

Palladium Books® Presents:

THE

RIFTER®

Your Guide to the Megaverse

Chaos Earth™ Part Two!



JOHNSON

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Violence and the Supernatural

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

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



The Rifter® Number 18

Your guide to the Palladium Megaverse®!

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Palladium Books® Presents:

THE RIFTER®

#18

Sourcebook and guide to the Palladium Megaverse®

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Based on the RPG rules, characters,
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Special Thanks to all our contributors, writers and artists. Our apologies to anybody who got accidentally left out or their name misspelled.

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Page 6 – Art

A powerful full page illustration by *Ramon Perez*. It depicts Julian the First, leader of the Juicer Uprising, in a second show of force on the western border of Tolkeen. Check out **Rifts® Aftermath** (in stores now) for the complete details.

Page 7 – From the Desk

of Kevin Siembieda

Palladium's President, CEO and Chief Game Designer, Kevin Siembieda, laments about internet piracy and how it hurts the ones you claim to love.

Page 8 – Palladium News

Rifts® Movie update (just a little tidbit), Palladium to attend Origins 2002, and the fate of the Precedence Rifts® CCG.

Page 9 – Coming Attractions

An awesome *Glitter Boy* limited edition print signed by Kevin Siembieda and artist supreme, Scott Johnson. Get 'em while you can.

Palladium's Checklist of recent releases (page 10) through August. Details and information about new releases like the *Palladium Weapon Series*, *Rifts® Aftermath*, *Phase World® Anvil Galaxy*, *The Cosmo-Knights*, *RECON® Modern Combat*, *Land of the Damned 2 & 3*, and other good stuff. And speaking of good stuff, the third *Rifts® Novel* is back in print.

Page 16 – Questions and Answers

Another big, juicy section of questions and answers ever, by Rodney Stott, Shawn Merrow and Kevin Siembieda. This issue's Q&A focuses on mutants, dogs, and the **After the Bomb® RPG**. Lots of cool stuff including Mutant Emperor Penguins, Trained Dogs, small mutants, and other mutant related things. The one question that wasn't asked is, will there be future supplements and source-material for ATB? Answer: You betcha. Helpful information and material officially *endorsed* by Palladium Books.

Artwork by Mike Wilson and Tyler Walpole.

Page 20 – Heroes Unlimited™

Expanded Unusual Characteristics Tables

Rob Morrison presents a massive table with many sub-tables for the appearance of mutants for **Heroes Unlimited™**. Includes bonuses, penalties and, sometimes, special powers or abilities. Its all fun and useful material to spruce up your game. A must read for any HU2 fans.

Illustrated by Tyler Walpole.

Page 25 – Ninjas & Superspies™ & HU2

Mysteries of Southeast Asia

Russell Brin presents a handful of strange and interesting new Martial Arts O.C.C.s suitable for use in **Ninjas & Superspies™** and/or **Heroes Unlimited™**. There is the *Dukun* sorcerer healer (not to mention a half a dozen new spells), *Stickfighter* and *Bersilat* Malaysian marital artist, plus a few delightfully disgusting *monsters*.

Art by Ramon Perez experimenting with a simpler ink and brush technique on Duo-Shade board..

Page 34 – Heroes Unlimited™/Aliens Unlimited™ and Rifts® Phase World®

Planetary Creation Guide

Daniel Denis thought the planet creation rules in the **Aliens Unlimited™ Galaxy Guide** were insufficient, so he presents a batch of his own, interesting and comprehensive creation tables and considerations as an optional way for creating worlds and entire solar systems throughout the Megaverse™. Suitable for any of Palladium's role-playing games from HU2™ and Rifts® and The Mechanoids® and any game.

Artwork by Apollo Okamura and Michael Wilson.

Page 47 – The Palladium Fantasy

Role-Playing Game®

Song Magic™

Joseph Larsen shares his ideas about the magic of music in this unique presentation on one of the many obscure mystic arts of the Palladium World. Includes the optional Song Mage O.C.C., and over 20 musical spells.

Artwork by Tyler Walpole.

Page 54 – Rifts®

Wormwood™

Like we said, we want to provide more support for all Palladium's lines and dynamic world settings.

Eric Thompson gives us a helping hand by presenting the *Symbiotic Warrior* of Wormwood, some cool powers over symbiotes, combat symbiotes, some notes and guidelines.

Some impressive artwork by Tyler Walpole.

Page 62 – Rifts®

A Long Dark Walk

Kimara Bernard's contribution this issue is part story, part optional source-material, complete with new O.C.C.s and plot ideas.

Art by the indomitable Kent Burles.

Page 68 – Rifts®

Coalition Biowarfare Division

David Liam Moran presents this very “optional” set of source-material for CS biowarfare. Its all good, well thought-out and interested, but it is NOT officially sanctioned by Kevin Siembieda and Palladium Books. Moreover, Mr. Siembieda warns that bringing in biological warfare, nuclear weapons and truly advanced nano-technology can be extremely unbalancing and destructive to campaign game settings and even entire game worlds. In real life, plagues have decimated entire countries. Use with caution.

Art by Apollo Okamura.

Page 86 – Rifts® Phase World®

Hammer of the Forge

Chapter 18: Repo Man, in James M. G. Cannon’s gripping *Phase World™* story.

Artwork by Apollo Okamura.

Page 94 – Chaos Earth™ RPG

Part Two: NEMA O.C.C.s

& The Great Cataclysm

This is the second instalment of Kevin Siembieda new vision for *Chaos Earth™*, a complete new role-playing game being developed and presented in the pages of *The Rifter®* before the final version is released as a new game in 2003.

Ever want to play in an apocalyptic setting? We mean as human civilization collapses all around you. You have. Good, here’s your chance. Enjoy.

This installment opens with *Armageddon Christmas Day Blues* to set the stage and atmosphere. It is followed by more about NEMA and NEMA Response Teams broken down by O.C.C.s like the *Chromium Guardsmen*, *Fire & Rescue*, *Para-Arcane*, and the *Silver Eagle Strike Force*. Not to mention Paranoid Vigilantes and Militia groups, and Witch-Hunters. Yeah, its starting to get good now.

Artwork by Kent Burles, Kevin Long and Mike Wilson.

The theme for issue 18

If you’re looking for a theme it probably has to be technology and genetic engineering (from germ warfare to mutants and symbiotes), with stuff on space, mutant animals, germ warfare, and the collapse of the Golden Age of Humankind. Then again, this issue has a little bit of everything, including magic and monsters.

The Cover

Scott Johnson out did himself on this issue’s cover showing a USA NEMA *Chromium Guardsman* standing brave and defiant in the carnage of the Great Cataclysm of Chaos Earth. A slightly modified version of the cover is available as big, breathtaking limited edition print signed by artist, Scott Johnson, and writer/publisher, Kevin Siembieda. Its gorgeous and you are crazy if you don’t scoop one up as soon as possible. This is Pal-

ladium’s first ever, limited Edition print so even has that additional bit of history and specialness going for it too. Oh, and while this may be the first limited edition print, it will not be the last. Scott is kicking around some ideas for another, and we’d love to hear what our loyal fans might like to see, including past covers as well as new things.

Details on how to order the print is found on page 9.

Optional and Unofficial Rules & Source Material

Please note that most of the material presented in *The Rifter®* is “unofficial” or “optional” rules and source material.

They are alternative ideas, homespun adventures and material mostly created by fellow gamers and fans like you, the reader. Things one can *elect* to include in one’s own campaign or simply enjoy reading about. They are not “official” to the main games or world settings.

As for optional tables and adventures, if they sound cool or fun, use them. If they sound funky, too high-powered or inappropriate for your game, modify them or ignore them completely.

All the material in *The Rifter®* has been included for two reasons: One, because we thought it was imaginative and fun, and two, we thought it would stimulate your imagination with fun ideas and concepts that the reader can use (if you want to), or which might inspire you to create your own wonders.

www.palladiumbooks.com — Palladium On-Line

Coming Next Issue

The Rifter™ #19

- *Chaos Earth™, Part Three: Psychic and other O.C.C.s, some monsters and more adventure and setting information and ideas.*
- *Material for Nightbane®.*
- *More material for Rifts®.*
- *With any luck, something for After the Bomb®.*
- *Material for Palladium Fantasy®.*
- *The next chapter of the Hammer of the Forge™.*
- *The latest news and developments at Palladium.*
- *Source material for the entire Palladium Megaverse®.*
- *New contributors and fun. So please join us.*

Palladium games are found in stores everywhere



From the desk of Kevin Siembieda

Product piracy on the internet is a growing problem for Palladium Books. It seems that some folks out there believe just because they “buy” one of our books they can scan it and *give it away* to anybody who would like a copy. Some automatically post the scans on the web while others trade them or offer them online, upon request.

The part that I find strangest of all is that *many* of these folks are Palladium *fans*. I find that strange because these kinds of fans are loving us to death! Providing electronic scans of our books “free” to friends or “fellow fans” hurts us by depriving Palladium Books of vital income. Money that keeps the company running and enables us to pay our employees, freelance artists and writers, the printer, utilities and many others. Ironically, these people are hurting themselves and other fans too, because blatant piracy causes loss of sales which *may* force Palladium to raise its prices and spend money on attorneys in a bid to protect our intellectual properties. This is another irony since Maryann and I struggle to keep our prices low and provide a lot of value in every product.

I grew up very poor, so I know what it’s like to scrimp and save for weeks, maybe months, to purchase a beloved book. But as hard as things were, I never *stole* books and that’s what you are effectively doing when you download scans of Palladium’s books.

Look, maybe you don’t think of “sharing” electronic copies of books as “stealing” – but it sure feels like it to us, and you *are* taking money out of Palladium’s pockets. And not just the cost of the book. Maryann spends hours and hours combating online piracy, and every time we have to involve one of our attorneys it costs us hundreds of dollars an hour!

We aren’t trying to be mean or spiteful or greedy. We’re just trying to stay in business and pay our bills. Yes, Palladium Books is very successful, but we aren’t Bill Gates, and there are lots of people who count on us for their livelihood.

Personally, I find this kind of “piracy” or “sharing” or whatever label you want to put on it, an insulting slap in the face. All of us at Palladium work very hard to produce the best products we can. We try to make every Palladium book the most fun, entertaining and attractive product possible. We spend more money on artwork than most of our competitors and we put our hearts and souls into these books, only to have some of the very people we create them for, take them, scan them and post them online where dozens, sometimes hundreds and even thousands of people can download them for free. Meanwhile, there are people who put in requests for specific wants and “fans” who will provide anything anybody asks for. Cutting out Palladium, stores and distributors who all make a living *selling* these books.

There are days when Maryann and I are so tired from long hours and busting our backs that we look at these acts of piracy and ask ourselves, why the heck are we killing ourselves like this? If people – no, some of our “own” fans – will just take it, bootleg it and give it away, what’s the point? It is more frustrating, painful and disappointing than you may think. At some point, we might just give up and move on to do something else. Then the electronic pirates and freedom of speech fanatics who think they have some god-given right to *take* intellectual proper-

ties, duplicate them and give them away, can run amok and post everything we have ever done. But you know what? There won’t be anything *new*. It will be over. They’ll have driven us away.

Yeah, I know those who engage in electronic piracy will just laugh at my diatribe. Others will call me a crybaby or greedy, and a whole lot of other stuff. Others may try to justify their actions by convincing themselves they are doing Palladium a favor. They’ll tell you how some curious fan will download a bootlegged **Rifts®** or **Fantasy RPG**, fall in love with it and run out to buy everything in the line. Yeah, it happens, except for every *one* person who does that, there are *a hundred or more* who only track down more *free* pirated scans of other Palladium products and *never* buy a darn thing. That’s the reality. Oh, and then there are the folks who defend themselves by saying they only post “out of print” books, except they have no right to do that either, and such actions can be just as damaging. **The Palladium Weapons series** was out of print for something like 12 years and now we’re bringing them back. **Beyond the Supernatural™** has been out of print and I’m bringing it back as a revised Second Edition. What if we want to renew our **Robotech®** license a year or three down the road and want to release the original books? Only they are plastered all over the web, so there is no point, and maybe we’ll decide not to take the license because of it.

I probably shouldn’t even print this editorial. I doubt it will do much good, and it will probably provoke a lot of ill will, but sometimes one just needs to blow off some steam, and I guess I’m still idealistic enough to believe that maybe *some* of the folks who read this might reconsider what they are doing and stop. Stop creating and posting such files, and others, to stop asking for and accepting them.

Personally, I wish people would not pirate and distribute any creators’ games, books or artwork. It’s like me “taking” half of your paycheck or stealing your car. I wish I had some magic wand to make them all stop. I don’t, so I vent my anger and disappointment to Maryann, the guys at the office, and in forums like this.

On the bad days, I feel tired and worn down, and feel like quitting. There’s lots of things Maryann and I could do other than role-playing. I have always said I would quit when the fun was gone, and fighting online pirates and dealing with online loudmouths on a weekly (sometimes daily) basis is *not* fun. Watching my own work and the hard work of Palladium’s artists, editors and freelance writers get “taken” and “distributed” to the world for free just adds support to the notion, “why the heck do we even bother?”

For now, at least, I still get excited when a writer like Bill or Erick or one of the guys comes up with a cool, new idea. I still get a kick from every new piece of artwork that breathes life into my writing or one of Palladium’s game worlds, and I enjoy the thrill everyone gets when they see the final product in print. Mostly, Maryann and I continue the business for the multitude of loyal and considerate fans who plop down their hard earned money to *buy* our products and keep us in business. These are the guys and gals who find wonderment and adventure in the

worlds we create and show their appreciation with the occasional kind word or simply by purchasing our products. We thank you and appreciate *you*.

Well, I've ranted long enough on this subject. Palladium has a lot of cool new products in production and on the drawing boards. We hope you buy and enjoy them. Read on to get the details.

— Kevin Siembieda, Spring 2002

Palladium News

By Kevin Siembieda (the guy who should know)

Rifts® Movie Update

All I can tell you right now is that negotiations are hot and heavy. We have made a great deal of progress and all parties seem to be very optimistic about the end results. Cross your fingers and wish us luck. If all goes well, I may have some exciting news for the next issue of **The Rifter®**.

For those of you who haven't heard about this yet, Palladium has been negotiating for a while now with a major Hollywood movie studio about a big budget **Rifts®** movie. They contacted us and we've been wheeling and dealing ever since. Unfortunately, a Hollywood deal takes a considerable amount of time, but, finally, things *appear* to be moving forward quickly now. When we know more, we will let you know about it too.

Surge Comic Properties is Palladium's New York City agent handling the negotiations and all **Rifts®** licensing. *Mark Freedman* brought Surge into prominence with his astute marketing of the **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles®** (movies, TV shows, toys, etc.). Maryann and I are also closely involved in the negotiations every step of the way.

Fan Note: Please do NOT send Palladium Books any movie scripts or film suggestions as such matters will be left in the capable hands of the film producer. Besides, we do NOT have a film deal yet! We are still engaged in negotiations that could fall through. Thanks.

Palladium Books® to attend Origins™

July 4-7 – Columbus, Ohio

No, your eyes are not deceiving you. Palladium Books was finally convinced to exhibit at Origins this year.

If you want to meet and chat with me (*Kevin Siembieda*), *Maryann Siembieda*, *Ramon Perez*, *Erick Wujcik*, and some of the other *Palladium Books* staff and freelancers, come on down!

The Palladium Booth #650, is located behind *Wizards of the Coast®* toward the back of the exhibitor's hall. There you will find our books (old and new), the new **RECON®** Modern Combat RPG, the new Glitter Boy print, original artwork, T-shirts,

water bottles, and some special promotional items and sale items for you to buy, buy, and buy!

Of course, all of us are happy to *autograph books* and chat for a little while depending on how hectic things are at the booth.

Note: Origins *may* be the only convention Palladium attends this year, so if you want to see us *this year*, Origins may be your only chance! Why only one show this year? To satisfy your insatiable demands for Palladium role-playing game products, that's why! 2002 is Palladium's most ambitious production schedule ever and we want to keep you lunatics . . . um, I mean, "fans" happy. See some of ya at the convention.

For information on how to attend Origins 2002

Check out the Origins website: www.originsgames.com

— or call (303) 635-2223

Precedence is out of business No more Rifts® Collectable Card Game?

Okay, things seem to be changing constantly at **Precedence Entertainment**, but this is what we know . . . or think we know.

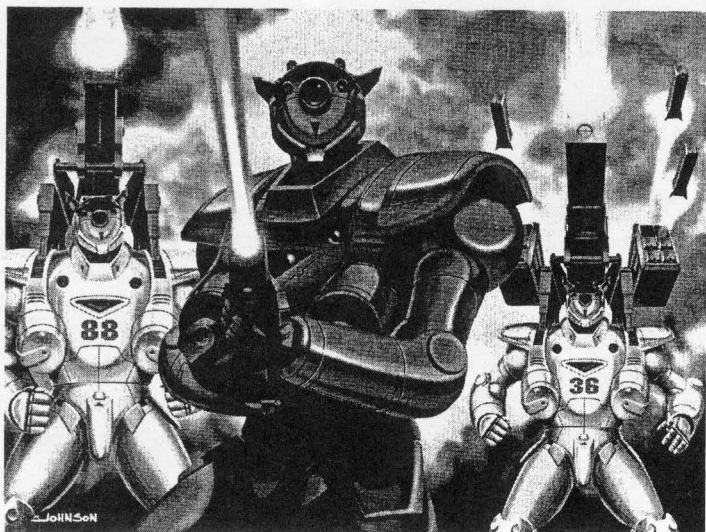
First, we were told that "Precedence is closing its doors."

Then, we were told that Precedence was being bought by a toy company.

As of this writing, it seems Precedence is up for sale, again, to the highest bidder, so I guess it may not be purchased by the toy company after all. I don't know. One of the frustrating things about Precedence is the lack of reliable communications and information. Data that does come from the company is usually startling, unclear or confusing.

How will this affect Palladium Books® & the Rifts® CCG?

1. Whether Precedence continues under new owners or in whatever manifestation, the company has lost the **Rifts® CCG** license for a number of reasons. This means Precedence can NOT make or sell any more **Rifts® CCGs**, except for a small amount we have allowed them to liquidate in the hope that said money will be used to pay the many artists who are still owed payment for their work on the card game.



Coming Attractions

Glitter Boy™ Limited Edition Print

Do you love the cover on this issue of *The Rifter*®? Would you like to own it?

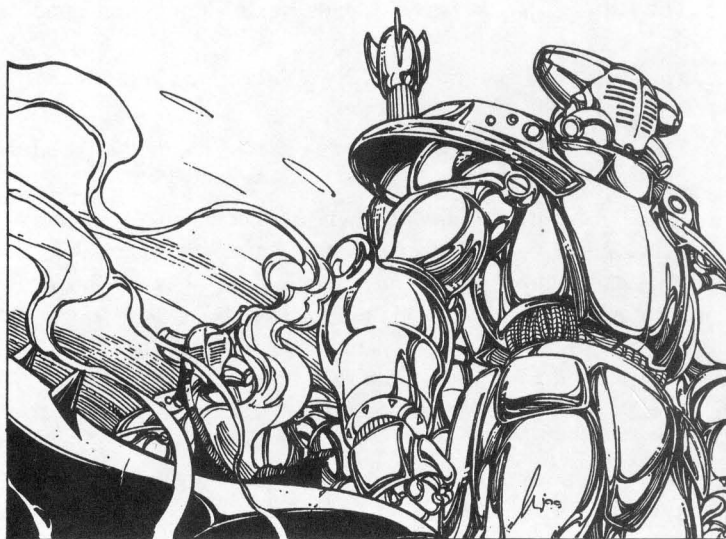
Well, now you can, as a signed, limited edition print.

When Scott Johnson turned in his cover for *The Rifter*® #18 we were blown away by the power, color and artistry of the work. When we posted it online, we got more e-mails raving about it than any cover in recent memory. That prompted us to create a limited edition print so hundreds of people can enjoy it. And sure enough, we got something in the neighborhood of 100 advance orders within the first 48 hours! So here it is, hot off the presses and available NOW!

- Limited to 700 signed and numbered copies (plus printer proofs and some "unsigned" promotional prints). High quality printing and paper.
- Image Size is a big, 20 x 28 inches.
- Hand signed by artist, *Scott Johnson* and *Rifts*® creator, *Kevin Siembieda*.
- Printed on a high quality, 100 lb., Silk paper stock.
- Suitable for framing.
- Shipped rolled in a sturdy mailing tube.
- \$20.00 US plus \$6 for postage and handling in the USA, \$10 for Canada and Foreign orders. Available while supply lasts.

Send your orders to:

Palladium Books Inc.
Dept. GB
12455 Universal Drive
Taylor, MI 48180



2. Palladium Books hopes to find a "new licensee" who is willing to *pick up* the *Rifts*® CCG, but prospects are thin and we do not hold out much hope such a deal will materialize. Palladium Books is not likely to do the game itself because . . . well, we are a role-playing game company and we'd rather stick to doing RPGs than cards.

3. The *Rifts*® CCG is probably "dead." Sorry. Believe me, nobody is more disappointed than Maryann and I, except maybe Wayne Smith, who has fallen in love with the game. Like I said, we are *looking* for a new CCG Company to take over the license, but we have no idea if anybody out there will pick up the product line or not. Interested parties should contact Palladium Books Inc. at their earliest convenience.

4. Palladium Books was NOT a partner or an investor in Precedence. We barely knew the owner at all. Consequently, its going out of business does NOT financially hurt Palladium Books in any way other than the loss of the CCG revenues.

