DX roll to avoid being smothered, using the shohog's DX as a negative modifier. Once they have been hit the shohog can continue to engulf them while attacking a different foe.

IMMUNITY TO IMPACT WEAPONS

Because shohogs just break apart into smaller spheres under impact, then flow back together again, kinetic weapons such as swords, bullets, clubs, etc., have no effect on them. Heat, flame and energy weapons have normal effects, as do acids. Poisons have no effect on the shohog metabolism.

DESCRIPTION:

Shohogs resemble gigantic quicksilver amoebas. They are formless and amorphous and can flow together, forming a huge sphere, or disintegrate into hundreds of tiny components, depending on their moods and purposes. They have a very potent variant of the psi power levitation that allows their component parts to fly along. The spheres will float in a terrifying procession through the air towards their intended victim before swirling around him and entrapping him in their suffocating grasp. Because of their very nature, shohogs are extremely difficult to kill. They will fly apart under impact and swiftly reassemble themselves. Only energy weapons can harm them with any certainty.

WASTEWORMS

DX	ST	IN	PW	LF
0	20	0	+3	300+

MR: 6**AR:** 9**Attacks:** Bite (5M).**Disadvantages:** Animal intelligence.**Special Abilities:** Swallow; tunnel.**SWALLOW**

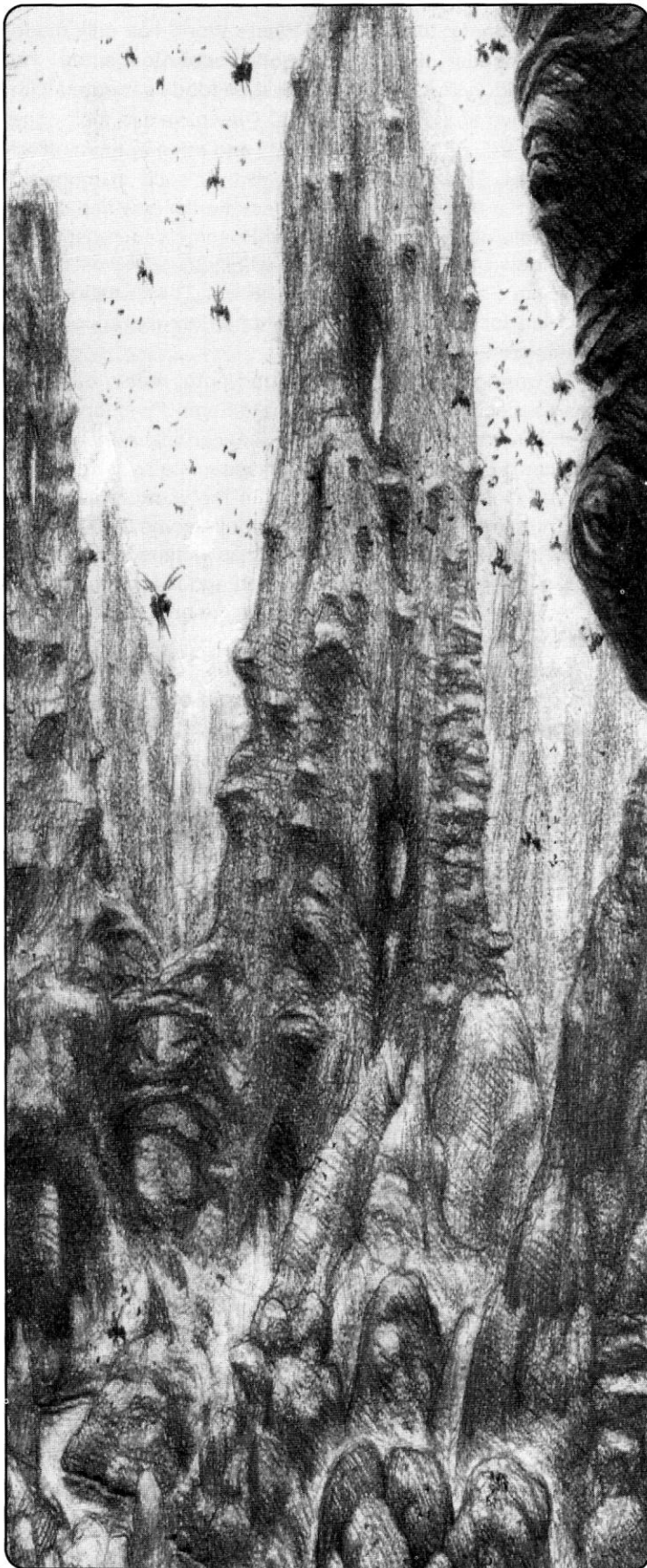
Waste worms are so huge that they can swallow entire vehicles. Once they have successfully bitten their target, it will be swallowed next round. Its prey disappears into the gut of the waste worm, to be digested at the rate of d20LF per round.