Where it has hurt Palladium most is the *disappointment* of our fans, retailers and distributors. From what we can tell, the *Rifts*® CCG was selling quite well and most people who played the game seemed to really like it – some, like Wayne Smith, went crazy over it. Thus, it is a huge disappointment to see it flash onto the scene and then vanish without even a second booster set. We all thought the CCG game designers, Kevin Tewert and Mike Hummel, did a wonderful job capturing the look and feel of *Rifts* Earth, and I thought the card artwork, design and packaging looked really nice. It is a shame the CCG barely got off the ground before Precedence went out of business.

5. Super Sale! It is Palladium's understanding that we will be getting a ton of the unsold stock which we will be blowing out at bargain prices:

\$20 US dollars for a *box* of booster cards (original value \$72).

\$5 US dollars for a *starter deck* (original value \$12).

\$1 US dollar for a *single* booster pack.

Available only while supplies last. Hey, many stores *may* also be offering sales on the *Rifts*® cards, so be sure to ask your local store about any *Rifts*® CCG card sales. Furthermore, many stores will continue to offer the sale of rare cards.

Check out Palladium's website for news about the CCG, updates and other information: www.palladiumbooks.com

Palladium's Checklist of recent releases & products coming soon

After the Bomb® the Role-Playing Game. If you have not taken a look at this complete role-playing game, you don't know what you are missing. Over 100 mutant animals, plus mutant humans, world information and adventures by game designing guru, Erick Wujcik. \$20.95, 224 pages; completely compatible with *Heroes Unlimited*. Available now.

Palladium Fantasy RPG®: Land of the Damned One: Chaos Lands™. The Northern Mountains and the Great Rift inside the Land of the Damned. Over 200 adventure ideas! 192 pages of action, mystery, magic and demons. *Available now!*

Palladium Fantasy RPG®: Land of the Damned Two: Eternal Torment™. New types of Undead, new Monsters, world information, an evil Faerie Kingdom, the Darkest Heart, the City of Bones, and adventure ideas. Cover by Larry Elmore. Interior art by Timothy Truman, Ramon Perez and others. 192 pages. In stores *mid-May, 2002*.

Palladium Fantasy RPG®: Land of the Damned Three: The Bleakness™. The Citadel, a den of wickedness, slavery, dark magic and chaos. Warring hordes of Minotaurs, Harpies and other fearsome beasts. The final part in the Land of the Damned trilogy. 192 pages. In stores *mid-July, 2002*.

RECON® Modern Combat – A “new” role-playing game. Players role-play military and law enforcement “specialists” (CIA, FBI, DEA, Special Ops, etc.) to fight the war on drugs, terrorism, espionage, homeland security, etc. It has been a project we've been kicking around for years and is more topical now than ever before. Uses Palladium's familiar game system set in our modern world. Compatible with *Heroes Unlimited™*, *Ninjas & Superspies™* and other modern day settings. \$21.95, 200+ pages. Cover by Scott Johnson, written by Bill Coffin. *Available by the end of June.*

Rifts® “Limited Edition” Glitter Boy Print of this issue's cover art. 20x28 inch image, signed by artist Scott Johnson and Kevin Siembieda, limited to 700 signed and numbered copies. \$20.00 +\$6.00 for postage and handing (\$10 for Canada & Foreign). Mailed rolled in a sturdy tube. *Available now.*

The Rifter #17 with all the usual good stuff and the start of **Chaos Earth™**. Now get two of your buddies to start buying *The Rifter®* and we'll be all set. \$7.95 per issue. *Available now.*

The Rifter #18, part two of **Chaos Earth™** and other good stuff.

The Rifter #19, part three of **Chaos Earth™** and other good stuff. In stores *July, 2002*.

The Rifter #20, part four of **Chaos Earth™** and other good stuff. In stores *Oct. 2002*.

Rifts® Adventure Guide. A Game Master's sourcebook and reference guide with information, steps, tips and material for creating and running **Rifts®** adventures. Also rules and tables for creating organizations and information about dimensional Rifts, post-apocalyptic Earth, barbarians, villages, the 'Burbs and towns, and more than 150 adventure ideas. Written by Siembieda, Coffin and Wujcik. \$21.95 for 192 pages. *Available now.*

Rifts® Book of Magic. Hundreds of magic spells collected from World Books 1-23, including Warlock Elemental Spells, Ley Line Magic, Necromancy, Nazca Line Magic, Ocean

Magic, Herbalism, Shamanistic Magic and Fetishes, and a whole lot more. Plus, magic items and more. \$24.95 for 352 pages. *Available now.*

Rifts® Game Master Guide. A collection of vital information frequently referenced by the Game Master, including ALL skills, psionic powers, experience tables, and condensed stats on a ton of weapons, body armor, power armor, vehicles, and miscellaneous equipment, plus an index of O.C.C.s, R.C.C.s, some G.M. tips, a collection of maps and other useful data. \$24.95 for 352 pages. *Available now.*

Rifts® Coalition Wars™ series. A six book epic detailing the Siege on Tolkeen. *All are available now.*

Rifts® Aftermath. Not only the aftermath of the Siege on Tolkeen, but more than 150 pages of a *World Overview as of 109 P.A.* The latest on Archie-Three, the Coalition States, Lazlo, New Lazlo, Federation of Magic, Xiticix, Pyscape, Mexico, South America, England, Africa, Atlantis, the NGR/Triax, and other parts of the world. Adventure ideas on virtually every page. \$21.95 for 208 pages. Just shipped to distributors! In stores *NOW – April, 2002*.

Rifts® Dimension Book Five: Anvil Galaxy™. The quest for the “Cosmic Forge,” an overview of the galaxy and a look at the key aliens and civilizations that play a important role and more. \$17.95 for a 160 page book. In stores *Mid-May, 2002*.

Rifts® Dimension Book Six: The Cosmo-Knights™. A sourcebook dedicated to the mysterious super-beings known as the Cosmo-Knights. More on the Cosmic Forge too. *In stores end of July.*

Weapons and Armor: 48 pages presenting approximately 600 different weapons and 30+ suits of armor for use in *ANY* role-playing game. Each and every item is illustrated and are real historical weapons from around the world. Only \$7.95 for this amazing reference. *Available now.*

Weapons and Castles: 48 pages presenting all sorts of bow weapons, siege machines, and 15 castles, complete with basic floor plans. All are real world castles. Suitable for use in *ANY* role-playing game system. Everything is illustrated. Only \$7.95 and found in stores everywhere. *Available now.*

Weapons and Assassins: 48 pages presenting the weapons, secrets and history behind some of the most famous assassins in history, namely the Ninja of Japan and Thuggee Assassins of India. Everything is illustrated. For use with *ANY* game system. Only \$7.95 and found in stores everywhere. *June, 2002.*

Weapons and Castles of the Orient: 48 pages presenting all sorts of weapons, armor, and castles of China, Japan and the Orient, complete with basic floor plans. All are real world castles. As always, stats are such that they can be used in *ANY* role-playing game. Everything is illustrated. Only \$7.95 and found in stores everywhere. *August, 2002.*

Also Coming in 2002, but not yet scheduled with a definitive release date:

Rifts® Conversion Book One, Revised Edition (some new material); Summer

Rifts® Federation of Magic™, Revised Edition (some new material & updates)

Rifts® Africa Two (all new)
Rifts® Dragons & Gods (all new)
Rifts® Australia Two & Three (all new)
 – and maybe a few surprises ...
Palladium Fantasy RPG® Adventures in the Northern Wilderness™, 2nd Edition
Palladium Fantasy RPG®: Mysteries of Magic™
Palladium Fantasy RPG®: Wolfen War™ (with a little luck)
The Palladium Weapons Series (returns due to popular demand).
Heroes Unlimited™: Hardware Unlimited™
Heroes Unlimited™: Mutant Underground™
Heroes Unlimited™: The City of Cascade™
Heroes Unlimited™: The Atorian Empire™
New After the Bomb® sourcebooks
Beyond the Supernatural™ RPG, 2nd Edition (I promise)
Mechanoid Space™ RPG (a new epic series)
Void Runners™ RPG (something different)
 And who knows what else?
Available in stores everywhere

The Palladium Weapon Series

For use with *any* role-playing game

A series of small, 48 page, sourcebooks that present historically accurate data and information about ancient weapons from around the world.

For use with ANY game system. You heard right. The statistical information is designed and set up in such a way that it can be applied to virtually any game system that uses dice.

Much of the information in the series has been compiled in Palladium's Compendium of Weapons, Armor & Castles, but gamers continue to ask us for the "small weapon books."

One reason, I think, is that the books are small, but packed with a ton of information. Thus, a player or G.M. needs only to grab whichever book in the series he needs for reference, and he is ready to go.

Another reason is that there is simply something convenient and appealing about this size and format.

Ideal for fantasy and historical games, as well as modern games that use ancient melee weapons (knives, swords, axes, maces, ball and chain, picks, spears, pole arms, etc.).

And the price is right at \$7.95 each.

The bottom line if our fans (and gamers in general) want a product, we'll try to give it to them. So you asked for it, you got it.

The Palladium Book of Weapons & Armor – Available now

- Over 600 different weapons. Each illustrated.
- Over 30 different types of armor from different periods of time. Each illustrated.
- Historically accurate.

- For use with any game system. Some adaptation required.
- Brief description of the types and styles of ancient body armor from around the world.
- Compiled by Matthew Balent.
- Color cover by Scott Johnson.
- \$7.95 – 48 pages. Square bound, comic book-sized reference book.

Weapons & Castles – Available now

- The bow and arrow, and crossbow weapons from around the world.
- 15 different, real world castles. Each illustrated and with a *basic* floor plan.
- Section on siege weapons and layout for a castle under siege.
- Historically accurate.
- For use with any game system. Some adaptation required.
- Compiled by Matthew Balent.
- Color cover by Scott Johnson.
- \$7.95 – 48 pages. Square bound, comic book-sized reference book.

Weapons & Assassins

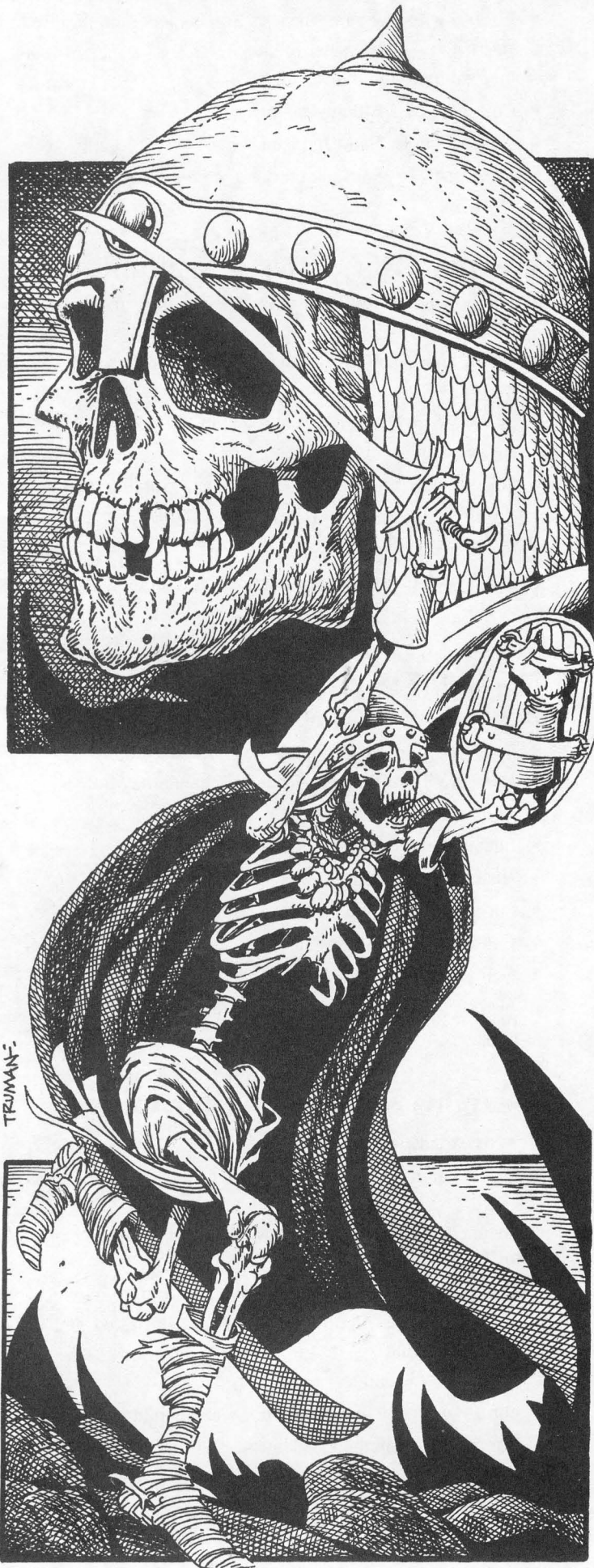
In stores the second week of June

- Assassin societies such as the Ninja and Thuggee.
- How deadly were they? What secrets did they hold?
- Their weapons and tools.
- Special equipment, armor and techniques.
- Historically accurate.
- For use with any game system. Some adaptation required.
- Compiled by Matthew Balent.
- Color cover by Scott Johnson.
- \$7.95 – 48 pages. Square bound, comic book-sized reference book.

Weapons & Castles of the Orient

In stores August

- The weapons & armor of Japan, China and the rest of the Orient.
- Spears, swords, bow and arrow, and other weapons unique to the Orient.
- A look at the Samurai, his weapons and armor.
- 15 different, real world castles. Each illustrated and with a *basic* floor plan.
- Historically accurate.
- For use with any game system. Some adaptation required.
- Compiled by Matthew Balent.
- Color cover by Scott Johnson.
- \$7.95 – 48 pages. Square bound, comic book-sized reference book.



For The PalladiumFantasy®

Adventures in the Northern Wilderness™, 2nd Edition.

Summer 2002 – probably a *July* or *August* release.

Adventures in the Northern Wilderness and **Further Adventures in the Northern Wilderness** “combined” into one big sourcebook with additional notes, tables, maps and information.

- Information on *Shadowfall*, the Wolfen capital.
- The 12 Wolfen tribes (updated).
- Expanded encounter table — offering 101 Adventures.
- Hook, Line & Sinker™ adventures.
- More history and background.
- The Northern Elfland, the ancient “Golden City.”
- Art by Burles, Wilson, Breaux, Johnson and others.
- Maps, adventure ideas and hints about the Wolfen War.
- Written by Bill Coffin, Kevin Siembieda and others.
- \$21.95 – 190+ pages.

The Land of the Damned™

The Land of the Damned is too large to cover in one book, so it will be presented as a series of three, big, “stand-alone” books that will explore and describe the various unexplored regions of this forbidding land. It will also reveal the strange creatures and beings who dominate the land, many extinct elsewhere in the world, as well as the dark powers that rule.

Land of the Damned #1:

Chaos Lands™ — Available now

- Over a dozen new monsters.
- Over a dozen new demons and another dozen Demon Lords.
- Over 200 adventure ideas! No kidding.
- The Northern Mountains and key places described.
- Historical accounts from the Tristine Chronicles, the origin of the Land of the Damned and more.
- The Great Rift canyon — a bottomless abyss that is home to legions of demons and Deevils locked in combat, and doorway to hellish infernos and alien worlds.
- Written by Bill Coffin.
- \$20.95 – 192 pages.

Land of the Damned #2:

Eternal Torment™ – May, 2002

- A land of the undead and villainy.
- The enchanted forest known as the Darkest Heart.
- New types of undead and werebeasts.
- Dark magic.
- Campaign hooks and Hook, Line and Sinker™ adventures.

- Maps and more adventure ideas.
- Cover by Larry Elmore. Art by Truman, Perez, Wilson, Breaux, Johnson and others.
- Written by Bill Coffin.
- \$21.95 – 192 pages

Land of the Damned #3:

The Bleakness – July, 2002

- Ancient Minotaur races and empires.
- Key people, monsters, and more.
- The Citadel — Fortress of pure chaos magic.
- Maps, adventure ideas and more.
- Cover by Zeleznik. Art by Burles, Wilson, Breaux, Johnson and others.
- Maps galore.
- Written by Bill Coffin.
- \$21.95 – 192 pages.



RECON® Modern Combat

A complete role-playing game

– Ships end of June, 2002

RECON® Modern Combat RPG may be the most requested Palladium role-playing game in the last decade and is in the final stages of production.

It is a new role-playing game using Palladium's familiar game system set in our modern world of international intrigue, spies, terrorism, crime and political unrest. Gamers play the men and women responsible for national security, fighting crime and keeping the homeland safe. The player characters are operatives on the front-line ferreting out and putting an end to threats and evildoers around the world.

Personally, I think this could be the *hit* of the summer.

The RECON® Modern Combat RPG will present the foundation for playing military and law enforcement agencies in their war against terrorism, drugs and crime, as well as espionage and national security operations and limited military conflicts. Military combat, Intelligence, Law Enforcement, Criminal and Civilian operatives will all be presented with corresponding skills.

Military: Various special units in the military such as Rangers, Seals, Commandos, etc., as well as mercenaries, rebels/guerillas/militias, warlords, terrorists, assassins, saboteurs and bandits and pirates.

Intelligence: Case officer, tech officer, intelligence officer, field operative, and black ops. **Law Enforcement:** Special agents/FBI/CIA, SWAT, tech expert, criminal investigator, detective, patrol cop, private eye, bounty hunter, security consultant, and security systems expert.

Criminal: Crime boss, cleaners/assassins, enforcers, thug, thief, smuggler, dealer, fence, and handlers.

Civilian: Freelance Journalists, professional adventurers, ex-patriots, and burnouts.

Future sourcebooks will go into much more detail on specific agencies, operatives and parts of the world, but this *complete game* will present everything one needs to play.

- Creation rules for anti-terrorism, espionage, intelligence and Special Ops characters.
- Our modern world and its defense and law agencies.
- Organization and special agency resources.
- Basic weapons, equipment and vehicles.
- Global overview, hot spots, adventure ideas and more.
- A complete game with everything one needs to get started.
- Art by Ramon Perez, Mike Wilson, Freddie Williams and others.
- Cover by Scott Johnson.
- Written by Bill Coffin.
- \$21.95 – 200+ pages. Ships end of June, 2002.

Mechanoid Space™

A new role-playing game

– coming Fall 2002

Development on Mechanoid Space is coming along nicely. I've been kicking around ideas and working on it here and there for almost two and a half years now, and I can hardly wait to get it out. I think the concepts, setting and avenues for adventure are so exciting that **Mechanoid Space™** could be the *Rifts®* for the next generation.

I'm not releasing a lot of new information on the book because I don't want to diminish the impact of the game when it is released. I don't want to rush it either, so while I am shooting for an August release date, more likely than not, **Mechanoid Space™** will NOT actually see print till September or October.

What follows is all I can tell you right now.

- The Mechanoids® are back with a vengeance. Their disappearance and apparent self-destruction were the means to "purge" themselves of mutations and dangerous free-thinkers. To recreate their race!
- Now they are back and have begun to purge the universe of human and humanoid "contamination" while rebuilding their empire.
- Psychics throughout the old Mechanoid space-ways are beset by grim visions and premonitions.

- Dead Mechanoids® computers on their home world spring to life. All repeat the same message: The Mechanoids have returned stronger, more numerous and more bloodthirsty than ever. Insane beings bent on sweeping the universe in a campaign to eradicate all human and humanoid life forms! That mission begins now!!
- *The Mechanoids®* redefined. Including new designs, new types and renegades.
- The secrets of the Mechanoid home world and other secrets revealed.
- The Confederacy of Planets and the many past victims of the Mechanoids unite in an intergalactic campaign to find, stop, and whenever possible, destroy the Mechanoids.
- Player characters are these intrepid heroes. Men and women from a growing multitude of races who go forth to discover new worlds, make new alliances and defend entire planets from the devouring horde that is *The Mechanoids®*.
- Genetically engineered human "Ultras."
- Human "Retros" and "ESPers."
- All the old favorite alien races and new ones join the ranks.
- I think it will be a Hit Point/S.D.C. system, perhaps with Mega-Damage conversion (let me know what you think and would like to see).
- True "World Books" will expand Mechanoid Space™ on a cosmic level, introducing new heroes, victims, enemies and adventure settings.
- I want Mechanoid Space to be truly epic and boggle the imagination.
- The initial game will be a stand-alone role-playing game; probably over 220 pages.
- Written by Kevin Siembieda. Final size and price not yet determined
- Coming in 2002. No release date has been set, but we are shooting for Fall.

RIFTS®

Rifts® Adventure Guide

Available now!

This is the latest book in Palladium's Game Master series.

The first part of the book presents insights and suggestions by Kevin Siembieda, Erick Wujcik, Bill Coffin and others on how to imagine, create and build a role-playing adventure. Where ideas come from, how to build upon them, pitfalls to avoid, and some tips and advice on running adventures are offered for one's consideration. Especially helpful for the beginner G.M.

The second half of the guide includes over 150 adventure ideas, more information about the 'Burbs, barbarians, world, dimensional Rifts, and organizations, along with G.M. "tools" such as how to come up with names, thinking big, story and

character archetypes, city/town and organization creation tables, and other useful information and ideas. Focus is on creating, running and playing Rifts® adventures. Best of all, it is a fun read.

- Over 150 adventure ideas.
- How to conceive, create and run a Rifts Adventure.
- Game Master and player advice and tips.
- Story and character archetypes.
- Tables for randomly rolling up towns and organizations.
- Tables for different types of dimensional Rifts.
- Data on the 'Burbs, barbarians and Rifts Earth.
- By Kevin Siembieda, Bill Coffin, and Erick Wujcik, with additional material by others.
- \$21.95 – 192 pages.



Rifts® Aftermath™

Available now!

The final siege on Tolkeen represents a new beginning. A chance to re-examine the world of Rifts® and to see what has happened during the War Years elsewhere, as well as ride the shock waves that follow the aftermath of the Siege on Tolkeen.

- The fate of the Tolkeen refugees.
- The Coalition occupation force and Tolkeen resistance fighters.
- Another Juicer Uprising led by Julian the First as he stares down death.

- The appearance of Larsen's Brigade.
- The return of Archie-Three.
- Splugorth colonies in Canada.
- Trouble brewing with the Federation of Magic.
- The latest on Lazlo, Psyscape and others.
- The latest with the New German Republic and the Gargoyle Empire.
- England, Africa, and other places around the globe.
- Art by Perez, Williams, Wilson, Breaux and others.
- Cover by Dave Dorman.
- Written by Kevin Siembieda.
- \$21.95 – 208 pages. In stores now!

New for Phase World® Rifts® Dimension Book Five: Anvil Galaxy™

At last, an overview of the Anvil Galaxy and key people, civilizations and worlds. More about the mysterious *Cosmic Forge* and the insanity and terror that surrounds its search.

- Overview of the galaxy.
- Legends of the Cosmic Forge.
- The search (and ensuing madness) for the Cosmic Forge.
- New alien races and planets.
- Adventure ideas and more.
- Art by Ramon Perez, Scott Johnson, Freddie Williams and others.
- Cover by John Zeleznik.
- Written by Bill Coffin.
- \$17.95 – 160 pages.

Rifts® Dimension Book 6: Phase World® – July, 2002 Cosmo-Knights™

A closer look at the mysterious space sentinels known as the Cosmo-Knights. Their secrets, their quest, and their connection to the *Cosmic Forge*.

- Overview of the Cosmo-Knights, their history and their purpose.
- More legends of the Cosmic Forge.
- More about the Three Galaxies and adventure ideas.
- New alien races and planets.
- Adventure ideas and more.
- Art by Perez, Breaux, Wilson, Williams and others.
- Cover by John Zeleznik.
- Written by Bill Coffin.
- \$17.95 – 160 pages.



Rifts® Novel #3 is back!

I almost forgot to mention that the *third novel* in the Rifts® Trilogy by Adam Chilson, *Treachous Awakenings*, is back in print. All three Chilson novels are available at stores everywhere as well as Palladium Books.

\$8.95 — 506 pages.

Coming for Rifts® later in 2002

Rifts® Conversion Book One, Revised Edition – August
 Rifts® Federation of Magic™, Revised Edition – August
 Rifts® Africa Two (all new) – Fall
 Rifts® Dragons & Gods (all new) – Fall
 Rifts® Australia Two & Three (all new) – Fall

Questions and Answers

By Rodney Stott, Shawn Merrow & Kevin Siembieda

This column has a mutant and animal bent. We'll try to answer some of the questions arising from the new release of **After the Bomb®**, as well as answering questions about mutants, and animals in general.

I would like to create a new mutant animal type for my **Heroes Unlimited™** or **After the Bomb®** Game, are there any rules for this?

The following rules by Erick Wujcik originally appeared in the **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles® RPG**, and are repeated here for those who do not have a copy of that Palladium game.

First, you've got to figure out how *big* the animal is. Most good animal reference books will list average weights and/or size. Once you've got that number, use the Growth Level Table to find the animal's Size Level.

Now, figure out how many points you need to change that animal to *Size Level 10*. If the animal is small, this is a positive number, if the animal is large, then the number may be negative. That's the basic *BIO-E number*.

The next step is to figure out what it will take to change the animal to *full human features*. For example, if the animal has Hands: None, Speech: None, Bipedal: None and Looks: None, then it will need 40 BIO-E points to get them. Add that number to the basic BIO-E.

Many animals have attribute bonuses. Subtract five BIO-E points for each attribute category (P.P., P.S., Spd., etc.) from the previous BIO-E total. The final BIO-E points are the actual total.

All Animal Natural Weapons, Human Features and Powers should have the same values and descriptions as those given in the RPGs.

For example, one of my players would like to play a *mutant penguin*, but no penguin stats are available, so using the above rules I can create a mutant penguin as follows.

Step 1: Size Level. The first thing is to look up the animal's size, and looking in a handy encyclopedia has told me that the Emperor Penguin is on average 4 feet (1.2 m) tall, and weighs about 75 pounds (33.8 kg).

Looking on the Height and Weight tables, Size Level 6 with a Medium build fits this particular type of (large) penguin.

Step 2: Base BIO-E. Now, to determine the base BIO-E for the mutant animal. Since it is Size Level 6 it would take 4 steps (20 BIO-E) to make the Emperor Penguin Size Level 10. This means the base BIO-E is 20 points.

Step 3: Human Features. Just by looking at the penguin, common sense tells you it has the following: Hands: None, Bipedal: Full, Speech: None, Looks: None. This means that 30 BIO-E is added to the Base BIO-E calculated above, giving the character a total of 50 BIO-E.

Step 4: Attribute Bonuses. Penguins are tough birds, able to really exert themselves and push themselves, so a +2 bonus to P.E. is reasonable. This reduces the base BIO-E by 5 points for a final of 45 BIO-E for the mutant Emperor Penguin.

Step 5: Powers and Abilities. Looking at the abilities of a penguin, and through the books for similar powers, a Beak, and Clawed Feet are reasonable for the birds. *Hold Breath, Leaping: Standard* and *Master Swimming* are appropriate to duplicate their underwater abilities. *Insulated Feathers* from the Duck is also appropriate, considering the conditions where they live. As for Vestigial disadvantages, *Webbed Feet* is appropriate.

Another less obvious special ability is that penguins, especially Emperor Penguins, can fast for up to three months at a time while looking after an egg. So to reflect this, I have decided to make up a *new* power for them – *Resist Hunger*. This is similar to an existing psionic power in **Heroes Unlimited™**, and I have decided to give it to the mutant penguin. It may be used at any time, and costs 10 BIO-E to take.

Penguin: Emperor Penguin

Now that we have done the basics, it is easy to come up with the following Animal Description block. Note that many other varieties of smaller penguins (about half the size) also exist; adjust them appropriately.

Original Animal Characteristics

Description: A flightless aquatic bird, generally with a black back and white front, though some varieties have other colors, including yellow. They are natural swimmers, but can only waddle on the ground.

Size Level: 6

Length: 4 feet (1.2 m) on average.

Weight: 75 pounds (33.8 kg) on average.

Build: Medium.

Mutant Changes & Costs

Total BIO-E: 45

Attribute Bonuses: +2 to P.E.

Human Features

Hands: 5 BIO-E for Partial, 10 for Full.

Biped: Automatically Full.

Speech: 5 BIO-E for Partial, 10 for Full.

Looks: 5 for Partial, 10 for Full.

Natural Weapons:

5 BIO-E for a Medium Beak (1D4 S.D.C.; not available for characters with Full Human Looks).

5 BIO-E for Clawed Feet (1D6 S.D.C.).

Mutant Animal Powers:

5 BIO-E for Hold Breath.

10 BIO-E for Resist Hunger (similar to the Psionic Power).

10 BIO-E for Master Swimmer (see Frog).

5 BIO-E for Insulating Water Repellent Feathers (see Duck).
+8 S.D.C., resistant to Cold, Rain and Snow.

5 BIO-E for Leaping: Standard.

10 BIO-E for Leaping: Rodent

Vestigial Disadvantages:

Automatically starts off with *Vestigial Wings and Tail* without any BIO-E bonuses, but without any of the usual penalties.

-10 BIO-E for taking Webbed Feet.



Can I ask the folks at Palladium to create a new breed of *Dog Boy* or *Mutant Animal* type for the game I am running? I really need a Mutant . . .
[Insert Name Here]

I am sorry but due to demands on our time we cannot provide descriptions and stats for special or new types of Dog Boys, mutants, robots weapons, magic items, superpowers or anything else of that nature. Sorry. After all, if we did that for everyone, Kevin and the rest of us would have no time to write and release any new sourcebooks. However, YOU should be able to work something up yourself. Just unleash that imagination of yours and look at examples of similar creatures or characters that already exist in our books. As for *mutant animals* check out the *After the Bomb®* RPG and the creation rules noted above.

Is there a way to improve an animal's abilities?

Yes, through breeding and training it is possible to improve a trait, or to reduce other traits. While long-term breeding will help in the long term (and that is what made the dog what it is today), training can also be used to bring out traits and abilities. The skill **Breed Dogs** can be used for the breeding and training of dogs, and with the permission of the Game Master the skill might be allowed to breed or train animals other than dogs (which may impose a penalty to this skill or count as a new skill entirely).

In training, you should pick a role for the animal, and you cannot generally train the animal in more than one specialized role, i.e. a bomb or drug sniffing dog can NOT also be an attack dog, or a seeing-eye dog for the blind, etc. Likewise, for many animals certain *breeds* will be more suited for different tasks. As for bonuses, generally the maximum bonus from training should be +1 or +2 for combat type bonuses and +10 or +15 for skill/ability bonuses. In some cases, a special skill equivalent (prowl, swim, leap, etc.) may be appropriate.

Here are some examples of specialized dog training, bonuses and skills.

Attack/Guard: This is an animal trained to stand guard, protect its master and attack on command as well as when its master is threatened. Bonuses: +1 one attack per melee round, +1 on initiative (+2 if the breed is aggressive and combat oriented to begin with, such as Pit Bulls, Mastiff, Wolf Hound, etc.), +2 to strike, and +2 to damage. Tends to be aggressive, but follows commands well.

Circus Tricks: Trained to do a small variety of tricks including leaping three times its height, jumping through hoops, walking on its hind legs, rolling cylindrical objects with its nose, playing dead, rolling over on command, barking on command, and one of the following at a 60% skill proficiency: Walk a Tight Rope, Back Flip or Pick Pockets! Bonuses: +1 to dodge; no other bonuses apply. Typically mixed breeds or Terriers.

Hunting: Basically a bloodhound that specializes in tracking/sniffing out *animals* identified by its master (via a piece of fur or meat for the scent), locating the prey and flushing the prey out in the open or up a tree so its master can shoot it. They are also typically trained to locate the downed animal after it has been shot and to point or bay so the hunter can find it. Many "hunting dogs" are trained to hunt one or two particular types of animal, i.e., game birds (ducks, geese, quail, turkey), rabbit, racoon, beaver, deer, wolves, foxes, and so on. Bonuses: +1 on initiative, +1 to damage, and the equivalent skills of *Land Navigation* 80% and *Wilderness Survival* 65%.

Pointers and setters: Another type of hunting dog, but one that uses scent, sight and stealth to *locate* prey. Rather than bark or give chase to the prey animal, the trained dog points or sits to clearly indicate the location for its master. Bonuses or Skills: +1 on initiative, +1 to M.E. and +1 to save vs psionic attack. Most are fair to good swimmers and have the skill equivalent of *Prowl* 65%.

Retrieving: The canine is trained to "fetch and retrieve" – typically used in hunting to retrieve small prey such as ducks, quail and other game birds shot down in midair. Bonuses or Skills: +1 on initiative, +2 to speed and +1 to M.E. Most are good to excellent swimmers and have the skill equivalent of *swim* 70% and *Land Navigation* 75%. Retrievers are excellent swimmers (equal to 70%).

Seeing Eye/Hearing/Helper: These are medium to large breed dogs with an even temperament and good intelligence. They are trained to "help" a human companion in any number of ways. The most famous of these dogs are "seeing eye dogs" for the blind, but they can also help the deaf, those confined to a wheel chair and so on. Bonuses: +1 to I.Q., +2 M.A. and will have one or two very specialized skills such as leading the blind.

Sniffer/Tracker: These are canines with an outstanding sense of smell and good to excellent intelligence (for a dog) to begin with. They are taught to recognize and follow a specific type of scents and will recognize it whenever it is encountered. Sniffers are trained to identify, track down and sound and alarm (bark and/or point) whenever that particular scent is detected.

Pick only one category: Explosives, drugs, cadavers (sniffs out the dead, decaying and blood scents), and bloodhound/tracker. The Bloodhound/tracker is used to locate "live" prey. They are typically given an article of soiled clothing or other source of scent to remember and immediately set about sniffing for that scent and following the trail. Bloodhounds/trackers are used to follow and find runaway slaves, fu-

gitives, people lost in the woods and other animals. **Bonuses & Skills:** +10% to the dog breed's normal sniffing and tracking capabilities and an additional +10% to follow an especially strong scents like blood. Also has the skill equivalent of *Land Navigation* 85%.

A note about swimming: All dogs and most four legged animals in general, can instinctively swim with a 40% or 50% swim proficiency. *Labradors* and *retrievers* are excellent swimmers with a 70% swimming skill, but the best of the best are *Newfoundlands* who love the water, have slightly webbed toes (really) and a swim skill of 86%.

I play *Heroes Unlimited*™, and there are no stats for “normal animals.” Can you give me stats for some normal animals like lions, etc.?

A host of normal animals can be found in *The Palladium Book of Monsters and Animals* which describes over 200 different real life animals, providing basic behaviors, attributes, abilities, and stats for a broad range of creatures.

While this book is intended for use with *The Palladium Fantasy RPG*®, it can be used in *any* Palladium game (or adapted to any other game) as a reference book for normal animals, as well as providing a interesting array of monsters to challenge heroes in most any setting.

Can you use *After the Bomb*® with *Heroes Unlimited*™, and what about the other older *After the Bomb* books?

Yes you can, and very easily. The mutant animal creation rules from *After the Bomb*® simply replace the existing mutant animal section found in the *Heroes Unlimited*™ RPG and provide a vastly improved set of mutant animal powers and abilities, as well as some new mutant animals.

Likewise you can easily import *Heroes Unlimited*™ characters into the *After the Bomb*® setting.

As for the “older” *After the Bomb*® source books, *Road Hogs* (California and Oregon), *Mutants Down Under* (Australia and Indonesia), *Mutants of the Yucatan* (Mexico and Central America), *Mutants in Avalon* (England), and *Mutants in Orbit*, they should be usable with the new edition of *After the Bomb*® with very little modification. All of these sourcebooks provide a wealth of new mutant animals, setting and adventure ideas for your campaign as well.

Why isn't *After the Bomb*® M.D.C.? And can you give me M.D.C. values for the robots and characters if converting them from S.D.C. to M.D.C.?

After the Bomb® is an S.D.C. world. While having a higher than normal technology level, the Earth of *After the Bomb*® does NOT have M.D.C. alloys and technologies, even though bio-technology and other high-tech systems were heavily developed in that world setting. No S.D.C. to M.D.C. conversions exist for *After the Bomb*®, and any mutant animal transplanted to *Rifts*® would usually be the same kind of Hit Point and S.D.C.

creature as humans, Dog Boys, and most D-Bees. Thus, they would require M.D.C. body armor to protect themselves from Mega-Damage threats.

What do you think the statistics for my dog would be in an M.D.C. setting like *Rifts*®?

There would be no change to the statistics for normal animals or most mutant animals presented in *After the Bomb*® and *Monsters and Animals* (for *Palladium Fantasy*). They remain Hit Point and S.D.C. creatures.

In *After the Bomb*®, if a character receives a primary skill from a background, and they also get the skill again from the main skills of their apprenticeship, does the character gain the skill twice?

Only if the skill is one that can be selected twice, and there is a possible reason for leaning a second set or variation.

For example, a mutant animal growing up in *Quebec* might get Literacy from their background, and also receive Literacy from their apprenticeship. In this case, it is reasonable to assume that each literacy skill is for a different language. Considering the region, that would be French and English – one as part of the character's background (probably French) and one from training under apprenticeship. Such a circumstance is often applicable.

In other cases, just ignore the repetition of the skill and assume the character's skill is of professional caliber in that area of expertise.

In *After the Bomb*®, it seems small-sized characters have negatives to attributes like I.Q., P.S., P.E. and bonuses to Speed. However under the animal descriptions they may possess a bonus or penalty to these attributes. So the real question is, are the Size Level modifications factored into the base statistic modifiers for the species, or do you apply the level after applying the species modifier?

The bonuses and penalties for Size Level are not factored into the animal's attribute bonuses listed under their description in the book. So when rolling up a mutant animal character, bonuses and penalties may come from Species, Size Level, Skills and Special Abilities.

With the Animal Ability of *Brute Strength*, does it raise the attribute involved (in this case P.S.) to the minimum level (in this case 17) if it is less than the minimum?

Yes it does raise the strength to the minimum (in this case, P.S. 17).

Does a Chimera character choose the abilities and disabilities of both its animal types, or is it restricted to just one of the animals?

It is only able to select those powers which are listed under the Chimera's description.



I believe the Hunting skill was omitted from the new *After the Bomb*® game. What are the statistics for the skill?

Hunting: The skill of killing and preparing an animal for food. **Special Bonuses:** Add the following bonuses to the appropriate skills: +2% prowl, +5% track animals, +5% skin animals, +5% wilderness survival, and +5% to cook the catch only. No base skill.

The Hunting skill falls under the *Wilderness Skill Category* and typically enhances other Wilderness skills like Trapping, Wilderness Survival, Skin and Prepare Animal Hides, etc. (all of which can also make up for the lack of a specific Hunting skill).

I don't see any way to gain more skills in *After the Bomb*®. Was this done on purpose or were the rules left out by mistake?

It was done on purpose. This is a "post apocalyptic" world setting where civilization, knowledge and training are limited and places of learning scarce especially for *mutant animals*. Consequently, skill knowledge is very limited. Characters must survive with the knowledge they have and live by their wits and mutant animal abilities.

Considering that mutant animals do have a certain amount of genetics related to humans, do they have the potential to reproduce with humans? If it is possible, what would the offspring appear as?

Mutant animals, even human-looking ones, and human beings can NOT bear offspring, nor can one diverse animals species breed with another – i.e. a mutant dog can NOT bear offspring with a mutant cat or duck or elephant because they are all different species of animals. A dog can only bear young with another dog. Likewise, some mutant animals cannot mate and bear offspring with members of their own species if there are vast differences in the mutations. There are some exceptions where the offspring produced could be considered a "mule" (sterile and infertile). For example, a horse and a donkey can interbreed, producing a mule, but mules are sterile and cannot breed at all, not even with other mules.

This is the reason why such powers as *Cell Reader*, *Cell Reader Advanced*, and technology like *Bio-Tech labs* and their EGGs are so important for mutant animal communities, as well as the reason why *Purebred communities* tend to band together and not mix with outsiders.

In all the old supplements for *After the Bomb*® (and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*®), the animals' stats seem low compared to the new *After the Bomb*®. Second, I most love playing the *Dinosauroids* and prehistoric animals from *Trans-dimensional TMNT*! The stats there, especially damages, seem way low! What I need and I hope you can help me with, is a damage value for a Dromeosaur scythe claw (2D10 seems way low compared to the new African lion 3D6+2 claws) and some other guidelines for converting dinosaur natural weapon damage.

If you wish, raising the damage done by these creatures by an extra die is reasonable, so 2D10 becomes 3D10 or 5D6, and so on. Likewise, bonuses could be bumped up one or two points where they seem most appropriate, and some of the *new* Animal Powers and Vestigial Disadvantages *may* be applicable to beef up the character, particularly things like Beastly and Crushing Strength, Claws, Predatory Burst, Natural Body Armor, and Reptile Brain (vestigial).

Would introducing a *Juicer* type modification into *Heroes Unlimited*® be too unbalancing to a campaign, or could it simply be modified into the *Experimental power* category.

It all depends on the modifications to the standard Juicer O.C.C., but there would probably be no serious unbalancing within the campaign. Such a character could easily fit in the *Experimental power category*, particularly as an Experimental Super Soldier. A "Juicer" could also fit in the Alien category as well.

In Rifts® South America Two; the natural ability for the mutant Capybara, *Time Warp*, doesn't have a time limit or range, just an area of effect. What are the missing stats?

The duration is one minute (4 melee rounds). The range is 60 feet (18.3 m) plus 10 feet (3 m) per level of experience, and can affect the character and/or one person per level of experience.

Where may I find experience point tables for the Orbital Profession O.C.C.s in *Mutants in Orbit*, page 7?

There are no experience point tables for these professions, since they are not like ordinary O.C.C.s.

If you play Rifts®, each of the Orbital Professions states what sort of Rifts® O.C.C.s that can be used to fill the profession, and you should select one of them and select skills accordingly and use that O.C.C.'s experience point table.

If you play using *After the Bomb®*, then you should use the default mutant animal experience point table as listed in the book.

I was wondering why the Flaming Panther R.C.C. has no P.P.E.

They start with the normal level of P.P.E. similar to humans (3D6 +6).

I have a very small character (actually a Gnome), what sort of mount can he ride?

Generally small characters need a small mount of equivalent size to carry them, otherwise they will have to carry climbing

ropes, or even step ladders or require other characters to help them. A Gnome can ride on the shoulder of a large (willing) companion or any number of mid-sized animals. Such small mounts may include: ponies, donkeys, goats, and even trained dogs. Basically any *domesticated* animal can be trained and used as a mount by a Gnome and other small characters such as Goblins, Kobolds, Pixies, Brownies, etc. Likewise, certain types of exotic animals and monsters may be suitable as a mount (e.g. gryphons, etc.). Tiny Druids, Beastmasters and other characters who can *control animals* can ride just about any creature that fits the character's stature.