TUNNEL

Waste worms are only found in the deepest deserts, where the sand is soft enough for them to tunnel through. They tunnel far beneath the surface, only emerging when they detect a target on the surface.

DESCRIPTION:

Found only in the deepest desert, waste worms are huge multiserrated armored worms which can grow to a kilometer long. They have been known to swallow a wastekrawler whole. These mighty creatures will attack anything that invades their territory and are almost invulnerable. They are attracted to almost any regular rhythmic vibration on the surface of the desert and can emerge without warning from far below the sands. The opening of their enormous maw causes a swirling whirlpool to appear, into which everything on the surface is sucked. Once within the belly of the beast, anything swallowed is swiftly dissolved by potent gastric acids.



The Black Swarm makes its Hives in the Slime Jungles of the South and its warriors are famous for their stealthy infiltration. They secrete a particularly nasty venom which can paralyze their prey in seconds. The Black Swarm has many subhives within the cities of mankind, preferring to lair in sewage systems and abandoned underground areas. They are one of the reasons why many cities maintain constant patrols through these areas. When a subhive becomes numerous enough, its warriors swarm out of their lair and take over entire city sectors. The infamous Dark Sector of Janus was created this way; the area is abandoned even to this day, because even after many sweeps by the combined forces of all the trading houses, no one is exactly certain that the area has been entirely cleansed. As a result, the trading houses pay bounty hunters to go on regular bug hunts through this area.

The Emerald Swarm also has Hives in the Southern jungles, and often wars with the Black Swarm. Its warriors are agile and numerous and well adapted to jungle terrain. Its Hives also contain many potent psychers who use their powers to lure humans to their doom. Many have a particularly potent form of the psi power dominate, which they use on their prey. The Emerald Swarm is also the most intelligent of all the Swarms and makes the longest-term plans. Its Hives are usually well hidden in deeply inaccessible parts of the slime jungles.

The Swarms are divided into Hives. In the distant past, all Hives within a Swarm could be relied on to aid each other or at least leave each other in peace. Mutation and the unending competition for resources has led to a partial breakdown of this cooperation. Sometimes the Hives are mutually antagonistic and fight among each other as much as with other races. The Hives of the Crimson Swarm are still cooperative, but in the East the fast-breeding Hives of the Azure Swarm have degenerated into a virtual civil war. The Emerald and Black Swarms have their rebel Hives too but mostly still cooperate.

Swarm members from different Hives can be distinguished by the slight variations in carapace markings and colorings. They maintain the overall color of their Swarm but with mottlings, shadings and slight variations of pattern.

The Swarms are invariably hostile to all outsiders and seem to have been bred or evolved to be the ultimate warrior race. Other races are simply food or biomass for them. They are totally unrelenting in warfare and can only be stopped by extermination. They never surrender. They never take prisoners. There are a few examples of warriors of one Hive aiding humans against the warriors of another Hive or Swarm, but these truces are always temporary and no one has ever forged a long-term alliance with any Hive. Indeed, such arrangements usually last just long enough for one Hive or Swarm to wipe out its foe and then take the humans as prizes.

Some Swarm warriors have been known to use weapons captured from other races, and there is certainly nothing to prevent the more intelligent castes from understanding human weaponry; however, most seem to prefer their natural weapons or their Swarm's own specially prepared bioweapons.