Many small beings do not use riding animals, but may use a cart or small wagon drawn by an animals..

What can giant and other exceptionally tall or large characters ride?

Again, the character must find an animal that fits his or her large stature and can be reasonably domesticated. Large horses such as Clydesdales are appropriate for some of the taller races like Ogres and Wolfen to use as a mount, though they will appear like ponies to these large beings. Horses, camels, oxen and others may still be used as beasts of burden to pull wagons, carry loads and performing other types of work. Really tall characters and giants might need a riding animal like an *elephant* or some exotic monster or friendly dragon to ride, or rely on magic or the power of their own feet. True giants who tower 20-30 feet (6-9 m) tall typically walk, seldom able to find a riding animal suitably large enough for them.

Expanded Unusual Characteristics Table

Optional Source Material for Heroes Unlimited™

By Rob Morrison

This table expands upon the Unusual Characteristics table given under the Mutant Power Category. It includes the original unusual characteristics as well as many additions. These characteristics are unusual physical aberrations or mutations that, along with amazing powers, set mutants apart from normal humans. Mutations further reinforce the idea that this character is different from others. He is, plain and simple, a mutant.

Game Masters and players can use this optional table during character creation to add greater variety to the mutants they create. Like the other Unusual Characteristics table, this table is optional; players who want a completely normal character can skip

it. Players may roll once or multiple times (with G.M.'s approval) on the table if they want a truly strange looking character. This table, with the G.M.'s approval, can also be used to create human-like aliens or side effects for an Experiment character.

If a player rolls an Unusual Characteristic he or she feels uncomfortable playing (some of the more freakish mutations), with the G.M.'s approval, they may scrap that result and roll again. G.M.s, make sure that this isn't abused.

Some of these mutations are truly freakish and horrific, while others aren't so disgusting. However, almost universally, they are not normal human traits. If discovered, it will be obvious that the character is a mutant or freak of some kind. Some of these traits can be hidden more easily than others (odd colored

hair can be dyed, some of the odd eyes can be hidden underneath mirrored sunglasses), while others may be almost impossible to disguise. Characters with four-inch long blue hair all over their bodies (or similar obvious unusual characteristics) will have a hard time walking around in a city. They may attract a crowd of onlookers, possibly be denied service because of their appearance, and a multitude of other possible problems.

Even when fighting crime, people may assume that this character is an evil monster, and police and the public will almost always assume the worst. Such is the life of a mutant. They have amazing, superhuman powers, but those powers do not come without a price. Their unusual, inhuman characteristics may make it impossible to live a normal life. Friends, loved ones, even family, may end their relationship, disown, abandon, or even abuse or attack them. For some, this price is too much. Tragically, many mutants turn to drugs or alcohol to escape the reality of their lives; others crack under the pressure and go insane.

To use this table, roll percentile dice once to determine which table you are going to use (Unusual Forehead, etc.). Then roll again on that table to determine the unusual characteristic that you end up with.

01-10%: Unusual Forehead

01-20%: Odd Protrusion: A bony growth runs down the character's forehead. A ridge of bone or cartilage, a series of bumps, or a crest. The exact nature of the protrusion is left up to the player. Adds +1D4 damage to head-butts.

21-40%: Odd Indentation: the character has an odd indentation in his skull, most often coming in the form of a shape (oval, spherical, or triangular indentations, which go in $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ of an inch/around 1 cm), or a line running down the middle of the forehead, splitting it into two halves (about $\frac{1}{2}$ an inch/just over 1 cm deep). Which type is left up to the player.

41-60%: Small Horns: 1D4 inches (2-10 cm) long, protruding from the forehead.

61-70%: Caveman Forehead: A heavy, bulging forehead much larger than normal, giving the character an ape-like, caveman look. Despite the primitive look, the character's skull is thicker and stronger than usual. The character is -1 P.B but adds 10 to S.D.C.

71-80%: Hairy Forehead: The character's hair grows down to his eyebrows. This hair can be shaved off, which negates the physical beauty penalty. -1 to P.B.

81-90%: Horns: Two large horns (6-8 inches/15-20 cm), or one huge horn (1 $\frac{1}{2}$ feet/45 cm long) jut out from the top of the character's forehead or from the sides of his head like a bull. Damage from a gore or jab is 2D6+P.S. damage.

91-00%: Armored Plate: The character has a triceratops-like bone plate running around his forehead. The armored plate rises up a few inches over the hairline and stretches around the side of the head, ending immediately before the character's ears. The character's head has a natural A.R. of 14 (attacks against the head must roll over the A.R. to do damage), and adds 20 to S.D.C.



11-20%: Unusual Skin

01-10%: Scaly Skin: A tough, smooth, reptilian skin with small scales. Adds 30 S.D.C.

11-20%: Tough, Lumpy Skin: Add 30 to S.D.C., but reduce P.B. one point.

21-40%: Odd Skin Color:

01-10% Yellow.

11-20% Green.

21-30% Red.

31-40% Grey.

41-50% Light Blue.

51-60% Stark White.

61-70% Dark Blue.

71-80% Black (as in coal black).

81-85% Purple.

86-90% Orange.

91-95% Two odd colors.

96-00% Metallic looking (Soft and warm, but smooth and glossy like metal; gold, silver, bronze, etc.).

41-50%: Two-Toned: One light color for underbelly, neck, face and hands, and a dark one for the rest of the body. Exact colors are player's choice.

51-60%: Spotted: The character is spotted like a cheetah or jaguar. Spots are black, or the player may roll on the Odd Skin Color table for the color.

61-70%: Slippery, Slimy Skin: A slick, gooey slime covers the character's body. It makes him hard to get a hold of and most people find the texture revolting. The character is +2 to escape from holds and locks, +10% to Escape Artist.

71-80%: Leather Skin: Durable, weathered skin, that feels like leather. Looks tougher than usual, but is otherwise normal. Adds 25 to S.D.C.

81-90%: Sun-Proof Skin: This character's skin is not adversely affected by the sun's rays, and he cannot get sun burned. However, he also can't get a suntan, and his skin remains the same shade no matter how much time he spends in the sun or in a tanning booth. This character suffers half damage from light attacks (Energy Expulsion: Light, for example).

91-00%: Armored Skin: The skin is thick and tough, and covered with calluses and bony patches of armor. Provides a Natural A.R. of 12 and adds 40 to S.D.C.

21-30%: Unusual Ears

01-10%: Pointy.

11-20%: Larger than normal ears by 2 or 3 times.

21-30%: Smaller than normal, the size of a quarter or a dime.

31-40%: Alien appearance.

41-50%: No ears at all! Just two small openings.

51-60%: Pointy, Yoda-like ears, that stick out to the sides two to five inches (5-13 cm).

61-70%: Animal-like ears. The character possesses cat, dog, or rabbit-like (or another animal) ears.

71-80%: The mutant's ears are covered in 1 inch (2.5 cm) long hair.

81-90%: Ear lobes that hang 2D4 inches (5-20 cm) down.

91-00%: Ears are forward, at the character's temples.

31-40%: Unusual Hands

01-10%: Bird-like talons for hands; claw strikes do 3D6 damage.

11-20%: Extra-large hands, twice the size of normal and very strong, add 1D4 to P.S. and +6 damage from punches, -30% to Escape Artist and -10% to Palming and Pick Pockets.

21-30%: Delicate, sensitive hands with long, slender fingers. +5% to Escape Artist, Palming, Pick Pockets, and similar skills that require manual dexterity and a delicate touch.

31-40%: Large hands, about 50% larger than a human's, with an animal or monstrous appearance and large retractable claws; does 3D6 damage +P.S. bonus, if any.

41-50%: Tentacles for fingers. The tentacles are the same size and have the same level of dexterity as normal fingers, but can be bent back or to the side without harm. The tentacle fingers have no bones, and can even grow back (takes 2D4 weeks for a finger to grow back). Provides a +10% bonus to Escape Artist if the skill is taken, or a base of 30% if the skill is not taken. This bonus is only applicable when the character is trying to escape handcuffs or other things that bind his hands or arms.

51-60%: Only two or three fingers, which are thicker and stronger than normal fingers, but also less dexterous. -20% to Escape Artist and -5% to Palming, Pick Pocket, and Pick Locks. Typing and dialing a phone are also more difficult, because keyboards and keypads aren't designed for someone with two or three wide fingers. -10% to all computer related skills when using a computer interface designed for normal hands. However, the character is +10% to Climbing and +2 to P.S., effectively +10 P.S. when pulling, crushing with hands, or in a tug-of-war situation. The hands have an exceptionally strong grip.

61-70%: Extraordinarily long fingers. The hands are normal sized, but the fingers are twice as long as usual. No penalties or bonuses.

71-75%: Small, retractable claws, like a cat, in the fingers. These small claws do minimal damage; about equal to a knife (2D4 damage +P.S. damage bonus, if any). Adds a +10% bonus to the Climb skill.

76-80%: Ambidextrous. These characters can use the right and left hands with equal skill and dexterity. Bonuses: Adds one additional attack per melee, +1 to parry, +5% to the Climb skill, +5% to Escape Artist, Pick Locks, mechanical and electrical repair skills.

81-85%: Sword hands. A two-foot (0.6 m) long bone extends from each hand (between two knuckles, the back of the hand, or the underside of the wrist). This bone-sword is razor sharp and as strong as steel. The blade extends from a small opening in the skin, and when extended, the hand is paralyzed and cannot be used. The sword-hands deal 3D6 +P.S. damage, and the character is proficient in their paired use.

86-90%: Webbed fingers, like a frog. Provides double normal swimming speed and +20% to the Swimming skill.

91-95%: Featureless fingers that lack finger nails and finger prints. The skin is totally smooth.

96-00%: Club hands. The character's hands are 50% larger than usual, and encased in rock hard bone, and when he makes a fist, his hands become devastating club-like weapons. The hand is totally protected by this armored bone, and the fingers fit together to form a ball-shaped club-head. Effectively,

the hand becomes a totally solid ball, perfect for smashing and cudgeling. The hands and fingers function normally, but they are obviously not normal (the hard bone covering the hand). Damage is 4D6 +P.S. bonus, and the character is proficient in their paired use.

41-50%: Unusual Hair

Note that these mutations do not affect the character's body hair or facial hair; there is another table for that.

01-20%: Odd hair color:

01-10% Green.

11-20% Streaked with white or other color.

21-30% Light blue.

31-40% Bright, flame red.

41-50% Stark white.

51-60% Bright yellow.

61-70% Metallic silver, red, or gold.

71-80% Dark blue.

81-90% Purple.

91-00% Orange.

21-30%: Thick, bushy head of hair with about double the normal amount of hair. Grows back very quickly.

31-40%: Quadruple the normal amount of hair (both length and thickness), which naturally sticks up into large spikes. Looks like he came right from the latest anime movie or hit manga.

41-50%: Naturally spiky hair. The hair looks like it has been gelled into 3-4 inch (7-10 cm) spikes, but that is how it naturally grows, and there is little that can be done about it. The hair doesn't grow longer than 3 or 4 inches, and no amount of gel, mousse, or hair spray will get the hair to stay down.

51-60%: Ultra-long hair, that grows down to the knees. The hair grows incredibly quickly, and even a shaved head will re-grow within one day. The hair itself is normal, and can be braided and styled as usual; it just grows exceptionally long.

61-70%: Supernatural Hair. The hair itself is supernaturally strong, and cannot be cut or ripped out. A single strand of this character's hair is strong enough to hold up a five-hundred pound (225 kg) weight. The hair can only be cut with a laser, diamond-edge, Vibro-, or Kisentite blade, and ropes or braids crafted from this hair would be able to support hundreds or thousands of pounds.

71-80%: No hair on his head at all. Doesn't even have any hair follicles, so it's impossible for him to grow hair.

81-90%: Hair moves with emotions. When frightened, the character's hair hugs tightly to the head; when angry, it thrashes around wildly or bursts into a ball of spikes. Whatever the character's mood, the hair responds accordingly. If asleep or unconscious, the hair lies flat and limp, though it may move around a bit if the character is dreaming. If excited, the hair ripples and darts around quickly. The movement of the hair cannot be controlled.

91-00%: Feathers or plants grow in the place of normal hair. Plant-hair will need sunlight, and the character will have to drink extra water to support his plant-hair, or else it will die and he will go bald. Feathers will require grooming, but no extra care than normal hair. The character will also molt once or twice a year, losing all of his old feathers and growing new ones.

51-60%: Unusual Eyes

01-10%: Very small, about half the normal size.

11-20%: Round eyes.

21-30%: Very large, at least twice as big as usual.

31-40%: Odd color. Roll on the odd skin color table or pick one.

41-50%: Glowing eyes. Roll on the odd skin color table for the color of the glow.

51-60%: A pair of transparent membrane slides over the eyes, like a crocodile, which allows clear vision underwater. The membrane is water-proof, so it protects the eyes from any irritants (smoke, sand, mace, tear gas, etc.) like a pair of goggles. The character must roll a successful parry at +2 to see if he can close the membrane before an attack hits. However, smoke and chemicals like tear gas also affect breathing, so the character may suffer one half or possibly full effect, depending on the irritant.

61-65%: Possesses 1D4 extra eyes, all located somewhere on the face. +1 initiative, +1 parry.

66-70%: The character's eyes are reflective, like a mirror.

71-80%: Eye in the back of the head. A single eye is situated in the back of the character's head, allowing him to see things going on behind him. The character is impossible to sneak up on and gains +1 to initiative and +1 to dodge.

81-90%: The character's eyes can move independently of each other. The character has a wider field of vision and can focus on two things at once. Adds +2 to initiative, +2 to parry, and +1 to dodge.

91-00%: One eye. The character is a cyclops, with only one, large eye in the middle of his head. However, he can still see normally, with full depth perception.

61-70%: Unusual Mouth

01-10%: Sharp Teeth or Fangs and Powerful Jaws: Gives the character a bestial appearance. A biting attack does 2D6 damage.

11-20%: Multiple Mouths: Posses one or two extra mouths (01-50% means one extra mouth, 51-00% means two extra mouths). The character only possesses one throat and one voice box, so he cannot say different things at the same time, or swallow and talk at the same time. He can, however, talk using one mouth and keep the other closed, talk using his multiple mouths, or chew with one mouth and swallow with the other. The sight of a character with multiple mouths is so gross and unnerving that the character has an optional Horror Factor of 10 around those not used to him.

21-30%: Huge Mouth: The mouth is twice as large as usual, and takes up most of the face.

31-40%: Fixed Mouth: The character's mouth is permanently stuck in one position. A smile, a frown, or a grimace of pain; the player's choice. The character can still speak and use his mouth normally, but it is permanently fixed in the one position.

41-50%: Poison Fangs: Viper-like fangs that inject a lethal poison into victims of a successful bite. 3D6 damage direct to Hit Points. If the victims saves (a roll of 14 or higher vs lethal poison), suffers only bite damage (1D4 damage), plus 1D4 damage from the poison (to S.D.C.). The character's poison glands can create enough poison for 2D6 attacks +1 attack per level of experience, and requires 4 hours to replenish an attack worth of poison.

51-60%: Odd Tongue: Roll again. All tongues fit in the mouth normally.

01-35% The character possess a 2D6 inch (5-30 cm) long forked, snake-like tongue. The character's sense of smell is three times better than a normal human's. Provides a +10% bonus to any Tracking skills.

36-70% A normal, but 5D6 inch (12-76 cm) long tongue. The character can use this tongue to grab and even carry things if it's long enough; nothing heavier than five pounds (2.3 kg).

71-00% A sticky, extra-long (1D4+2 feet/0.9-1.8 m!), frog-like tongue. The character can launch the tongue out at high speed (80+5 mph/128+8 km per level of experience), grab something with his sticky tongue, and yank it back into his mouth in a split second (one action). This can be used to yank away an opponent's weapons (requires a roll to disarm), give a tongue punch (1D6 damage), or flick a switch. The tongue has a P.S. equal to half of the character's P.S., but it cannot be used to carry things, only grab, strike, and pull.

61-70%: Inner Mouth: A small, extendible mouth is located inside the character's mouth, in the place of a tongue. The inner-mouth extends up to one foot (0.3 m), and shoots out at high speed. The inner-mouth can chew and swallow like a normal mouth. Extending the inner-mouth into an enemy does 3D4 damage, while a bite with the mouth's small but incredibly sharp teeth deals 1D4 damage.

71-80%: Stretch Jaw: The character can unhinge his jaw, like a snake, to stretch it open three times wider than normal. The throat muscles are also very flexible, allowing a normal person to swallow something the size of an ostrich egg whole, without ill effect.

81-90%: Tusks: A pair of large, pointed tusks project from the front of the mouth. A gore or slash with these tusks deals 2D6 + P.S. damage.

91-00%: Metal Teeth: The teeth have grown in naturally, but are made of solid metal — gold, silver, steel, titanium, platinum, or any other metal the player chooses, provided it is strong and durable. The teeth cannot be knocked out and have a razor-sharp edge. Bites from this character do 4D6 damage; he essentially has a mouth full of knives, and accidentally biting his tongue, lip, or cheek might take a substantial chunk out of his flesh, and require medical attention and even stitches.

71-80%: Extreme and Unusual Body Hair

01-10%: Very Hairy all over the body; head, arms, legs, chest and back. Clearly human hair, but about three times the normal amount.

11-20%: Human hair all over the body, so thick that it resembles fur. About six times the normal amount.

21-30%: Fur; short, half inch length, covers most of the body, except face, feet, and hands.

31-40%: Fur; 1D4 inches (2-10 cm) long, covers most of the body except face, bottom of feet and palms of hands.

41-50%: Fur, half an inch or 1D4 inches long (player's choice), which covers the entire body except for the palms and the bottoms of the feet. The face is completely covered by fur.

51-60%: Odd colored fur (half an inch or 1D4 inches long), which covers the entire body except for palms and the bottoms of the feet. Roll on the unusual skin color table or the player may choose a color.

61-70%: Odd colored fur (half an inch or 1D4 inches long), which covers most of the body except face, feet, and hands. Roll on the unusual skin color table or the player may choose a color.

71-80%: Striped or spotted fur (player's choice), half an inch or 1D4 inches long. The fur covers the entire body, except for palms and bottoms of the feet. The color of the fur and its markings may be chosen or rolled randomly on the unusual skin color table.

81-90%: Odd colored body hair. Normal length and amount of hair, only it is an odd color; pick one or roll on the unusual skin color table.

91-95%: Odd colored facial hair, pick one or roll on the unusual skin color table.

96-00%: Four times the normal amount of facial hair. Grows a full beard after only twelve hours without shaving.

81-85%: Unusual Face

01-10%: Skeletal face, sunken eyes and cheeks, line lips, receding hairline; maximum P.B. is 10, adjust appropriately.

11-20%: Angelic, beautiful face, +1D6+4 to P.B.

21-30%: Animal features, long muzzle, canine teeth and can *resemble* an ape, lizard, snake, canine, feline, horse, or other animal of the player's choice.

31-40%: Insect or aquatic features, large, round, dark eyes, large mouth with no upper lip (and not much of a lower one), small or flat nose, and little or no hair on the head or face; -2 points from P.B.

41-50%: Face looks artificial, like a mask. -2 points from P.B.

51-60%: Demonic face — has small, pointed teeth, forked tongue, two mouths or a third eye, plus other odd features (pronounced forehead, odd lumps or tiny spines above eyebrows or along the jaw, etc.). -1D4 points from P.B.

61-70%: Upside down face. The eyes are where the mouth would normally be, and the mouth is where the eyes should go. The end result is a hideous freak, reduce P.B. by half. Also, roll on the random insanity table because of trauma.

71-80%: Alien head — totally bald, no eyebrows, with an oversized, dome-like cranium, small mouth, large eyes, and only two small holes for a nose. Most people will assume the character is an extraterrestrial, not a human. +1 to I.Q.

81-90%: An odd scar or birthmark that has formed an unusual design on the character's face. The shape or design is up to the player.

91-95%: Has 1D4+1 extra noses, which provide no bonuses or extra benefits.

96-00%: No facial features, except a slit for a mouth, two tiny holes for nostrils, small, narrow eyes, and button sized ears. Despite this physical deformity, the character can breathe, hear, speak, and see as well as, or even better than ever. Perfect 20/20 vision, even if the person needed eyeglasses before. Can naturally see in the infrared and ultraviolet spectrums (600 feet/183 m range). Senses of hearing and smell are much sharper; adds +2 initiative. The character can also discern between different sounds much more clearly, and is +20% to the Imitate Voices skill. On the negative side, reduce P.B. by half and roll on the random insanity table resulting from trauma.

86-90%: Unusual Eyebrows

01-20%: The character has an single eyebrow, which wraps around his head like a headband, even if the character is bald. If the character has hair, the eyebrow merges seamlessly with his hair.

21-40%: Instead of eyebrows, spikes line the character's brow.

41-60%: Odd color eyebrows, different from the rest of the character's hair. Choose a color or roll on the random skin or hair color tables.

61-80%: The character has no eyebrows at all.

81-00%: Large, heavy brow. May be hairless or not, and gives the character a look of being perpetually angry.