To other species, one of the most frightening aspects of the Swarm is their eating and breeding habits. Swarm members will eat anything organic, but that food is usually brought back to the Hive to be shared among the Swarm. This means their victims will be paralyzed and carried still living to the Swarm lair. Sometimes, even more frighteningly, they will be used as hosts for the Swarm's eggs. Queens lay their eggs within the bodies of the paralyzed victims, which are then carried off and cocooned in special birthing cells within the Hive. Each body may contain dozens of eggs. The young Swarm larvae will grow within their host body, slowly consuming it, and eventually eating its way out of the abdominal cavity. They finish by devouring their still-living host. Most people would rather kill themselves than face such slow torture. The tiny grubs then make their way along marked scent trails to the food pits where they will eat and grow until large enough to form a cocoon.

Grubs hatch from their cocoons as small but perfectly formed workers, warriors, Hivelords or Queens. Galactic scientists believe the hatching process is controlled by complex pheromone patterns emitted by Swarm members. This means that the cocoons usually hatch whatever the Swarm requires at the moment, be it workers, warriors or whatever.

The pheromone glands of adult Swarm contain the chemical compounds that are the basis of the highly addictive pleasure drug known as vortice. These glands can be sold to black market drug dealers for 10M each. When dried, these can be preserved for up to six months. This has led to a class of Swarm hunters who seek out Hives or Swarm hunting grounds and attempt to slaughter as many Bugs as they can before flying out in fast aircars. Possession of Vortice and Swarm pheromone glands is a capital crime in most metrozones.

THE HIVES

The Swarm do not usually build dwelling places. They are parasitic, preferring to take over structures others have already built and transform them to suit their needs. They kill all the inhabitants of megacities, bunkers and cave complexes, and then take them for their own. The constant presence of Swarm is enough to transform the place. Their skins secrete mucous, layers of which build up till the original shape and form of a place is altered.

As this process takes place, workers swarm all over the exterior of the structure, secreting layers and layers of organic concrete, until once more the original structure of the place is lost and the whole building comes to resemble a great termite mound.

Certain workers secrete hormones into this stuff, and slowly a web of nervous tissue is created, embedding itself in the Hive walls.

When this process is complete the Hive acquires sentience and becomes part of the Swarm, growing, repairing itself and watching for intruders. It can close doors, cut off air circulation and warn Swarm members of the presence of interlopers, so that they overwhelm newcomers before they can progress to deep into the Hive.

Within the Hive are many chambers. There are egg chambers where prey is stored. There are cocoon chambers where the chrysalises hang from walls waiting to emerge. Most important of all is the great throne room where the Queen lies waiting.

A fully functioning Hive is nearly impregnable, a giant maze of corridors filled with deadly warriors ready to die to prevent a foe gaining a foot of ground. Few Hives have been destroyed. Even saturation bombing rarely works, for the armored sides are thick; and even if the destruction is immense, there are always some survivors ready to repopulate the Hive.

The Hive seethes with constant activity night and day. Workers move everywhere. Hatchlings race about on errands. The drone of scouts fills the air. Hivelords stalk the corridors supervising construction. New hatchlings constantly emerge.

The statistics given here are for Swarm warriors. More details of the other castes will appear in future supplements.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

All members of a Swarm share certain abilities. These are available to nearly all of the monstrous creatures that PCs are likely to meet and cause the Swarm to be feared and dreaded by all intelligent races.

**ALTERED METABOLISM**

The Swarm's odd metabolism makes them immune to almost all forms of poison and gas and disease. They can ignore things that would kill other races. Swarm ignore poison and gas attacks.

SWARM SPECIFIC SPECIAL ABILITIES

Each Swarm has its own special abilities and modifications to the templates given below.

Members of the Crimson Swarm are +1 to ST and AR. Members of the Azure Swarm are +2 DX but -1 AR and -2LF. The Black Swarm are -4 to their opponent's perception rolls and when they successfully hit in close combat their opponents must make a poison saving throw at -4 or be paralyzed. Members of the Emerald Swarm are at +2 WP.

Swarm members never panic and never need to make any sort of moral check.

COCOONING

Swarm members all have the power to cocoon themselves when times are hard. They secrete a substance from their flesh; this hardens and forms a chrysalis within which the Swarm can rest until it receives a signal from the Hive to emerge. During lean times entire Hives will cocoon themselves. The cocoons can be set to open at a predetermined time or when certain conditions are fulfilled, such as when they are wet or when they are touched by a large creature.