91-95%: Unusual Feet

01-20%: Prehensile feet! The feet greatly resemble those of a monkey or chimpanzee, with long, finger-like toes, and thumb-like big toes for grabbing and holding. The prehensile foot is not developed enough to throw an object or fire a gun with any accuracy (-6 to strike), but can easily pick up and hold or carry items (30 lbs/13.5 kg or less), press buttons, untie rope, turn doorknobs, pull levers and even play the piano (although not too well; half normal skill with hands). When barefoot, the character is +30% to Climb or Rappel (if he has no climbing skill use the 30% as a base skill proficiency), is +1 dodge, and can use his feet like hands. Please note that the use of feet to perform skills like Computer Operation or Pick Pockets suffers a skill penalty of -25%. Highly technical skills, such as Mechanics, Electronics, Robotics, Medical, Demolitions, piloting aircraft and similar, are impossible to perform with any accuracy (30% is the best possible base proficiency with feet).

21-40%: The tops of the character's feet and toes are covered in one inch (2.5 cm) long fur.

41-60%: Clawed toes. The character's toes have two inch (5 cm) long claws on them, which are helpful for slashing and climbing. Provides a +15% bonus to Climbing or Rappelling, and a slash with claws does 2D6+P.S. damage.

61-80%: The character only has two or three large toes (01-50% two toes, 51-00% three toes).

81-90%: Webbed toes, like an amphibian, enhance swimming ability. Can swim at double normal speed, and is +15% to the Swimming skill.

91-00%: The feet are extra large, double their normal size.

96-00%: Miscellaneous Mutations

01-25%: The character has grown an additional appendage, a tail. While it may be difficult to conceal, it does have some advantages. Like the prehensile tail of a monkey, it can seize and grasp. Somewhat more limited than prehensile feet, it can only be used to grasp and carry things or help climb. The tail can not be used to untie rope or string, or fire a weapon. However, it can be used to turn knobs, press buttons, and even provides an extra attack/action per melee. Such attacks should take the form of snaring an opponent's feet or hands, snatching objects or weapons, and even binding hands or strangling. It is also possible to hold a blunt object and use it as a club. Note: No hand to hand or attribute bonuses apply when striking or parrying with the tail.

Bonuses: +1 to strike and parry with the tail. The tail itself is +5 to dodge. Adds +20% to Climb when the tail is used. The tail is quite strong, able to support the character's full body weight when suspended above the ground (dangling by his tail like a monkey).

26-50%: Stocky, exceptionally broad and husky person about twice as broad as a normal human. Bonuses: Add 50 (22.5 kg) pounds to weight, +1D4 to P.S. (superhuman), and 4D4 S.D.C.

51-75%: Double Jointed. A double-jointed person has extremely limber muscles, flexible bones, can pop bones in and out of their sockets with ease, and can twist, bend, and fold themselves into normally impossible positions. These contortions enable the character to collapse the bones in his hands to easily slip out of handcuffs or manacles, temporarily and painlessly dislocate joints to wiggle out of ropes or straight jackets, slip through small openings and fit into small areas (suitcase, trunk, etc.).

The double-jointed mutant can attempt to escape any bonds once per melee round with the following chance for success:

Hands and/or feet tied with rope, handcuffed or chained: 79% chance of escape.

Hands, arms, legs and body bound with rope, chains, straps or straight jacket: 49% +1% chance to escape per level of experience. Being locked inside a room, trunk or compartment will trap/hold the double-jointed mutant. However, a jail cell or compartment with an opening may allow the character to escape.

The double-jointed mutant can also contort his body to be half its normal width from shoulder to shoulder, and flatten himself from chest to shoulder blades (back) also by half. Furthermore, the nimble fellow can curl up into a ball so small and tight that he is a mere 25% of his normal height and half his normal width. Note: The average shoulder width of a muscular, 6 foot (1.8 m) man is about 24 inches (0.6 m), so half would be about 12 inches (0.3 m).

Bonus: +2 to roll with fall or impact.

76-00%: The mutant's legs are specially designed for running and leaping. Instead of having a normal knee joint, the character's knee is similar to the rear leg of a horse or cheetah. His legs are muscular yet lightweight, making them perfect for speed. Add 2D4x10 to the Speed attribute, the character can leap 15 feet (4.6 m) long and 10 feet (3 m) high, and adds +1D6 to kick damage.

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The Mysteries of Southeast Asia

Optional Material for Ninjas & Superspies™

By Russell Brin

The following source material is equally useful for a contemporary **Ninjas & Superspies™**, **Heroes Unlimited™** or **Beyond the Supernatural®** campaign, as it is for **Rifts®**. The magical spells mentioned below can be found in **Heroes Unlimited™**, **Rifts®** or the **Palladium Fantasy RPG®**.



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Occupations of Southeast Asia

Dukun O.C.C.

Curer and Sorcerer

The Dukun (pronounced Doo-koon) is an important position in Indonesia. Dukun are the curers and sorcerers of Indonesia (particularly Java) and have a number of important abilities that help out the people who live there. They are also highly valued members of the community, and are looked up to by many.

Whenever one has a problem with the supernatural, they often seek out a Dukun. Most of the time, they can reach one through word of mouth. Often, word of a possession or a mysterious illness will bring one of these men of magic to the person. It is then that the Dukun will likely determine what is wrong and how much it will cost the person to be cured.

Most Dukun, however, are not fighters. Nor can their magic be used during combat. Most of their magic requires knowing

the name of the person and a good description (or photograph) of that individual. Being highly valued members of Javanese society, no one would ever dream of attacking a Dukun, and even most spirits tend to show a tremendous amount of respect for a local Dukun, even when the spirit is being pulled out of the body of someone they have possessed.

The average Dukun is of good alignment. Those of evil alignments will often use their skills unscrupulously and will charge extremely high fees for any gifts they give. Luckily however, such rogues are uncommon and frowned upon by other Dukun.

Dukun Requirements and Base Numbers:

Attribute Requirements: I.Q. 9 and M.E. 11.

Alignment Requirements: None.

Base S.D.C.: 20

Base Hit Points: Standard (P.E. plus 1D6).

Base Chi: P.E. plus 20.

Base P.P.E.: Unlike most spell casters, the Dukun has very little P.P.E. This is why most of his spells are rituals, and he must draw on the P.P.E. of those around him to create his magical effects. The base amount of P.P.E. is 3D6+10.

Dukun Advancement Bonuses:

1. +2 to save versus magic, +5 to save versus possession, +4 to save versus Horror Factor.
2. +1D6 to S.D.C. and +2D6 to Chi.
3. +1 to save versus Horror Factor.
4. Select one additional O.C.C. Related Skill.
5. +1 to save versus magic, add +1D6 to P.P.E.
6. Add +2D6 to Chi.
7. Select one additional O.C.C. Related Skill.
8. +2 to save versus psionics, +3 to save versus Horror Factor.
9. +1 to save versus magic, add +1D6 to Hit Points.
10. Select one additional O.C.C. Related Skill.
11. Add +2D6 to Chi.
12. +2 to save versus possession and Horror Factor, and +1D6 to P.P.E.
13. Select one additional Secondary Skill.
14. +1 to save versus magic, and add +2D6 to Chi.
15. Select one additional O.C.C. Related Skill, and +1D6 to P.P.E.

Dukun Martial Arts: The Dukun can select one non-exclusive martial art form, although most will shy away from Chinese martial arts (bad relations between Indonesia and China).

Dukun O.C.C. Skills:

- Speak and Read Indonesian (+30%)
- Two other Languages of choice (+20%).
- Running
- Fasting (+20%)
- Meditation
- Athletics (General)
- Indonesian Mythology (+20%)
- Feng Shui (Geomancy) (+15%)
- Lore: Demons and Monsters (+20%)
- Lore: Spirits (+30%)
- Writing (+10%)

Dukun O.C.C. Related Skills: Select 7 from the following list.

- Communications: Any.
- Computer: Computer Operation only.
- Cultural/Domestic: Any (+10%).

Cultural/Games: Any (+10%).

Electrical: Basic Electronics only.

Espionage: None.

Mechanical: Basic and Auto only.

Medical: None.

Military: None.

Physical: Any.

Pilot Skills, Basic: Any.

Pilot Skills, Advanced: None.

Pilot Related Skills: Any.

Science: Any.

Swindler: Any.

Technical: Any (+10%).

Temple: Any (+15%).

W.P. Ancient: Any.

W.P. Modern: Any.

Dukun O.C.C. Secondary Skills: Select four from the previous list. All Secondary Skills start at base level proficiency and don't get the benefit of the bonuses in parenthesis.

Finances: Most Dukun are comfortable when it comes to wealth, although few are terribly rich. The Dukun starts with \$15,000 for equipment and supplies, and can earn about \$100 a week selling his services as a curer and sorcerer in the various islands and nations nearby.

Special Abilities of the Dukun O.C.C.

Cure Others: Dukun are known to have the powers of curing. They can heal blindness (Cost in Chi: four), joint pain (Cost in Chi: three per joint), hair loss (Cost in Chi: one), coughs and colds (Cost in Chi: one), infections and lung problems (Cost in Chi: two). It's up to the individual G.M. to decide what other healing the Dukun is capable of, and what the Chi cost is. However, Dukun can NOT actually restore Hit Points and S.D.C.! At best, they can control blood loss and make the character more comfortable, but they cannot restore the lost damage points. The actual methods used by the Dukun will vary somewhat from practitioner to practitioner, as some will use metal needles, and others will use their hands, etc.

Exorcism: The Dukun is also capable of removing a spirit from a possessed person. Unlike the West, the spirits possessing someone in Java seldom resist being removed by the Dukun. This is mostly due to the fact that the spirits are often in awe of the Dukun and his abilities to communicate with them. Most Dukun will not harm the spirit and simply take it out and allow the spirit to once again roam free. Since Dukun are often quite resistant to possession and psionic attacks, most spirits would think twice before attacking them any way; however, the occasionally malevolent spirit will attack a Dukun if angry enough. Cost in Chi: 5

Divination: Like many similar occupations, Dukun can have prophetic visions. This is often the result of consulting spirits relating to one's deceased family, who often provide insight into what is likely to happen. As with any other method of divination, this is not 100% accurate, and should be used sparingly, as most spirits prefer both not to be bothered with such things, and not to be removed from the spirit realm for any length of time. What it does provide however, is a tool that the Dukun can use, especially if someone is going to be in great peril sometime in the near future. Cost in Chi: 8

Luck Charms: Some Dukun will occasionally bless an individual or a business for a fee (typically large). What this amounts to can be a small bonus to save against anything (i.e. \$1000 for a +1 save versus psionics or toxins), to keep away termites or spirits or demons, or over a piece of land to ensure a good harvest. These bonuses tend not to have much combat application (they can't provide combat bonuses) but to the average farmer or logger, the magic bonuses can make the difference between disaster and bounty. The cost of creating a luck charm varies. **Cost in Chi:** 4 Chi for each bonus for a saving throw, 4 Chi to keep away a specific variety of insects, 6 Chi to keep away spirits, 10 Chi to keep away a demon. The duration of the keeping away abilities is one month per level of the Dukun. It costs 20 Chi to protect an acre of land from natural disasters, and 50 Chi to make an area of land produce a good harvest, which is a yield 300% greater than anticipated.

Communicate with Spirits: Dukun can see normally invisible spirits, as well as communicate with them. It is as if the spirit is a flesh-and-blood being in their presence. Most spirits speak Indonesian, so the Dukun will often be seen as if they are talking to someone who is not present. This can be unsettling to anyone who does not know what is happening.

Spirit Combat: Dukun can not only see and talk to spirits, but if necessary, they can interact with them! Dukun engaged in combat with spirits are +3 to initiative, +4 to strike, parry, and dodge, and are +6 on all saving throws against magic and psionics leveled at them by spirits. Note however that these bonuses only apply against "spirits" and not humans, gods or demons. Since spirits are normally intangible and ethereal, they can often escape combat simply by going through a wall, something the Dukun cannot do.

Sorcery: Dukun are also known to cast spells. All of these spells however, unless otherwise noted, must be cast as rituals. As well, they cannot be used during combat.

Spells of the Dukun

Tenung (ten-un)

Range: 500 miles (800 km) per level of experience.

Duration: Until cured.

Saving Throw: Standard.

Cost: 60 P.P.E.

This ritual involves creating a half circle of food offerings, including opium and incense, while chanting for the destruction of the victim. The person being affected will suffer from vomiting, sickness and a terrible headache. The victim is -30% on any skills they have, attacks per melee are reduced by 1/3, and all combat bonuses are reduced to one!

Djengges (jen-jes)

Range: 500 miles (800 km) per level of experience.

Duration: Until cured.

Saving Throw: Standard.

Cost: 90 P.P.E.

This ritual is similar to Tenung in that it is also created via a half circle of food offerings, including opium and incense. However, it also includes nails, glass and needles. The Dukun then chants a spell and actually asks spirits to embed the items in the victim's stomach! This is very painful and traumatic for the vic-

tim. If they fail their saving throw, they must make a save versus coma or else they will be paralyzed. If the person manages to stay conscious, they will be nearly helpless: -60% on all skills, attacks per melee are reduced to one, and all combat skills are -8. The character must make a save versus coma every day at a cumulative penalty of -10%. Once the character is in a coma, they will continue to waste away; -2 Hit Points per day until it reaches zero, then -1 P.E. per day once Hit Points are depleted. If P.E. falls below zero then the victim will die. This is considered a magic curse.

Santet (san-tet)

Range: Touch.

Duration: Permanent until cured.

Saving Throw: Standard.

Cost: 15 P.P.E.

This is one of the few instant spells known by the Dukun. The Dukun must physically touch the victim and rub the victim with pepper salt while mentally reciting the spell. If the victim fails the save, then they will be inflicted with a nasty case of diarrhea. The victim has to go to the bathroom once every 1D4 hours, and will always have a 20% chance of having to go at an inappropriate time. The chances during combat are even higher: 60%. Roll once every melee. The general feelings of uneasiness and discomfort will make the character -10% on all skills, all combat bonuses are -2, and attacks per melee are reduced by one. On top of that, if the character has an "accident" during combat they are practically helpless: attacks are reduced to one and all bonuses are gone! The character won't smell too pleasant, either. This can be considered a magic curse.

Gendam (jen-dam)

Range: 500 miles (800 km) per level of the Dukun.

Duration: Until arrival.

Saving Throw: Standard.

Cost: 100 P.P.E.

This ritual involves the Dukun chanting the name of a person he wants to summon, as well as a visual identification of the person. The person will somehow feel his name being called, and provided he fails his saving throw, will feel a need to go towards the Dukun. The person won't rest until he meets the Dukun, at which point the spell is broken and the previously enchanted person is free to do what he pleases.

Sirep (si-reep)

Range: 500 miles (800 km) per level of the Dukun.

Duration: Two hours per level of the Dukun.

Saving Throw: Standard.

Cost: 45 P.P.E.

This ritual allows the Dukun to put to sleep a variety of people in a 20 foot (6.1 m) radius, roughly the size of a house. Note that the Dukun will usually do this early in the morning, so that the victims don't know that their sleep was caused unnaturally.

Naruga (nah-ruu-gah)

Range: Line of Sight.

Duration: One month per level of the Dukun.

Saving Throw: Standard.

Cost: 50 P.P.E.

This ritual enables the Dukun to implant an emotional suggestion in the victim. However, the Dukun himself cannot be the

focus of that emotional suggestion; it is between two other people. Typically, it is when the Dukun is approached by someone who wishes for someone else to feel a particular way about them (often to fall in love). If the ritual is successful, then the victim will fall under the spell of the Dukun and perceive the person as the spell warrants.



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Stickfighter O.C.C.

The Stickfighter is without a doubt one of the most fearsome sights in Southeast Asia. The simple sticks they often wield with a frightening amount of accuracy, make the fighters easily recognizable. The sticks they wield are usually only one and a half to two feet (45-61 cm) long and are often capable of being carried hidden on one's person. Stickfighters can literally be encountered anywhere, even when one does not expect to face such a person. Stickfighters are individuals, so it's up to each individual as to how any encounter will result. Most people give Stickfighters a fair bit of respect, especially when they are wielding their sticks, although even in empty hand combat they can be devastating opponents.

One does not choose to become a Stickfighter. While there are many fighters who wield sticks, they are not true Stickfighters. A master, upon hearing about a Stickfighter, will often invite that individual to train with them as an apprentice. There are usually no hard feelings if the student passes up the offer, and the exceptional students will always be welcome.

Training usually occurs in secrecy in the master's home, and is very intense; at least five hours a day of pure training, both physical conditioning and martial art combat training. Training is typically for four years, after which time the student is considered skilled enough to teach others on his own.

However, Stickfighters are generally not permitted to use their skills in public. Public displays are forbidden, as the masters don't want their skills to become public knowledge. To this end, most masters and students take a pact not to display their art nor teach anyone who doesn't agree to this pact.

Stickfighter Requirements and Base Numbers:

Attribute Requirements: P.P. 14 and P.E. 11.

Alignment Requirements: None.

Base S.D.C.: 30

Base Hit Points: Standard (P.E. +1D6 per level of experience)

Base Chi: Standard (P.E.).

Base P.P.E.: 3D6

Stickfighter Advancement Bonuses:

This is in addition to bonuses gained from martial arts combat training.

1. +1 attack per melee when wielding sticks, +3 on initiative when using sticks, +2 to strike and parry with sticks, +2 to disarm with sticks, KO/Stun with sticks on a natural 19 or 20.
2. Add +2D6 S.D.C., +2 to save versus pain, +1 attack per melee when wielding sticks, +2 to strike and parry when using sticks.
3. Add one O.C.C. Related Skill, +2 to disarm with sticks, Critical Strike on a natural 19 or 20, +2 to save versus Horror Factor.
4. Double Damage when using sticks (2D6), KO/Stun with sticks on a natural 18-20.
5. Add +2D6 S.D.C., +2 initiative when using sticks.
6. +1 attack per melee when wielding sticks, +2 to disarm with sticks, add one O.C.C. Related Skill.
7. +2 to save versus pain, +2 to save versus Horror Factor, +2 to strike and parry when using sticks.
8. +2 to save versus Horror Factor, +1D6 to Hit Points.
9. +1 one attack per melee when wielding sticks, add +2D6 to S.D.C.
10. Critical Strike with sticks on a natural 17-20, KO/Stun with sticks on a natural 17-20.
11. +2 to disarm with sticks, add one O.C.C. Related Skill.
12. +2 to strike and parry with sticks, Death Blow with sticks on a natural 19 or 20!
13. +1 attack per melee when wielding sticks.
14. Triple damage when using sticks (3D6).
15. Add one Secondary Skill.

Stickfighter Martial Arts. The character normally gets Arnis/Silat or Bersilat as his main martial art (see **The Rifter**® #7 for Arnis/Silat). However, the character can use any martial art that provides Weapon Katas. The restriction is that one martial art power must be dropped, but the character gains the special O.C.C. Abilities of the Stickfighter.

Stickfighter O.C.C. Skills:

Running	
Prowl (+15%)	
Climbing (+15%)	
Gymnastics	Cooking (+10%)
Wilderness Survival (+10%)	Land Navigation (+5%)

Stickfighter O.C.C. Related Skills: Select six from the following list:

Communication: Basic Radio only.
Computer: Computer Operation only.
Cultural/Domestic: Any (+10%).
Cultural Games: Any (+5%).
Electrical: Basic only.
Espionage: Any.
Mechanical: None.
Medical: First Aid or Paramedic only.
Military: None.
Physical: Any (+10%).
Pilot Skills, Basic: Any.
Pilot Skills, Advanced: None.
Pilot Related Skills: None.
Science: Any.
Swindler: None.
Technical: Any.
Temple: Any.
W.P. Ancient Chinese: Any.
W.P. Modern: None.
W.P. Military: None.

Stickfighter Secondary Skills: Select any four from the previous list.

Special O.C.C. Powers and Mastery:

Pain Strike: The character can choose to hit an opponent with a painful damaging strike. The attacker must roll a 12 or higher to strike, and the attack can be parried or dodged normally. This attack **MUST** be made with a stick. The victim must roll a save versus pain or suffers -3 to strike and parry for the rest of the melee and the following melee. The attack does normal damage.

Paralysis Strike: This is a strike for a nerve in the victim with the stick, with the goal being to render a part of the victim's body paralyzed. A strike roll of 12 or better is required, and the victim can parry or dodge normally. The victim if struck gets to roll a save vs a target of 13, P.E. bonuses included. On a successful save there is no additional effect (beyond the normal damage). If the victim fails the save, then the body part that was struck is paralyzed for 2D6 minutes! Normal damage only is inflicted to the victim.

Stickfighter Finances: The character is far from wealthy but has enough for a comfortable living. **Cash:** Has a small apartment and personal possessions. Typically has \$800 in savings to spend on weapons and other personal items. **Income:** Has a low-paying job typically that brings in \$150 to \$190 a week. Can earn a substantial income as a fighter and bouncer, although most tend to have non-combat oriented professions.

Bersilat

One of the oldest and most secretive of the Malaysian martial arts, Bersilat is practiced by a wide variety of different people in the nation of Malaysia. The art itself has been heavily influenced by the many different ethnic conflicts that have plagued Malaysia over the centuries.

The teachers of Bersilat prefer to remain in secrecy and will only train one student at a time. The teacher will watch the student for a probationary period to determine if the student is worthy of being taught the art. After the student has proven himself

or herself worthy, the training begins. Traditional Bersilat is very demanding, but the student is rewarded with many skills and martial art knowledge.