WARRIORS

DX	ST	IN	PW	LF
+3	+3	-1	+1	25

MR: 10**AR:** 6**Attacks:** Bite (1M+1); 2 claws (1M).**Disadvantages:** -**Special Abilities:** See above.**DESCRIPTION:**

Warriors are the most common members of the Swarm. They are massive six-limbed creatures capable of walking upright or moving on four legs. They have terrifying extendible jaws and heavily armored skins. They are swift and terrifying foes and unnaturally hard to kill. The running speed given is for moving on all fours.

PARTIAL IMMUNITY TO PSYCHIC POWERS

Swarm minds are so alien that few psychers are capable of contacting or understanding them. This means that the Swarm are totally immune to all psionic powers that act directly on the mind, such as telepathy, illusion, etc. They can be harmed by powers that manipulate energy to cause normal damage, such as electrokinesis, pyrokinesis, etc.

SILENT COMMUNICATION

The Swarm never speak to each other, yet they communicate. Some have speculated that they release pheromones. Others say they possess a psychic link. However they communicate, there seems to be a definite hierarchy with hatchlings at the bottom, then warriors, then Hivelords and other high castes, then the Queen. All obey those above them.

POISON

The skin and saliva of the Swarm contain a venom capable of paralyzing a bull reptodon in seconds. Few indeed are those who have been bitten or had their naked skin touched by this stuff and survived. The victim falls as if dead. His breathing becomes shallow and his heartbeat slows.

Only those with great medical training would be able to detect that the victim is still alive. Later, when the victim is cocooned and the larvae has been implanted, the victim may stir feebly - but by then it is too late.

Anyone bitten by a Swarm member must make a poison saving throw at -2. If they fail this they will be paralyzed.



APOKALYPSE LEGIONS

Waste World is littered by the rusting wreckage of burned-out vehicles and machines. Mingled among this are the hulks of dormant machines which can still unexpectedly spring to life. Many of these ancient machines can prove very dangerous, because they have been driven insane by simple age, the effects of war, or the cumulative effects of minor bugs in their programming.

Certain rebel machines haunt the Wastes in vast packs, seeking fuel and spare parts to keep them going and waging unrelenting war against their ancient creators, mankind. These dread armies go by the name of the Apocalypse Legions. They were reprogrammed by the Apocalypse Virus long ago and now make war on all life. New rogue Panzers are created all the time, as ancient hidden autofacs spring back to life and spew forth these deadly creatures.

ROGUE PANZER

DX	ST	IN	PW	LF
0	+4	0	0	25

MR: 6

AR: 9

Attacks: By weapon. Most are armed with HMGs or megacannons or super-heavy weapons. Most Panzers have d6 skill with whatever weapons they use.

Disadvantages: Positronic brain; robotic body.

Special Abilities: -

DESCRIPTION:

Panzers are humanoid war-machines with positronic brains, armored chassis, and often their own built-in weapon systems. Of course, many rogue Panzers are mad and hate all life with a vengeance.

TEKNOVORE

DX	ST	IN	PW	LF
+3	+9	0	+5	50

MR: 8

AR: 9

Attacks: By weapon type. Teknovores usually carry d4 heavy weapon systems that have been integrated into their body. They can punch at 1M.

Disadvantages: -

Special Abilities: Super regenerate.

SUPER REGENERATE

Teknovores regenerate 1LF per combat round until they are fully repaired. They cannot be stopped for long. The best most people can do is put some distance between them and the teknovore.



DESCRIPTION:

Teknovores are among the most lethal foes anyone can face. They have evolved out of the relentless struggle for survival in the Wastes and are the best and most successful of all the competitors. They are the product of the lost nanotechnology of the Ancients, huge roughly humanoid beings with machine parts and weapons grafted on all over their body. They are almost indestructible, since they can self-repair if even the smallest part of them survives a struggle. The pieces will just flow back together and reassemble. They are able to absorb parts of their victims into themselves, usually only assimilating systems that they do not already possess. This means that many tekno-vores possess an enormous number of cybernetic systems as well as their own formidable innate abilities. Teknovores are terrifying things. They never communicate and they exist only to fight and survive. They will attack anything that crosses their paths. Certain brilliant machine mages have evolved a method of programming tekno-vores to hunt down their enemies. This is a task to which they are perfectly suited, since they are completely relentless and nearly unstoppable. They are almost the perfect assassin.