In combat, most masters of Bersilat will throw a few deft punches and kicks to see the skill of his or her opponent. When the opponent attacks, the master of Bersilat will counter with a takedown, then a hold and release of their opponent, then attack again with punches and kicks. After the takedown they will crouch, cover, and take the "on-guard" position of their particular form.

One of the more deadly moves mastered in Bersilat is the "snap-throw." The idea behind the move is to throw an opponent but hold the thrown person by a body part as his momentum carries him over. This devastating move can cripple an opponent if done right.

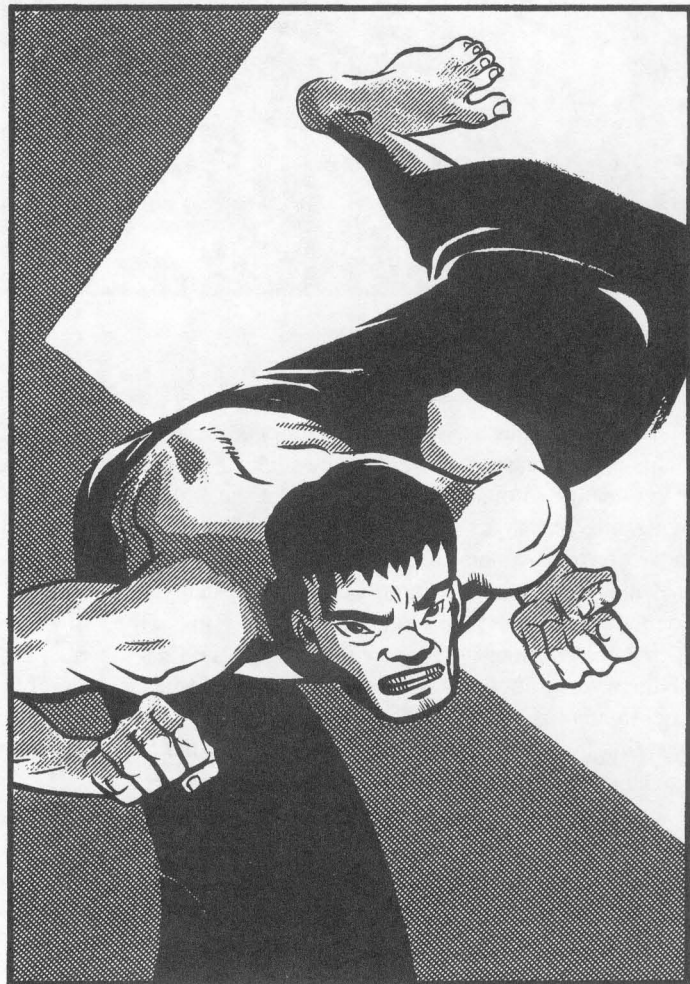
Entrance Requirements: Must be a good or Aberrant alignment. Attribute requirements are P.P. 11 and P.E. 11.

Costume: None.

Stance: A crouched, covered position with hands covering the face and the knees bent slightly.

Character Bonuses:

Add +10 to Chi.
Add +2 to P.S.
Add +1 to P.P.
Add +2 to P.E.
Add +10 to S.D.C.



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Combat Skills:

Attacks Per Melee: Two.

Escape Moves: Roll with Punch/Fall/Impact, Maintain Balance.

Basic Defensive Moves: Dodge, Parry, Automatic Parry.

Advanced Defenses: Combination Parry/Attack, Disarm, Circular Parry.

Hand Attacks: Strike (punch), Palm Strike, Fore-Knuckle Fist.

Basic Foot Attacks: Kick Attack, Snap Kick, Crescent Kick.

Special Attacks: Knee, Elbow, Forearm, Body Flip/Throw.

Holds/Locks: Arm Hold, Leg Hold, Body Hold, Neck Hold, Snap-Throw (SPECIAL! The character, after securing a hold, can throw their opponent. If the throw is successful the victim must make a save versus pain or suffer a dislocated joint. A dislocated shoulder or elbow will reduce combat bonuses by -4. If a hip or knee is dislocated, speed is reduced to 10% and dodging is impossible).

Weapon Katas: W.P. Knife, W.P. Short Blunt.

Modifiers to Attack: Pull Punch, Knockout/Stun, Critical Strike, Critical Strike from Behind.

Skills Included in Training:

Martial Art Abilities and Powers: Select three abilities from among Martial Art Techniques, Body Hardening, and Specialty Katas (including Chi Katas and Weapon Katas).

Languages: Malay.

Survival: Fasting and Jungle Survival.

Philosophical Training: None.

Level Advancement Bonuses

1. Critical Strike on a natural 20 and from behind, +1 to strike, +2 to parry/dodge.
2. +2 to any hold.
3. +1 to strike, +1 attack per melee.
4. +2 to initiative, auto body flip/throw.
5. Add one more Weapon Kata (any).
6. +2 to disarm, +2 to dodge.
7. Add one more martial art power from Martial Art Techniques, Body Hardening, or Katas.
8. +1 attack per melee, +2 to parry, +2 to holds.
9. Gains axe kick and leap attack.
10. +2 to initiative, +2 to parry and dodge.
11. Critical Strike on 19 or 20, auto disarm.
12. +2 to holds and throws, +1 attack per melee.
13. Add one more martial art power from Martial Art Techniques, Body Hardening, or Katas.
14. Add one more Weapon Kata (any).
15. +2 to initiative, +2 to strike, Death Blow on a natural 20.

Why Study Bersilat?

A good form with a balance of offensive and defensive moves. Not as flashy as some arts, but meant to handle a large variety of combat situations. The snap-throw is a particularly devastating hold and a skilled Bersilat artist can end a fight as quickly as necessary.

Monsters of Southeast Asia

Panapati

One of many demons that plagues Indonesia, the Panapati are a terror to the inhabitants. The horrible creature resembles a human, however it walks on its hands and its head is located between its legs. It can be either male or female, although male seems to be more common.

The hideous beast causes destruction wherever it treads. Its motivation and origins are unknown; all that is known is that it won't stop killing until it dies. These demons are quite rare and usually work independently, although they may work with evil witches and summoners.

Alignment: Miscreant or Diabolic.

Attributes: I.Q. 2D4 (low human), M.E. 2D6, M.A. 1D6, P.S. 4D6, P.P. 3D6+6, P.E. 4D6+4, P.B. 1D6, Spd. 2D6 (fairly fast for walking on one's hands).

Hit Points: P.E. number +6D6.

S.D.C.: 3D6+30 (2D6x10+20 M.D.C. on Rifts Earth).

Horror Factor: 14

P.P.E.: 1D4x10

Chi: Standard (P.E.).

Natural Abilities: Nightvision 90 feet (27.4 m), keen day vision (same as human), see the invisible, swim 40%, climb 40/30%, impervious to fire and heat (magic and M.D. fire do half damage). Also possesses fire breath: 30 foot (9.1 m) range, 4D6 damage, 60% chance of setting combustibles on fire. Can use fire breath up to four times per melee.

Psionics: None.

Magic: None.

Combat: Four attacks per melee. Bite does 2D6 S.D.C., Kick does 3D6 S.D.C. plus any P.S. damage bonus, or by fire breath.

Bonuses: In addition to attribute bonuses, +2 on initiative, +4 to save versus Horror Factor, +6 to save versus psionics and poison. +3 to strike with fire breath.

Skills: While not stupid, Panapati generally don't utilize human skills. They can figure out how to open a door, push a button, and similar basic things, but anything more advanced is beyond them.

Appearance: A human (usually Asian) with a head in the groin and nothing where the neck is normally located. The creature walks on its hands even though it possesses human legs.

Weapons: Generally doesn't use any.

Sundel Bolong

Demon Prostitute

One of the most frightening demons in Southeast Asia is the Sundel Bolong. They appear as beautiful women of the night willing to cater to a man's every desire. However, they are not what they seem. The most obvious sign that they are not human is that they have a hole in their back! The hole does not go through their entire body, however, and they keep their hair long and straight to cover up their deformity.

Once a Sundel Bolong gets a man under her mesmerism, she will usually make the man believe he will have the time of his

life. Indeed, he is likely never to forget the experience because the demoness will attempt to castrate him with her claws at the first opportunity!

These creatures can be found anywhere in Southeast Asia but are most common in the mega-urban regions of Bangkok, Manila, Kuala Lumpur, and Indonesia.

Alignment: Miscreant or Diabolic.

Attributes: I.Q. 3D6, M.E. 3D6, M.A. 2D6, P.S. 4D6, P.P. 4D6+6, P.E. 3D6, P.B. 4D6+6 (minimum 19), Spd. 3D6+6. Supernatural Strength and Endurance.

Hit Points: P.E. number +4D6.

S.D.C.: 5D6+40 (2D6x10+80 M.D.C. on Rifts Earth).

Horror Factor: 15

P.P.E.: 3D6+10

Chi: Standard (P.E.).

Natural Abilities: Nightvision 400 feet (122 m), keen day vision (same as human), see the invisible, swim 80%, climb 70/60%, Prowl 85%, Bio-Regenerates 1D6 Hit Points/S.D.C. per minute (3D6 M.D.C. on Rifts Earth), and can retract claws. Doesn't need food, water, or air to survive. Also has the special power of Mesmerism.

Mesmerism: Looking into the eyes of a Sundel Bolong is dangerous. Any man who does so risks falling under her spell (women are unaffected). A save versus psionics is required. On a failed save, the male will be unable to attack the demon and will follow her wherever she asks, and will even fight to protect her. The character will not commit suicide, nor fight to the death. If the demoness attacks the character, the spell is instantly broken.

Psionics: Four sensitive abilities of choice. **I.S.P.:** 5D6

Magic: None.

Combat: Four attacks per melee. Bite does 2D6 S.D.C., Kick does 3D6 S.D.C. plus any P.S. damage bonus, or by retractable claws: 2D6 S.D.C. damage.

Bonuses: In addition to attribute bonuses, +4 on initiative, +6 to save versus Horror Factor, +2 to strike, parry, and dodge, +3 to save versus psionics, magic, and mind control. Impervious to possession and poison.

Skills: Select 10 from Technical (except Computer skills), Domestic, and Swindler.

Appearance: Beautiful women (85% are Asian) with a hole in their back covered by long hair. To most they are indistinguishable from human.

Weapons: Generally doesn't use any. However, they will use whatever is present if they need to.

Manananggal

One of the most feared and hated creatures in the Philippines is the monster known as the Manananggal, which is occasionally referred to as the Filipino Vampire. The creature appears as a normal human female (all are female) during the day, but during the night undergoes a transformation.

The transformation can be either the head detaching from the body (65%) or the upper torso detaching (35%). The creature sprouts wings from either its head or back as it flies to feed. Its favorite meal is the excrements of pregnant women, although it will feed on the internal organs of anyone.

The creature will float, invisible, near the roof of a building, scouting out a victim. When it attacks, it will use its long tongue

to penetrate the victim's body, and it will continue its gruesome assault as it devours the internal organs of its victim. Only during the feeding will it truly become visible and vulnerable to attack.

Although called the Filipino Vampire, it shares little in common with true vampires. It doesn't feed on blood, isn't vulnerable to garlic, water, silver, or its native soil. However, like a true vampire it is a nocturnal predator and can be kept at bay with magic circles and holy symbols.

The biggest weakness of the creature is that the top part needs to reattach before dawn in order to survive. If salt is placed on the lower body part, the creature will howl in pain when it tries to reattach, will be paralyzed, and will crumble to dust when the sun rises.

The creation process of these monstrosities is unknown. They aren't created through the normal slow-kill process of other vampires, and they function as normal humans during the day. It is possible that they are simply a different species, indigenous to some distant alien dimension.

Alignment: Anarchist, Miscreant or Diabolic.

Attributes: Normal human during the day. At night the following take effect: I.Q. 3D6, M.E. 4D6, M.A. 1D6, P.S. 4D6+6, P.P. 4D6+6, P.E. 3D6+2, P.B. 2D4, Spd. 5D6 flying at night. Supernatural Strength.

Hit Points: P.E. number +1D6x10.

S.D.C.: 1D6x10+20 (4D6x10+20 M.D.C. on Rifts Earth).

Horror Factor: 16



P.P.E.: 2D6x10

Chi: Standard (P.E.).

Natural Abilities: Nightvision 400 feet (122 m), see the invisible, turn invisible at will, track by smell 60%, Bio-Regenerates 2D6 S.D.C./Hit Points once per minute (1D4x10 M.D.C. per minute on Rifts Earth).

Psionics: None.

Magic: Limited natural powers. Can be used in the place of an attack. Each is equivalent to the spell of the same name. Befuddle, See Aura, Energy Bolt, Blind, Fear, Paralysis: Lesser.

Combat: Three attacks per melee if the head only, five attacks per melee if the head and upper torso. Bite does 3D6 S.D.C., claws do 3D6 +P.S. damage bonus if applicable, kicks are not applicable. Prehensile tongue can not be used in combat.

Bonuses: In addition to attribute bonuses, +4 on initiative, +8 to save versus Horror Factor, +6 to save versus psionics and magic, +2 to automatic dodge (applicable to head only), +2 to strike, impervious to possession, poison, and mind control of any kind.

Skills: Detect Ambush 70%, Tracking 80%, Prowl 75%; select three additional skills from the Espionage category.

Appearance: Appears as the head or upper torso of a human female (95% are Filipino) but with large oversized fangs, red, hate-filled eyes, and a wicked expression. During the day they appear as a normal human (even their aura will register nothing unusual). Note that See Aura or Sense Evil will reveal nothing out of the ordinary. Only Empathy *may* reveal something is amiss. These monsters ARE aware that they transform, but their special nature allows them to appear as completely normal humans during the day.

Weapons: Generally doesn't use any.

Orang Minyak

Many stories exist of these bizarre and vile creatures in Indonesia. Unnaturally black in color, they secrete a strange greasy substance. They strike brutally and quickly, and even a rumor of an attack is enough to frighten most.

They have a number of abilities which make them so powerful and feared. They are able to use a form of selective invisibility, and paralyze a victim to make her unable to fight back. Even more amazing is that they are able to create an illusion that the victim is sleeping peacefully!

The origins of the Orang Minyak are also unknown. It is popular belief that these enigmatic beings are other-dimensional in nature, although that has never been proven. Another belief is that they are somehow normal humans who are corrupted through magic and witchcraft. None of the Orang Minyak spotted have ever confessed to their origins, so the mystery continues to this day.

These creatures thankfully are also comparatively rare. They prefer to work in large cities with areas of high concentrations of females (their preferred victims), such as women's shelters and university campuses. Although most numerous in Indonesia, there a chance of encountering one of these beings anywhere in the world.

Alignment: Miscreant or Diabolic.

Attributes: I.Q. 2D6 (effectively a supernatural predator), M.E. 4D6, M.A. 1D6, P.S. 5D6, P.P. 4D6, P.E. 4D6+4, P.B. 2D6, Spd. 4D6. Supernatural Strength and Endurance.

Hit Points: P.E. number +2D4x10.

S.D.C.: 1D6x10+40 (3D6x10+40 M.D.C. on Rifts Earth).

Horror Factor: 15

P.P.E.: 2D6x10

Chi: Standard (P.E.).

Natural Abilities: Nightvision 100 feet (30.5 m), see the invisible, turn invisible, Shadow Meld (same as the spell), Bio-Regenerates 1D6 S.D.C./Hit Points once per minute (3D6 M.D.C. per minute on Rifts Earth). Also possessed the following special abilities:

Paralysis: The substance secreted by the Minyak is a powerful toxin that can paralyze the victim. The person who comes in contact with this greasy substance must make a save versus non-lethal poison or be paralyzed for 4D6 minutes. Normal save bonuses apply.

Invisibility: The creature can choose who it wants to appear to and who cannot see him. This is a constant ability, and of course only works against those who can not see the invisible. Anyone who possesses that ability can see and fight him as normal.

Illusions: The Orang Minyak can create the illusion that its victim is sleeping peacefully. No save is normally made for this illusion, unless someone is psychic or feels a need to further investigate. Ordinary humans make a normal save versus magic at -3. Mages and psychics make saves as normal. Psychic sensitives, however, get a +3 bonus to save against this.

Psionics: None.



Magic: Limited natural powers. Can be used in the place of an attack. Each is equivalent to the spell of the same name. Befuddle, Fear, See Aura, Fly as the Eagle, Globe of Silence.

Combat: Five attacks per melee. Bite does 2D6 S.D.C., punch or kick does 4D6+P.S. damage bonus if applicable. Also can do a body throw that does 2D6 damage.

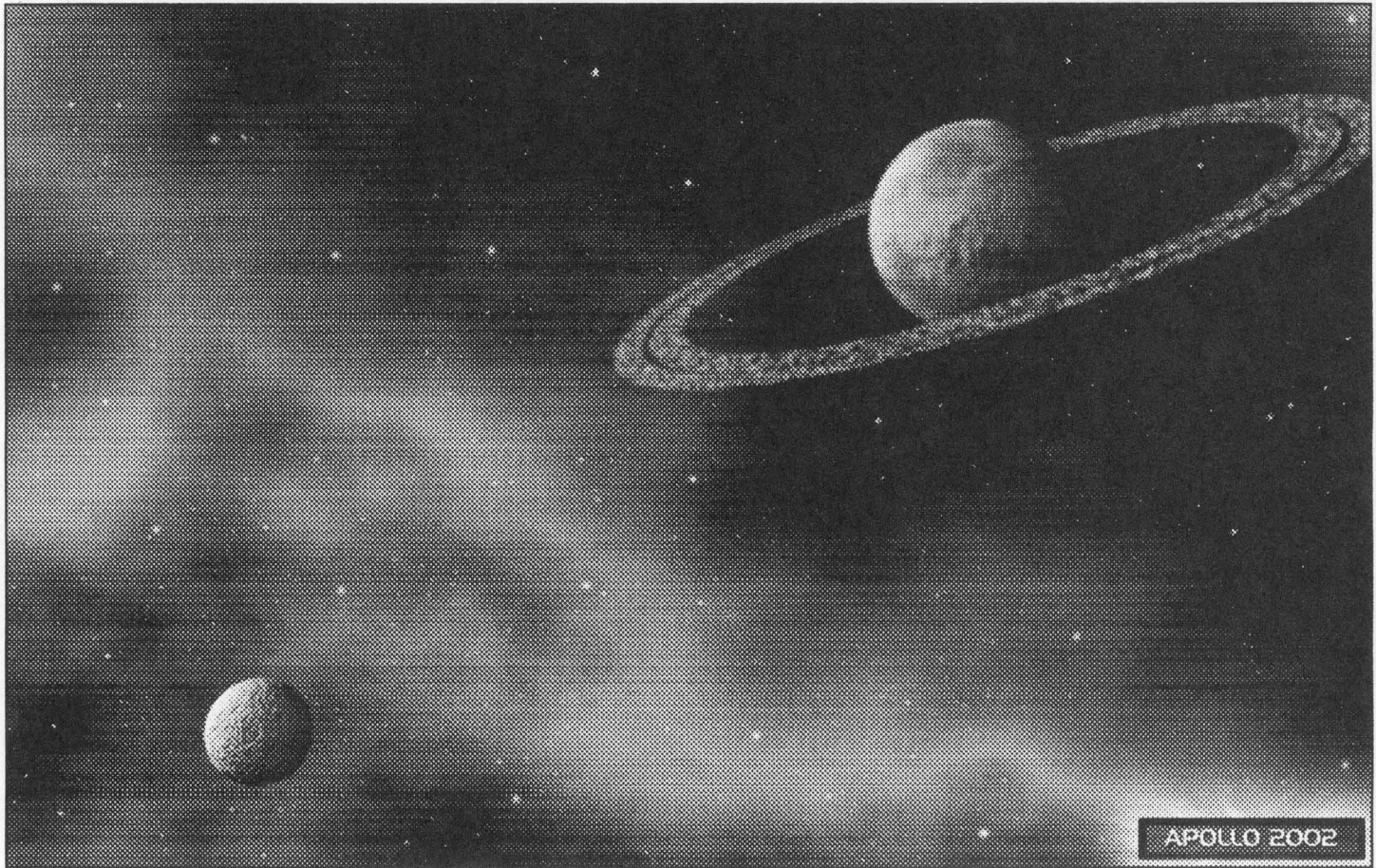
Bonuses: In addition to attribute bonuses, +3 on initiative, +5 to save versus Horror Factor, +2 to save versus psionics and

magic, +3 to strike, impervious to possession, poison, and mind control of any kind.

Skills: Detect Ambush 70%, Tracking 80%, Prowl 75%, Climb 80/70%, Swim 85%, plus one Espionage skill of choice.

Appearance: A normal human, except the skin is unnaturally black and they secrete a strange greasy substance.

Weapons: Generally doesn't use any, but will use any that are convenient and if they are in need of one.



Planetary Creation Guide

Optional Rules for Aliens Unlimited™ and Phase World®

By Daniel Denis

This system has been put together to permit a G.M. to quickly build a world. Although this guide was made with the Phase World setting in mind, it can be used for any space setting such as Aliens Unlimited, the Mechanoids, or any other space-based campaign. The rules can also be used to create dimensions or pocket dimensions (see *Part 4*).

To keep in the gaming setting and for simplification, the actual physics behind the stars, the planets, the suns, and the cosmos are NOT explained. Do not take this guide as the gospel of what is out there. The goal of this is to stimulate one's imagination so the G.M. can introduce the player characters into new,

exotic, and bizarre lands. If you don't like something, change it. Remember, it's all in good fun!