DEMONS

There are many different sorts of demons who roam the toxic Wastes. All of them are inimical to mankind and all of them are bodiless. They are composed of fields of pure psionic energy and have considerable skill in manipulating it. In ancient days the Demons were humans who through the power of their super-science had their minds locked into vortices of pure energy and thus gained immortality. Unfortunately, they put aside none of the lusts of the flesh, and many went mad, and began a war of conquest against humanity that led them to being imprisoned in two great prisons at the planet's poles. During the Armageddon Wars the Demons broke free and have roamed the world bringing misery to all they encounter. More than anything, these Demons lust after the use of a body which will enable them to once more experience the pleasures of the flesh before they are consumed by the demons own energies. There are many other different types of demon which will be covered in future supplements.

POSSESSOR DEMON

DX	ST	IN	PW	LF
2	+5	+3	+5	10

MR: As the body they occupy or flight MR 10.

AR: 0 or as the body they occupy.

Attacks: As the body they occupy.

Disadvantages: Demons consume the body they occupy at the rate of 1 LF per day. These LF cannot be regenerated or healed in any way. Once the body is consumed, the Demon must find another host. A Demon which does not find a new host within one day will start to consume itself in exactly the same way as it consumes a host. When it reaches zero LF it will die. The statistics given are for the

Demon when it is in its energy form. It can only use its own flight movement when in energy form.

Special Abilities: As the body they occupy; d10-1 psionic powers. (The Demon will be PL D10-1 with the psionic powers it possesses); Demonic form; possession.

POSSESSION

The Demon may attempt to take over its victim's body. To so it must make a success roll using its PW+PL as a positive modifier and the victim's WP +PL as a negative modifier. Psiscreens also act as negative modifiers. If the Demon succeeds he takes over the victim's body and can use it as his own. If he fails then he is at -4 to possess this particular victim ever again, since the victim's WP is strengthened by the knowledge that they have successfully resisted such an attack in the past. This penalty will apply to any other Demon trying to possess the victim.

DESCRIPTION:

These potent bodiless beings swarm across the Wastes, seeking human bodies to possess and use in their never-ending quest to spread chaos, death and destruction. They can lurk almost anywhere. When a potential victim comes within range of their power, they will follow them and wait for a suitable moment to launch their psychic attack, usually when the victim is alone and far from aid and potential witnesses. Then they will attempt to possess their victim's body and consume its life force. Afterwards they rejoin their victim's friends and begin sowing distrust and confusion among the party, preparing for the moment when they have consumed their victim entirely and must possess another form. They have access to all their victim's memories and skills, as well as their own potent psionic abilities. Entire isolated communities have been wiped out by powerful Demons who have slowly devoured everyone present.

At the start of possession, Demons can only be spotted by psychers with the appropriate talent or by psionic scanning equipment, but as possession continues the victim will lose weight with unnatural speed, becoming gaunt and sallow. Most of the victim's friends will probably assume they are ill. As possession continues, the victim's hair and teeth start to fall out, his skin begins to flake, and his remaining hair loses all natural pigment. His eyes begin to glow with an unnatural light and he seems to age rapidly, often seeming to age years in mere hours as his life force is consumed faster and faster. In the end the victim's pupils, irises and eye-whites vanish, replaced with glowing pools of pure energy. This is a sure sign that the life force has almost been consumed and the demon must find a new host.

If the Demon is exorcised before death ensues, the victim will regain much lost vitality but will never truly be the same again.



NEKROTH

One of the deadliest of all nanoplagues released during the Armageddon Wars was the Zombie Plague. This terrible weapon infected the corpses of the newly dead and brought them back to a hideous half-life. In wartime there was no shortage of corpses to be infected. The Plague reanimated and left them with a shadow of human intelligence and a terrible hunger to rend and destroy. Entire city sectors were lost to the Zombie Plague as the living were slain by the newly dead and then reanimated. As the Plague progresses, the victim rots and decomposes, until eventually it falls apart and liquefies into a pool of virulent black slime. This slime provides a culture in which the plague lies dormant until coming into contact with new victims. There are Plague pits in most megacities, which the authorities are careful to try and hunt down and decontaminate.

Most of these creatures were merely mindless zombies driven by their unending hunger. A few, however, retained an almost human intelligence and cunning, and in some cases even developed potent psychic powers. This new race of undead immortals called themselves the Nekroth, and went on become one of humanity's greatest scourges. They lurk in the deepest darkest corners of the metro-zones, emerging at night to seek their prey, or to lead undying armies of shambling zombies across the polluted Wastes.

NEKROVORE

DX	ST	IN	PW	LF
+2	+2	0	+2	15

MR: 6

AR: 0

Attacks: 2 claws (1M+1).

Disadvantages: -

Special Abilities: 50% chance of d4 Special powers; climb; stealth.

CLIMB

Using their sharp talons and uncanny agility, Nekrovores can climb virtually sheer faces.

STEALTH

Nekrovores move very quietly. Their targets are at -4 to any hearing perception rolls.



DESCRIPTION:

In the days following the Armageddon Wars, many megacities lay in ruins, their autofacs disabled, their agri-domes wrecked. In those dark times many were reduced to starvation and worse than starvation. Many took to devouring their fellows as the only source of food. This awful habit was to prove the ruin of those who survived this way, for often the entropic fallout was concentrated in the bodies of their victims, and slowly but surely more and more of it was absorbed into the bodies of the cannibals. Eventually this led to a hideous twisting mutation of those who existed in such a way. This, combined with their natural fear and shame concerning their unnatural practices, led to their becoming a separate subgroup of humanity who long ago forgot their kinship with the human race and see it only as prey.

**PSYCHO ZOMBIES**

DX	ST	IN	PW	LF
-1	+3	-3	+2	20

MR: 6**AR:** 1**Attacks:** 2 fists (1M); by weapon type.**Disadvantages:** -**Special Abilities:** Varies from type to type (see below).**DESCRIPTION:**

Since the Armageddon Wars, the Zombie Plague has mutated and there are now several strains of it, all of which have different results.

The Red Pox can infect even the living. Its zombies are covered in huge festering red blisters which contain a foul pus that splatters and splashes over anyone who hits the zombie in close combat. If this pus remains on the victim for more than ten minutes, there is a good chance that he too will die and then devolve into a zombie.

The Blue Death blotches its victims' skin blue and causes them to emit a foul overpowering reek. Anyone who smells it will become nauseous and vomit unless they make a poison saving throw.

The Gray Death causes its victims to rot and fall apart within hours. This form of viral leprosy is incredibly virulent and can affect the living if they come into physical contact with the zombie.

Most psycho zombies resemble walking corpses. They are usually gaunt and disheveled and wear whatever they had on when they died. They no longer have the coordination or intelligence to use ranged weapons but are ferocious and lethal in hand-to-hand combat. Usually their eyes glow with a colored witch-light and their hair and teeth are falling out.

Nekroth lords have the same profile as psycho zombies, except that their IN is +1 and they can have up to 3 psionic powers at levels 6-9.

Even in the megacities that survived, many of these cannibal ghouls existed, although they were often driven into hiding as law and order was restored. Now they exist in ruined megacities and deep below the streets of the inhabited ones, in the sewers and abandoned subways, emerging only at night to hunt their prey and carry it down into their dark lairs. As always, the law enforcement agencies have set bounties on their heads; this has led many to search for Nekrovores in the depths. Often such hunters do not return, instead finding themselves prey to even more skilled hunters who know every nook and cranny of their territory, and who have adapted to moving and killing with stealth.

Nekrovores resemble tall lean humans with sharp pointed teeth and huge mad eyes. They have long fingers and talonlike nails. They favor knives and garrotes and they usually go barefoot. They are great climbers and very at home in the dark beneath the cities. Often they will have several special powers.

BIOHAZARDS

It is not just the desperate denizens of the deserts which threaten the traveler on Waste World. Although living creatures and Panzers present considerable dangers, there are other things which can also threaten life, limb and sanity. Weather, radiation, entropic fallout, the poison sands themselves - all can reduce your life expectancy to nil.

WEATHER

The weather of the Wastes can isolate you, hurt you, even strip you to the bone. It kills thousands of unwary voyagers and can challenge even the most alert desert scout.