This guide is divided into parts. Each part describes your world at different degrees, from the star to moons. A note to the G.M., you do not need to explain a world in extreme detail. This being said, you may create a world using one part, two or three rolls, or a few parts here and there. You don't need to roll up each individual planet. Let's face it, too much information turns the game into a classroom. Enjoy...

A Few Terms

The following is a list of definitions to clarify the terminology used in this guide.

Star system: A star system is a cluster of solar systems and stars within "close" proximity.

Star: A burning ball of gas, i.e. the sun. Stars and suns are basically the same, but for the sake of this guide, stars hold no planets while suns do. Although stars have no planets, the space around them is *not* empty. It possesses hundreds upon hundreds of comets, asteroids or small planetoids.

Solar system: A solar system is basically a star (called a sun) with multiple masses (planets) circling around it.

Planetary system: A planet with its moons.

Nebula: A giant gas cloud in space.

Dead star: A star that did not ignite to produce light or which has burnt out its material. It is now just a very large mass in space.

Black hole: A mass in space whose gravitational field is so strong that light cannot escape it.

Kuiper Belt: An area of space that primarily consists of comets, asteroids and small planetoids. This area is formed when the star (or sun) first ignites. It expels all the excess masses that were not large enough to become a planet or be captured by a planet (to become a moon). This belt is found at the outermost orbit beyond the last planet within the solar system.

Naming the Stars

For simplicity's sake, and because of the thousands upon thousands of worlds, a generic naming process has been established. G.M.s can use this convention or ignore it completely. This guide is used for stellar navigation, but a civilization within a given system might have a specific name for each planet and moon (like our own system). Eventually, names run out, so this system has been adapted.

- Each star system gets its name from the main planet/civilization.
- Each solar system gets its name from the major planet in its system.
- Each planet will carry the solar system's name, then a number indicating its orbital placement, with "1" being the closest to the sun.
- Each moon will carry the solar system's name, planet number, and then a letter to indicate its placement around its planet, with "A" being the closest.

For example, "Karpak-3B in the Cormak system" would indicate the second moon around the third planet of the Karpak solar system, within the Cormak star system.

Part One

Building a Random Star System

A star system is a cluster of solar systems and stars in close proximity. For quick creations, you don't have to describe *every* planet, nor every solar system with extreme details. This is to give the players a general idea of what's out there. If the G.M. so desires, he can simply detail one or more solar systems and planets to base the story line or for any other game purposes.

Step 1: Star System Size

A star system's size is determined by the number of stars it holds in close proximity. Roll randomly or choose one in the following table.

01-10%: Mono star system! Holds only one star.

11-30%: Small: Holds up to 1D6 stars.

31-55%: Medium: Holds up to 2D4+2 stars.

56-78%: Large: Holds up to 2D6+3 stars.

79-95%: Extra Large: Holds up to 3D4+4 stars.

96-100%: Humongous (very rare): Holds up to 3D8+5 stars.

Step 2: Star to Solar System Ratio

Here, we determine how many stars within the star system are actually suns with planets (solar systems). Using the number of stars obtained in step 1, you can determine how many are actually solar systems (round up or down on fractions). If you want to describe one or multiple solar systems, refer to Part Two. Roll randomly or choose one in the following table.

01-03%: The entire star system is made out of stars; no planets!

04-10%: 10% of the stars within the star system are actually solar systems.

11-17%: 25% of the stars within the star system are actually solar systems.

18-24%: 40% of the stars within the star system are actually solar systems.

25-50%: 50% of the stars within the star system are actually solar systems.

51-65%: 60% of the stars within the star system are actually solar systems.

66-75%: 70% of the stars within the star system are actually solar systems.

76-85%: 80% of the stars within the star system are actually solar systems.

86-95%: 90% of the stars within the star system are actually solar systems.

96-100%: The entire star system is made out of solar systems!

For example, the Cormak system is a medium sized star system made up of 5 stars. Rolling under step two, the G.M. rolls a 48% which means that 50% of the stars are actually solar systems. This means that the star system has 2.5 solar systems. The G.M. will decide to have either 2 or 3. He decides three solar systems will make his adventure more intriguing. And now the Cormak system is born, with two stars and three solar systems.

Step 3: Number of Livable Planets

This step determines the numbers of planets found in the entire system which are *livable*. This does not mean that ALL of these planets are colonized by an intelligent species, but that they can sustain life. The number of livable worlds depends on the number of solar systems within the star system, NOT on the number of stars. The total number of planets is neglected since it has no actual effect on the number of livable worlds. If the G.M. wishes to establish a fixed number of planets, see Part Two, Step 1.

Number of solar systems	Possible number of livable planets
1	1 or 2 (G.M.'s choice)
2-4	1D4
5-8	1D6
9-12	2D6
13-15	2D8
16-20	3D6
21-24	3D8
25-29	4D6+1D4

For example, the Cormak system has 3 solar systems. The G.M. rolls a 3 which means that there are three livable worlds in the star system.

Note: These are only the natural livable worlds. This does not take into account any habitable space stations or planetary stations.

Step 4 (optional):

Star System Abnormalities

If the G.M. wishes it, he may put a few abnormalities in his star system. Each abnormality may replace a star because of the sheer size of them. You may have as many abnormalities as you want, but keep in mind that too much may be overkill. Roll randomly or choose from the following.

01-10%: A Galactic P.P.E. Sponge: Similar to a black hole, the P.P.E. sponge absorbs the P.P.E. in the surrounding space. It is possible for ships to voyage through one of these, but all will feel slightly drained. This area is a definite nightmare to magic users, whose P.P.E. is slowly drained out of them, unable to gain it back until they leave the area of space (which could take a while). This is especially dangerous for magic-powered spacecraft, which will suffer power fluctuations and outages while in the vicinity of the P.P.E. sponge.

11-20%: Galactic-Sized Ley Line Storm: A massive number of spacial ley lines cross in a particular section of space. The intensity of P.P.E. is so great that a *permanent* ley line storm occurs in space. The ley line storm will have the following modifications (see *Rifts® World Book Two: Atlantis* for details on ley line storms):

- Bolts of lightning will be directed to any nearby ship where a magical presence can be found. The damage to the ship is 4D6x10, plus 2D6 S.D.C. to *everyone* inside. A total of 2D4x100 P.P.E. will be siphoned from the ship's passengers and crew (divided among all in the ship). There is also a 01-25% chance the ship will be teleported 2D6x10 light years away!
- Roll every 10 minutes under the Random Events table found in the description of ley line storms. The effects occur within the ship (except for rolling thunder, which takes place in space).

21-30%: Black Hole: A black hole is found in the star system.

31-40%: Galactic Electrical Field: A large section of space is considered a no man's land because of the intense electrical disturbances. Any ship going into the area loses ANY navigational and sensory capability (this also includes the use of radars, targeting systems, etc.).

41-50%: Nebula: A nebula is found near or is part of the star system. The cloud's size can span up to 10 solar systems (basically ten times the size of our solar system).

51-60%: Asteroid Field: A giant area in space is an asteroid field the size of five solar systems. The density of the field can vary, but on average, most fighters cannot go faster than mach 8 without sustaining serious damage. Larger ships must constantly shoot down the rocks to protect themselves from random collisions. Because of the asteroid field's immense size, it is almost impossible for someone to fly through one of these. **Note:** A ship going mach 8 will take over 100 years to go from one side of our solar system to the other. That is,

if the ship may maintain a speed of mach 8. Now imagine something that is five times the size.

61-70%: A Cluster of Comets: An entire "pack" of comets exist in the star system. From time to time, it sends a comet to a nearby solar system.

71-80%: Spacial Graveyard: If you think you've seen it all, you've seen nothing yet! There's nothing like a spacial graveyard. Billions upon billions of ships float in a cloud of a forgotten war. The exact nature of the battle is unknown, but the site of the ships brings fear to all who pass by. It is up to the G.M. to decide if this area is "known" throughout the galaxy or not.

81-90%: Spacial Minefield: Left behind by some forgotten civilization (or not), a vast sector of space has been mined. The field is vast, and it is up to the G.M. to dictate if there are safe passages through this incredible blockade.

91-100%: A Dead Solar System: A solar system exists where the "sun" was unable to ignite and shine. The so-called sun is basically a giant gas ball the size of a normal sun! As a result, all the planets are completely lifeless and cold. There is no light in the system, other than the other stars in the galaxy.

Part Two

Building a Solar System

A solar system is basically a star (called a sun) with a few masses (planets) circling around it. It can be part of a star system, or isolated by large distances from the rest of the stars. If you wish to make your solar system part of a star system, refer to *Part One* and add it as one of the "stars." If you so desire, you may add more specific details onto a particular or multiple solar systems by describing the planets (refer to *Part Three*).

Note on solar systems: A solar system will have a Kuiper Belt beyond the last planet orbiting it. This belt consists of comets, asteroids and small planetoids (the largest being 250 miles/400 km in diameter). It is basically all the excess mass that was ejected when the sun first ignited. Since this area is not very dense (even though millions of masses are found in it, it is extremely large), navigating through it is a simple task.

Step 1: Solar System's Size

The size of the solar system is determined by the number of planets it possesses. Roll randomly or choose from the following table.

01-05%: One! It's just got one lonely planet.

06-15%: Tiny, with 1D4 planets.

16-30%: Small, with 1D6 planets.

31-45%: Small, with 2D4 planets.

46-70%: Typical, with 3D4 planets.

71-85%: Large, with 2D6+4 planets.

86-95%: Huge, with 3D6+4 planets.

96-100%: Gargantuan, with 4D6+6 planets.

Step 2: Determining Planet Type

On average (based on our own solar system), a solar system will have mineral planets closer to the sun, followed by gaseous planets, with a handful of planetoids in the outer orbits. A planet capable of sustaining life would normally be a mineral planet,

found among the other mineral planets relatively close to the sun. If you want to describe one or multiple planets in detail, refer to *Part Three*. To determine the types of planets in your solar system, roll randomly or choose from the following table.

01-05%: All are mineral planets.

06-15%: 25% are mineral, 25% are gaseous, 50% are planetoids.

16-30%: 25% are mineral, 65% are gaseous, 10% are planetoids.

31-50%: 40% are mineral, 50% are gaseous, 10% are planetoids.

51-65%: 50% are mineral, 50% are gaseous.

66-85%: 50% are mineral, 40% are gaseous, 10% are planetoids.

86-95%: 30% are mineral, 30% are gaseous, 40% are planetoids.

96-100%: All are gaseous planets.

Note: Remember that beyond the last planet lies the Kuiper Belt; see *A Few Terms* for details.

Step 3: Livable Worlds

A typical solar system can possess 1D4 “livable” environments. The norm is that this livable world is a planet. But not just any planet, it is normally a mineral planet found within the first 6 orbits of the sun. If you want to add a twist to your solar system, refer to the *Livable Worlds Table* found in *Part Three* for strange livable spots. Do note that livable planets are a rarity. There are more solar systems that hold no “life” than those that do. Often, life will be found on space stations, bases, etc.

The following steps are optional material that will add details to your star system. These are to add an edge to the world you’re building.

Step 4 (optional): Orbital Time

This is an optional rule that will help you to determine the time it takes for a planet to make one rotation around the sun. Since at any specific distance from the sun, the orbital time is fix, any body going faster or slower will be pushed out of its current orbit or be forced out of the solar system (or even inwards to the sun). With each duration of one “year” varied from planet to planet, we will take all measurements based on our own. One year will be 365 days; each day will be 24 hours. To determine the base orbital time, in days, for the first planet, roll 5D6+75. For all the other orbits, double the orbital time of the previous one. In other words, the 1st orbit will require 5D6+75 days for one rotation and the 2nd will need 5D6+75x2 days (twice the first orbital time). The 3rd orbit will need 5D6+75x4 days or twice the second orbit’s orbital time. The 4th requires 5D6+75x8 days or twice the 3rd orbit’s orbital time; and so on. It is normal for the outer orbits to take A LOT of time for one rotation. Some can take over 100 years. (See the *Planet Abnormality Table* in *Part Four* for “different” orbital times.)

Step 5 (optional): Number of Suns

Here, we will determine the type of suns the solar system has. There are three sizes for suns. Small suns are half the size of our own sun or smaller. Medium sized suns are like the one we see each day. Large suns are double, triple or even five times the size of our sun. The G.M. can pick what size he wants the

sun to be, but some size restrictions may apply depending on how many “suns” are in your solar system. Roll randomly or choose from the following table.

01-10%: Tri-Suns: Three suns are found in the solar system. Two suns (medium or large sized) are in the middle, with another small sized sun circulating in one of the other orbits (replacing one of the planets). Roll randomly or choose to determine the orbit in which the second sun is found.

01-33%: Found in the last orbit.

34-67%: Found in the middle (if there are 10 planets, the 5th will be a small sun).

68-100%: Found about 3/4 of the way out (e.g., if there are 10 planets, this sun is the 7th or 8th one).

11-35%: Binary Suns: Two suns are found in the center of the solar system. Any size can be chosen.

36-65%: One Sun: Only one sun is found in the center of the solar system. Any size can be chosen.

66-80%: Binary Suns: Two suns are found in the solar system. One sun (medium or large sized) is in the middle with another small sized sun circulating in one of the other orbits (replacing one of the planets). Roll randomly or choose to determine with orbit the second sun is found.

01-36%: Found in the last orbit.

37-70%: Found in the middle (if there are 10 planets, the 5th will be a small sun).

71-100%: Found about 3/4 of the way out.

81-93%: Tri-Suns: Three suns are found in the middle of the solar system. The size of the suns cannot be large.

94-100%: Tri-Suns: Three suns are found in the solar system. One giant sun (ten times the size of a normal sun) is in the middle, with two other small sized suns circulating in other orbits (replacing planets). Roll randomly (or choose) for each sun to determine which orbit it will be in. It is possible for the two to share one orbit. In that case, each sun will be to one extreme of the orbital ring.

01-30%: Found in the last orbit.

31-65%: Found in the middle (if there are 10 planets, the 5th will be a small sun).

66-100%: Found about 3/4 of the way out.

Step 6 (optional):

Solar System Abnormalities

If the G.M. wishes it, he may put a few abnormalities in his solar system. Each abnormality will replace a planetary orbit (e.g. the asteroid belt separating Mars and Jupiter). Roll randomly or choose from the following.

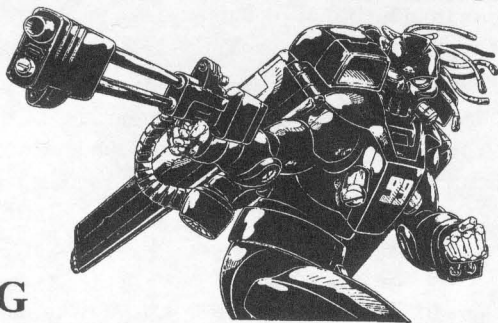
01-05%: A Giant Space Station: This space station is the size of a large moon! A truly remarkable piece of engineering. It may or may not have been created by the inhabitants of the solar system, but they will take the credit for it. It also may or may not be uninhabited (perhaps deserted for some reason).

06-15%: Ley Line Storm: A constant spacial ley line storm takes up an entire orbit.

16-20%: Minefield: Similar to the minefield described in *Part One*, but at a solar system scale. An entire orbit has been mined. The field is vast, and only the most skilled can pilot their way through it.

21-30%: Black Hole: The entire solar system revolves around a black hole instead of a sun. Oh, the sun is still there. It also

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revolves around the black hole. This causes light to be absorbed by the black hole when the sun is behind it. This causes a "black out" of sunlight and heat for 4D4+16 days after each 3 months!

31-40%: Random: All of the planets are placed in an abnormal fashion that defies the laws of physics. You will find a gaseous planet between two minerals with a planetoid right next to the sun, or any other combination. Roll randomly or choose the type of planet for *each* orbit by using the *Basic Planet Type Table* found in *Part Three*.

41-50%: Asteroid Belt: An asteroid belt replaces one or multiple orbits. This area of space was originally supposed to become a planet. But due to unknown and (possibly) natural events, the planet was never formed and only a field of rocks remains.

51-60%: Empty Orbit: For some strange reason (or no reason at all), one of the solar system's orbits is empty. Like if it was just forgotten or is missing a planet.

61-70%: Orbital Switch: Two planets exchange orbits at a regular interval. The environment on the planets may or may not be affected. In addition, the G.M. can choose to make this switch scientific (the two planets' orbits simply cross), or mysterious (they aren't suppose to switch orbits!).

71-85%: Space Gases: A spacial gas cloud replaces one of the orbits. This "gas" is similar to a nebula, but on a much *smaller* scale. It is up to the G.M. if the gas has an effect on ships passing through it. If so, roll or choose one of the following to determine the effected ship's systems:

01-30%: The ship is unaffected!

31-40%: Ship's navigation.

41-50%: Ship's sensors.

51-60%: Ship's weapon targeting systems.

61-70%: Ship's engines (reduce max speed by half!).

71-80%: Ship's communications.

81-90%: Ship's power supply (the ship's energy will not regenerate and is slowly drained. Staying too long in the gas will eventually *kill* the ship's power source!).

91-100%: Multiple systems! The gas will affect 1D6 systems or all if the G.M. so desires.

86-93%: Special Illumination: The sun isn't the only source of *light* in the solar system. Roll randomly or choose to determine the alternative source. Note: It is up to the G.M. if the special illumination replaces the sun completely, or the sun is reduced to a very small star.

01-34%: Major ley lines cross in space, making a Rift. These Rifts are so numerous here that they produce a significant amount of light in the solar system. We're talking over millions of Rifts here.

35-67%: Outer Illumination: The solar system is illuminated by a source in the last orbit. This could be a gas cloud or other body where intense chemical or nuclear reactions occur. These reactions are so strong that they produce light to the planets.

68-100%: Multiple volcanic planets produce the planet's light (about ¾ of all the planets in the system are volcanic). The combined energy produced by these planets is the equivalent of a small sun.

94-100%: Barricade: An actual barricade has been built taking up an entire orbit (usually one of the close orbits). This barricade may be one of several different types like a net, a series

of pods that will produce a powerful force field, or any other construction at the G.M.'s choice. The main purpose is to prevent ships from passing through, or at least making it really difficult for them. The actual builders may or may no longer exist.

Part Three

Building Planets

A planetary system is basically the planet with a few or multiple satellites (moons) circling around it. A planet is always part of a solar system. But if you wish to describe your solar system in detail, refer to *Part Two*, or you can always add your planet to an existing solar system you've created. With these rules, you'll be able to create a planet with ease and as detailed as you want it to be.

Step 1: Basic Planet Types

Unless you have already decided what type of planet you want to create, this table lets you quickly and randomly make up a planet. If you want to randomly create an M-class planet (a livable world), roll under the Livable World Table. Otherwise, roll randomly or choose from the following table:

01-10%: Asteroid/Planetoid: Asteroids and planetoids are not actually planets. They are basically giant rocks or debris that were caught in the solar system's gravitational field. As a result, they now circle the sun as if they were a planet. Pluto could easily be argued to be a planetoid. Normal planet size: Planetoid.

11-25%: Mineral Planet: Mineral planets are planets that are extremely rich in high-density minerals. These planets are havens for mining corporations, but the planet may or may have an atmosphere that can support life. The richer they are, the less probable life exists there. Normal planet size: Small.

26-40%: Dead Planet: Dead planets were once M-class planets that lost their ability to sustain life a long time ago. They are now reduced to a lifeless rock, orbiting a sun. The reason why the planet lost its life is unknown. Maybe it was a global disaster (natural or artificial), maybe an alien invasion. We may never know. Mars is a perfect example of a dead planet, for some believe that life was once abundant on Mars. Normal planet size: Small.

41-55%: Livable World: This is your Earth-like environment where life can prosper. Roll under the Livable World Table to determine the specific type of world.

56-65%: Young Planet: This planet is very young and is still under formation. The general terrain is covered by lava, and its crust is rocky and extremely rough. It cannot sustain life, and characters may not survive without thermo suits to protect them from the planet's heat. Normal planet size: Small.

66-75%: Frozen World: This planet was unable to produce a sufficient amount of heat to warm itself and cannot benefit enough from the sun. It is therefore forever trapped in an ice age. Normal planet size: Small to medium. Roll randomly or choose from the following table to determine the type of frozen world:

01-20%: To the core: The planet is a solid block. Even its core has virtually no heat.

21-45%: **Frozen Planet:** The planet's core is still warm, but the surface is frozen. It holds lakes of nitrogen (or other liquid) which can remain liquefied in extremely low temperatures.

46-70%: **Frozen Crust:** The outer crust of the planet is frozen. Underneath, the crust holds a layer of relatively warm liquid. It is up to the G.M. if the liquid is actually water. In that case, underwater life *may* or *may not* exist.

71-100%: **Arctic Planet:** Life can exist on the surface, but the climate is basically winter all year long!

76-85%: Slush Planet: A planet in the state between mineral and gaseous. The planet's crust is basically slushy. The planet still has a thick atmosphere and is rich in minerals, but has a very difficult terrain to travel upon. Normal planet size: Any.

86-100%: Gaseous Planet: These planets are basically made out of gases. They usually have a small core made out of solidified gases with an extremely thick atmosphere. Jupiter and Saturn are perfect examples of gaseous planets. Normal planet size: Medium to large. Roll randomly or choose from the following table to determine the basic characteristic of the gaseous planet.

01-20%: **Unknown:** The gases of the planet are unknown. No scientific data has been collected and it is unforeseen what reaction a ship will have when in the planet's atmosphere.