WATCHING THE SKIES

Watching the skies is a good way of improving your chances of staying alive in the Wastes. The cloud formations, colors and patterns can all give the alert player some hints as to what is coming. Normally the skies of Waste World are always cloudy. Huge multicolored chemical clouds cover the sky and block out the sun. Sometimes they break, allowing blazing shafts of light to fall, but mostly the skies are full of turbulence.

RULES

Normally it is up to the Narrator just when a weather hazard occurs. However, if you decide to use one, you should give your players fair warning. At the start of the day, make a survival skill roll for each player. If the roll is successful then he should give some hint as to the upcoming weather change. The character will notice a change in the air pressure, wind direction or cloud coloration, which will give him a bad feeling about the weather.

ACID RAIN

Acid rain is a result of industrial pollution and the weird climactic effects of the Armageddon Wars. It falls in massive colorful droplets which sizzle when they hit the sands and are quite capable of eating through unprotected flesh. Sometimes it reacts with the contaminants in the sand and causes chem clouds or explosions.

Acid rain has a variety of colors. Each gives off a strong pungent odor when it comes into contact with anything. Acid rain does d4 damage when it hits. There is no way of avoiding it except by taking shelter indoors, in a vehicle or under an overhanging rock. Armor protects against most acid rain. Acid rain storms are usually short, lasting for d6 minutes. They can go on for longer at the Narrator's discretion.

There is a second and fortunately more rare type of acid rain which is so potent that it can eat through armor and other forms of protection. It starts by inflicting its damage on the target's AR and once that has been reduced to zero, it affects its target's LF.

There are very few warning signs of acid rain. The clouds may move, becoming more turbulent as the rain approaches. Keen-eyed PCs may (if they make an a perception roll) spot the acid rain etching the landscape or causing small clouds to rise.

RED RAIN

Red rain is the exact color and texture of blood. It is a legacy of the use of nerve gases and neurotoxins during the Armageddon Wars. When it touches exposed flesh its victim must make a poison saving throw or he will go into an uncontrollable berserker rage for 3d6 combat rounds. During this time he will be driven mad by pain and anger and attack the nearest available target - friend or foe - with his close combat weapons or bare hands. He will be unable to use ranged weapons or martial arts. During this period he will take 1 LF damage per round but will ignore any results on the Critical Hit Table that would render him unconscious. At the end of the period of berserk rage, he will fall into a coma for d6 hours.

Red rain can be spotted by the trail of red it leaves as it approaches. Armor protects against this, provided it covers the whole body. If any part of the body is exposed red rain can take effect. Red rain showers usually last for d6 minutes.

BLACK RAIN

Black rain is also a legacy of ancient biochemical weapons. If it gets into your eyes it causes searing stinging pain and a terrible sensation of burning. Within moments a film of blackness will cross your vision and you will find yourself unable to see. Black rain works in much the same way as red rain, but its effect will be permanent blindness if the victim fails his poison saving throw. His optic nerves will be so damaged that they will need to major bionic surgery or the use of psychic powers to regenerate them. Goggles easily protect their wearer from black rain.

CHEM CLOUDS

Chem clouds resemble huge misty multicolored clouds. They hover at ground level, obscuring vision. They can spring up almost any time and anywhere. They sometimes happen as a result of the interaction of acid rain with soil contaminants. Sometimes they are the residue of ancient clouds of nerve gas which have been altered by Entropic fallout to become semi-permanent features of the landscape.

Some chem clouds have hovered over the same valleys and battle sites for centuries, at times extending hundreds of kilometers in all directions. Others creep slowly across the Wastes, engulfing anything in their path. Sometimes they spontaneously disappear. They are one of the major causes of death in the Wastes. To find out the effect of a chemical cloud, roll a d4 and consult the table below.

Chem clouds can come in two kinds. The most common type is a simple gas that affects you if you breathe it. The second type also contains a contact poison and will affect you if it touches any exposed part of your body. Roll a d6. If the result is 1-5 it is a type one chem cloud. If the result is six then it is a type two chem cloud. Chem clouds come in various strengths, at the Narrator's discretion. If you cannot decide on their potency, roll a d10. That is their poison strength.

SHATTERSTORMS

The most powerful of all storms, these can reach speeds of up to a thousand kilometers per hour, driving huge tidal waves of dust and sand before them. This abrasive dirt can strip a man to the bone in seconds. Huge shatterstorms are so potent that they can pick up huge boulders and light vehicles. Fortunately, they are relatively rare outside the deepest of deserts. In the aftermath of a shatterstorm, entire streets and buildings can be buried under 20 meters of sand. Thus, many of the ruins of ancient cities are buried and uncovered on a regular basis. All of the metrozones have high sandwalls to protect them from shatterstorms.

Shatterstorms can be divided into three types. These range in power from the least to the most potent.

A type one shatterstorm is the least powerful. It inflicts d10 damage per combat round on anyone caught in it. Visibility will be reduced to three meters. It cannot lift vehicles or people.

A type two shatterstorm inflicts d20 damage per combat round on anyone caught in it. It lifts objects weighing less than a tonne and throws them about at speeds exceeding 100 kph. Anyone not anchored to the ground will be blown along, taking crash damage as for someone crashing at that speed per combat round.

A type three shatterstorm inflicts 2d20 damage per combat round and moves objects weighing up to 10 tonnes. Anyone not anchored to the ground takes crash damage as for someone moving at (d6x100) kph per combat round.

USING WEATHER

For most Narrators, weather is mainly a very useful plot device. There is nothing like a huge shatterstorm for keeping players huddled in those old and haunted ruins, and a well-timed chem cloud can block their route home just when you have to keep them in the desert. As with most devices, the trick here is not to be too heavy-handed. You should always foreshadow it whenever possible.

Describe the shatterstorm building as a few small clouds on the horizon and then sweeping in like a towering wave of sand and dust. Give the players some time to prepare for hazards and they will usually accept them. Suddenly telling them that they are in the middle of a shatterstorm without any warning will give rise to howls of protest.

EFFECTS OF WEATHER

Generally speaking, you don't need to make any die rolls to see whether weather affects a player once it starts. It is very difficult to avoid being hit by wind or rain if you are caught in it.

RANDOM WEATHER EVENTS

Sometimes you will want to decide quickly what the weather is like. Ideally, you should consider the impact of the weather event on your scenario's script but occasionally this is not possible. In such a case you may want to simply roll a d20 and consult the Weather Event Table.

WEATHER EVENT TABLE

d20	Event
1-2	Shatterstorm
3-4	Acid rain
5-6	Red rain
7-8	Black rain
9-10	Chem cloud
11-20	Clear Weather



CHARACTER SHEET**NAME:****OCCUPATION:****METROZONE:****AGE:****IDENTITY NUMBER:****HEIGHT:****WEIGHT:****NEXT OF KIN:****PHOTOCHROMIC IMAGE****ST****DX****IN****PU****LF****MR**

(b)lf = st + 10

(b)mr = st + 4

ADVANTAGES**SPECIAL POWERS****SKILLS****EQUIPMENT****DISADVANTAGES****DESCRIPTION**

ROLEPLAYING in A SAVAGE FUTURE



In the dark future of a dying earth five warrior civilizations prepare for the final conflict. In each mighty megacity, technology is an ideology that shapes the destiny of billions. The enigmatic Machine Gods of Prometheus grant their followers the gift of bionics, and faith in total war. The ever-reincarnating samurai defend their Shogun with swords of light. The Lords of Hydra sculpt their followers into superhuman soldiers, using the terrifying power of biotechnology. The decadent nobles of Ikarus descend from their flying city in razor-winged battlesuits to prey on the lands below. The exiled aliens of Janus defend the world's last starport and pray that salvation will come from the stars.

The people of this ravaged planet fight for Drakonium, the most precious substance in the universe, the ultimate energy source. They know that without it, their cities will fall, their civilization will collapse and the poisoned deserts will claim their homes. They know they can never falter, never retreat, never stop fighting. There can be no mercy. There can only be conflict. It is all they know, and all they will ever know.

In the Waste World Roleplaying Game, you can enter this savage struggle for power and dominion. You can use the flexible design rules to create the character you want to play. You can take on the role of a cyborg ninja, a potent psyker, or fearsome alien. Using the super-fast and ultra-deadly combat system, you can fight mutant monsters and terrible robotic killing machines in a world gone completely mad. Waste World Roleplaying Game provides you with all the rules you need to get right into the action in this harsh and dangerous world.

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