21-40%: **Volatile Gas:** The gas is extremely reactant to heat. This means that if an explosion goes off or high intensity weapons are fired, the gases can erupt. The entire planet will NOT burst into flames, but an area in the atmosphere will. Damage will consist of the following (G.M.s can modify the numbers as seen fit for higher volatile gas). From lasers (or other heat sources or energy weapons), 1 point of damage to the ship or character per each 4 points of damage that the weapon can produce. As for explosives (missiles and mines), triple the amount of damage to an area 5 times greater than the normal affected area of the explosive itself.

41-60%: **Extremely Windy:** The planet's atmosphere is in a constant state of turbulence. Winds reaching hundreds of miles per hour make it almost impossible to navigate in the sky. Reduce piloting skill by *half*!

61-80%: **Acidic Gas:** The gas acts like an acid, reacting instantaneously with any material entering the atmosphere. Choose one of the following damage rates: 3D6 points of damage per minute; 5D6 points of damage per minute; 1D4x10 points of damage per minute; 1D6x10 points of damage per minute; or a whopping 2D4x10 points of damage per minute! It is up to the G.M. to determine if the acid atmosphere can penetrate force fields or not.

81-100%: **Ley Line Storm:** The planet's atmosphere has a ley line storm occurring. This storm is constant and will never end. Double all effects caused by the storm.

Livable World Table

This table permits you to determine the type of livable world you are creating. Roll randomly or choose from the following table:

01-15%: On a harsh planet that normally *cannot* sustain life, an area on or within the world can support life for some unexplained reason. This could be a gaseous world, a young

planet, a mining planet, etc. Roll randomly or choose from the *Basic Planet Type Table*, excluding the roll of Livable World, to determine the type of harsh world. Then roll randomly or choose from the following to determine the size of the *livable* area:

01-30%: A small area covering the size of a large city.

31-55%: An area of the size of a large island or small country.

56-75%: An area covering a quarter of a continent.

76-90%: An area covering half a continent.

91-100%: A small continent.

16-35%: A harsh planet (mineral, dead, frozen, or giant moon) has been terra-formed to sustain life. This "change" has turned the planet into a M-class planet, but it is at the G.M.'s discretion to determine if this change is temporary (2D6x100 years until the planet reverts into its former self).

36-65%: M-class planet. The livable conditions are on a planet just like Earth. It has plenty of potential to produce life and sustain it. Normal planet size: Small.

66-80%: The planet can only hold one type of life form. The atmosphere is deadly to others not protected by a space suit or exploration suit. The bad side is that these creatures cannot leave the planet without any protective suits or a ship with their type of atmosphere. Normal planet size: Any.

81-100%: Lunar life. A large "moon" has the capacity of sustaining life just like Earth. This moon belongs to a medium or large sized planet (normally a gaseous planet).

Step 2: Planet Size

The size of a planet depends greatly on its type. The sizes will be compared with one or two planets in our own solar system just to get an idea of the relative size. Of course one type of planet can be greater or smaller in size (see the *Planet Abnormality Table* in *Part Four*), but the general rule is the following:

Planetoid: Very small planet or captured asteroid. Roll the following to determine size: 6D4x100 miles (960-3840 km) in diameter. (Pluto is about 1430 miles/2301 km.)

Small: The common size for mineral planets. Roll the following to determine size: 5D6x500 miles (4000-24,000 km) in diameter. (Earth is about 7972 miles/12,750 km and Mars is about 4217 miles/6785 km.)

Medium: The size that's in-between the mineral and gaseous planets. Roll the following to determine size: 1D6x9000 +10,000 miles (30,400-102,400 km) in diameter. (Uranus is about 32,000 miles/51,488 km and Neptune is about 30,760 miles/49,493 km.)

Large: We are now looking at the realm of giant gaseous planets. Roll the following to determine size: 1D6x10,000 +50,000 miles (96,000-176,000 km) in diameter. (Jupiter is about 88,736 miles/142,800 km and Saturn is about 74,500/119,871 km.)

The following steps are optional material that will add details to your star system. These are to add an edge to the world you're building.

Step 3 (optional):

General Planetary Information

Here, you will be able to describe your planets as you see fit. Each piece of information permits you to have a very developed

world that will appeal to the players. All information is based on our planets. Earth is assumed to be the standard of what a livable planet should be. Have fun with this.

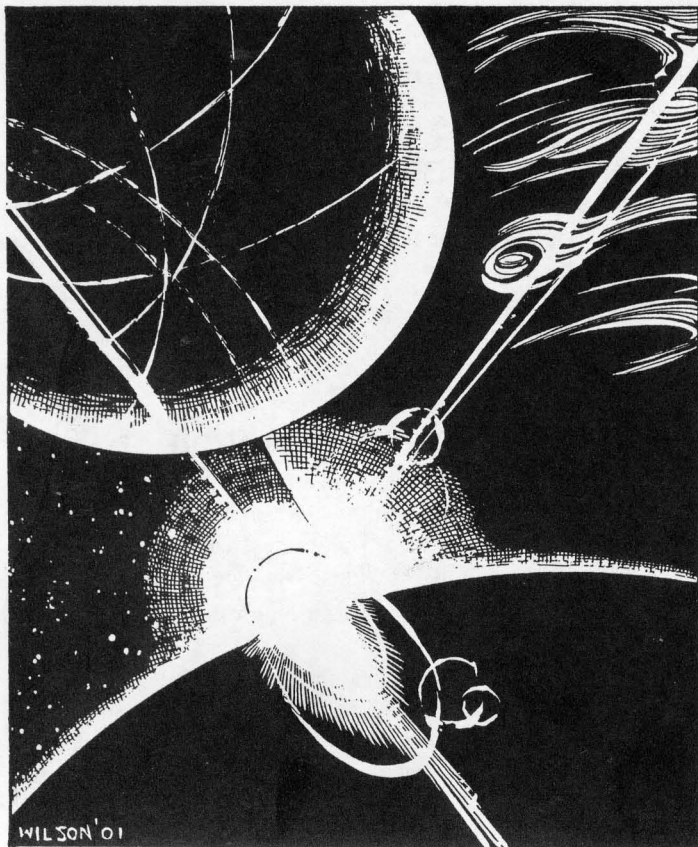
Rotation Period: This determines the period of rotation for the planet. In other words, the length of time it takes for one "day" to go by on the planet. All durations are measured in Earth days or hours. Also look under the *Planet Abnormality Table* in *Part Four* for some strange rotational durations. Roll randomly or choose from the following table.

- 01-05%: The planet has a 2D4 hour day.
- 06-15%: The planet has a 3D4 hour day.
- 16-25%: The planet has a 3D6 hour day.
- 26-60%: The planet has a 2D4+20 hour day (the norm).
- 61-75%: The planet has a 3D6+30 hour day.
- 76-80%: The planet has a 3D6x10 hour day.
- 81-85%: The planet has a 5D8x10 hour day.
- 86-90%: The planet has a 1D4x100 hour day.
- 91-94%: The planet takes 1D4x10 Earth days for one rotation.
- 95-97%: The planet takes 2D6x10 Earth days for one rotation.
- 98-100%: The planet takes 4D6x10 Earth days for one rotation.

Note: Roll modification — gaseous planets get a -30% to the roll. They usually have a faster rotation compared with other types, especially mineral planets, which get a +10% to the roll. It is up to the G.M. to use this modification or not.

Sky Color: Roll randomly or choose from the following table to determine the color of your planet's sky.

- 01-07%: Colorless (You can still see the stars even during the day!)
- 09-14%: Brown.
- 16-21%: Purple.
- 24-28%: Green.
- 31-35%: Green-Blue.



36-42%: Red.

43-60%: Blue (typical of M-Class planets).

61-67%: Red-Orange.

68-74%: Orange.

75-81%: Yellow.

82-88%: Pale White.

89-95%: Mix colors! Depending on the time of day, the sky changes into 1D4 colors. Re-roll to determine all the types of colors.

96-100%: Other color of choice.

Number of Continents: Roll 2D6 to determine how many continents are found on your planet.

Water Coverage: Roll randomly or choose from the following table to determine the percentage of land coverage found on the planet. Just so you know: the Earth is 1/3 covered by land.

- 01-20%: Mostly water; 25% land coverage.
- 21-40%: Below even; 33% (1/3) land coverage.
- 41-60%: Even; 50% land coverage.
- 61-80%: Above even; 66% (2/3) land coverage.
- 81-100%: Mostly land; 75% land coverage.

P.P.E. Level: Roll randomly or choose from the following table to determine the planet's level of P.P.E. Note: It's up to G.M. if he wishes to imply the spell restrictions to worlds with low P.P.E. The goal is to make your world diverse and interesting, but if you don't like it, just don't use it.

01-10%: P.P.E. Drain: The planet is basically a P.P.E. sponge! Any character with over 5 P.P.E. will find themselves losing 2D6 P.P.E. per each 24 hour period spent on the planet. The spell casters also find it impossible to regain any lost P.P.E. A true terror to magic-based creatures. Spell modification: Reduce range, duration, and damage by half and double the spell's P.P.E. cost. And *all* supernatural creatures are turned into S.D.C. beings and lose their supernatural stats! This means a supernatural strength of 25 will become a normal P.S. of 25.

11-20%: None: The planet holds *NO* P.P.E.! This means that any spell caster may no longer replenish his lost P.P.E. Once a spell is cast, that P.P.E. is lost until the caster physically leaves the planet and goes to another area where the P.P.E. level is greater. Spell modifications: Reduce range, duration, and damage by half. And *all* supernatural creatures turn into S.D.C. beings!

21-40%: Low: The planet is the equivalent of Earth before the cataclysm. All spells suffer no modification as per duration and range, but damage will be their S.D.C. equivalent, unless the spell caster doubles the P.P.E. cost for the spell. All supernatural creatures are turned into S.D.C. creatures.

41-70%: Medium: There is a fair amount of P.P.E., the equivalent of the Palladium World. There are no penalties to spell casting, and *at the G.M.'s discretion*, supernatural creatures may remain M.D.C., but at one quarter their normal capacity.

71-90%: High: The planet is very rich in P.P.E. Similar to Rifts Earth, spell casters have no penalties in casting spells and all supernatural creatures are turned into M.D.C. creatures.

91-100%: Extreme: The planet's level of P.P.E. is extremely high. Spell casters will find that their spell's duration, range and damage/capacity has doubled. Not only are all supernatural creatures M.D.C., but *all* S.D.C. creatures are temporarily turned into minor M.D.C. only after a few hours on the

planet's surface (the equivalent of half of their S.D.C. into M.D.C.).

Climate Table

Roll randomly or choose from the following table to determine the planet's "main" climate. Generally, the planet's climate changes from season to season. To simplify and add uniqueness to your planet, the entire planet's climate will be determined by 1D4+1 major climates.

- 01-05%: Nice:** The weather is as perfect as it can be; all year long!
- 06-14%: Rainy:** Light rains cover the land. These rains cause fogs at night and in the mornings.
- 15-20%: Rainy:** Heavy rains. When it rains, it pours. The rains are constant for 1D4 months with a break of 2D6 weeks between rains.
- 21-24%: Winter:** Typical.
- 25-28%: Winter:** A light winter occurs. These are your nice winters where you get a foot of snow, max. The weather is bearable.
- 29-32%: Winter:** The winters are wet, slushy, and the snow falls heavily.
- 33-35%: Winter:** The winters are very cold and although not much snow falls, everything is icy.
- 36-45%: Autumn:** Typical.
- 46-65%: Seasons:** The planet has all 4 seasons, just like Earth.
- 66-70%: Seasons:** The planet only has 1D4 seasons (with Summer or Winter being the main season).
- 71-80%: Spring:** Typical.
- 81-84%: Summer:** Typical.
- 85-88%: Summer:** Think of the nicest summer day, not too hot or cold.
- 89-92%: Summer:** The weather is hot and dry. Not much moisture in the air, which can cause many forest fires.
- 93-95%: Summer:** The weather is very hot and high in moisture. Not only are you warm, but you're also sweating like a pig!
- 96-100%: Temperature Jump:** The Summers are very warm, with very cold Winters. A temperature difference of almost 120 degrees Fahrenheit (67 Celsius)!

Terrain Table

Roll randomly or choose from the following table to determine the planet's "main" terrain. Most likely, the planet's terrain changes from area to area. To simplify and add uniqueness to your planet, the entire planet's terrain will be determined by 1D4+1 major types:

- 01-10%: Desert.**
- 11-20%: Tundra.**
- 21-30%: Forest: coniferous trees.**
- 30-40%: Forest: foliage trees.**
- 41-50%: Forest: mix, coniferous and foliage trees.**
- 51-60%: Plains.**
- 61-70%: Rocky.**
- 71-80%: Jungle.**
- 81-90%: Swamp.**
- 91-100%: Valleys and plateaus.**

Step 4 (optional): The Moons

The following will help you to create multiple satellites or moons around your planet.

Number of Moons: The amount of moons depends greatly on the planet's size.

Asteroid/planetoids will have: No moons (1-50%), one moon (51-75%), or two moons (76-100%).

Small sized planets will have: 1D4 moons. There is always a 30% chance that the planet has no moons (at the G.M.'s discretion).

Medium sized planets will have: 4D6 moons. There is always a 20% chance that the planet has no moons (at the G.M.'s discretion).

Large sized planets will have: No moons at all (1-10%), 3D6 moons (11-55%), 5D6 moons (56-90%), or 1D4x10 moons (91-100%).

Size of the Moons: The sizes of the moons will vary depending on the planet's size.

For planetoids and asteroids: Small moons only.

For small sized planets: Small or medium-sized moons.

For medium and large sized planets: Any size moons.

The sizes:

Small: 1D6x100 miles (160-960 km) in diameter, sometimes smaller.

Medium: 3D6x100 +500 miles (1280-3680 km) in diameter.

Large: 4D6x500 +1000 miles (4800-20,800 km) in diameter.

Note: Our moon is about 2175 miles (3,480 km) in diameter.

Moon Type: Roll randomly or choose from the following table to determine the type of moon the planet possesses, for each moon. Do note that each type has a size specification. If your planet can not hold that particular size, re-roll.

01-15%: Volcanic Moon (medium to large).

16-30%: Trapped Comet (small).

31-50%: Asteroid/planetoid (small).

51-65%: Giant Rock (like our moon; medium or large).

66-80%: Frozen world (medium to large).

81-90%: Special moon: Roll under the *Types of Planet Table*. May not be applicable for small planets, depending on the results.

91-100%: Special Planet Satellite: For special twists in a planet's orbit, refer to the *Special Planet Satellites* under the *Planet Abnormalities Table* (step 6).

Step 5 (optional): Civilization

Here you will find a general idea of the type of civilization found on the planet. It is up to the G.M. to describe the civilization in as much detail as he or she wishes. This is just to have a vague idea. Roll randomly or choose from the following:

01-10%: None: There's no civilization on the world. It is free to be colonized!

11-20%: Primitive: The civilization is still in the Stone Age.

21-35%: Pre-Industrial: The civilization hasn't mastered any industries as of yet. They have some knowledge comparable to the Roman times, medieval times, or even the Renaissance.

36-50%: Modern: The civilization has mastered many industries and may be at the verge of space exploration.

51-70%: Pre-FTL: The civilization can voyage in space, but only to a limited extent. They have explored their own solar system, but haven't mastered Faster Than Light travel.

71-100%: FTL: The civilization has mastered FTL. They can explore the cosmos with all other advanced races.

Step 6 (optional):

Planet Abnormalities

If the G.M. wishes it, he may put a few abnormalities on his planet. Each abnormality will add a special twist in the world you are creating. You may have as many abnormalities as you want, but don't overdo it. Roll randomly or choose from the following.

01-03%: Life Longevity: Some strange manipulation on the planet causes the inhabitants to live longer and healthier lives. Double the characters' normal recovery rate (Bio-Regeneration is not affected) and all gain a +10% to save versus coma/death. The characters will appear younger and those who spend their entire lifetime on the planet will actually live longer (25% to 50% longer than their average life span!) It requires 2D6 days before visitors are affected by the planet's life force, and when a character leaves, he will slowly return to his normal aging process. The source of this longevity can be one (or multiple) of the following:

01-25%: Unknown. No one knows why.

26-40%: Strange radiation from the planet's rings.

41-55%: The planet and its moon have an unusual gravity field between them.

56-70%: A reaction between the sun's radiation and the planet's atmosphere.

71-85%: A nebula or cloud around the planet or solar system.

86-100%: Some sort of radiation produced in the planet's core.

04-06%: Radiation Planet: The planet has an abnormal amount of radiation. This could be generated from the planet's core, one of its moons or rings, or even from the sun itself. As a result, normal characters and creatures will eventually be affected by the radiation. G.M.s can decide if the radiation also prevents a character's Bio-Regeneration. The following are the effects of the radiation depending on the intensity:

01-20%: Minor Radiation: After two weeks, the characters can no longer heal naturally.

21-40%: High Radiation: After one week, the character may no longer heal naturally, and after the second week, characters will start to lose 2 Hit Points per day (or 1 M.D.C.).

41-60%: Major Radiation: After a few days (1D6 days), the characters will become ill, suffering a -5 to all rolls and -15% to all skills for each additional 1D4 days on the planet.

61-80%: Dangerous Radiation: After a certain number of hours (3D6 hours), the characters will be affected by radiation sickness, and begin suffering 2D4 points of damage per hour!

81-100%: Extreme Radiation: After a certain number of hours (2D4 hours), the characters will be affected by radiation sickness and at extreme risk. The characters will begin to suffer 1D4 points of damage per minute!

tion sickness and at extreme risk. The characters will begin to suffer 1D4 points of damage per minute!

Note: Game Masters are free to alter the effects of radiation as they see fit for the adventure. Remember that the goal is to make your world interesting or challenging, not a death trap.

07-09%: Abnormal Orbit: The planet actually rotates in the opposite direction than all other planets in the solar system. It's going clockwise instead of counter-clockwise.

10-12%: Abnormal Orbit: The planet's orbit actually takes up two orbits. But the planet switches from one to the other at a regular pace. The planet may or may not suffer strange weather because of this, and it may be unknown why or how this phenomenon occurs.

13-15%: Abnormal Orbit: The planet's orbit off by 90 degrees compared to all the other planets in the solar system.

16-18%: Mono-Life: The planet can support one type of life form, but is deadly to others (not protected). The bad side is that these creatures cannot leave the planet without any protective suits or a ship with their type of atmosphere in it.

19-21%: Localized Life: On a harsh planet that normally cannot sustain life, an area can support life for some unexplained reason. This could be a gaseous world, a young planet, a mining planet, etc. Roll randomly or choose from the following table to determine the size of the area:

01-30%: A small area covering the size of a large city.

31-55%: An area of the size of a large island or small country.

56-75%: An area covering the quarter of a continent.

76-90%: An area covering half a continent.

91-100%: A small continent.

22-24%: Water World: The planet is covered with water! Only a handful of small islands may exist, but that's up to the G.M.

25-27%: Terra World: The planet is covered with land! Only a handful of large lakes may exist, but that is up to the G.M.

28-30%: Island World: Only islands exist on the planet. The islands are scattered across the planet and their size is no greater than a few miles across.

31-33%: Mono-Terrain: The planet has only one type of terrain *all* over the globe. Roll randomly or choose from the *Terrain Table* found in Step 3.

34-36%: Abnormal Rotational Time: Still: The planet does not rotate. This causes the planet to have an incredibly long daytime and nighttime. The length of night and day is half the time it takes for the planet to do one rotation around the sun. For example, if the Earth stopped spinning, our days will be 182.5 days long!

37-39%: Abnormal Rotational Time: Slow: The planet rotates at a speed that will seem like if the planet is still. This causes one side of the planet to ALWAYS face the sun while the other is in permanent darkness.

40-42%: Abnormal Rotational Time: Super Fast: The sun will rise and set in a matter of 2D6x10 minutes! This may actually cause some disorientation to those visiting the planet. The planet's atmosphere will also be extremely dangerous, with unbelievably strong winds and turbulence.

43-45%: Larger Planet: The size of the planet is larger than the *norm*. Multiply the diameter by a factor of 1D8+2.

46-48%: Smaller Planet: The size of the planet is smaller than the *norm*. Decrease the diameter by a factor of 1D4+1.

49-51%: Abnormal Climate: The planet possesses some strange seasons and temperatures. Roll randomly or choose from the following table:

01-09%: Volcanic Season: For a period of time in the year, volcanoes erupt. They cause rivers of lava to flow across the land. An incredible sight to see, but very dangerous.

10-18%: Meteor Season: For a period of time in the year, meteors fall like rain (well, light rain). These meteors are relatively small, causing craters no bigger than a few meters. The landscape survives, and the wildlife re-grows. The G.M. may choose to concentrate these meteor showers in a particular area.

19-27%: Thermo World: The planet is extremely hot (over 150 degrees Fahrenheit/67 Celsius).

28-36%: Frozen World: The planet is nothing but cold (below -40 degrees). A normal human without any protection will die within minutes!

37-45%: High P.P.E. Season: For a period of time in the year, the planet's P.P.E. level goes up. For the rest of the year, it is almost zilch (this can depend on the planet's P.P.E. level).

46-54%: Low P.P.E. Season: For a period of time in the year, the planet's P.P.E. level goes down to almost nothing. For the rest of the year, it is at its normal peak (this can depend on the planet's P.P.E. level).

55-63%: Mono-Climate: The planet has only one type of climate *all* year long and *all* over the globe. It is unknown why, it just does. Roll randomly or choose from the *Climate Table* in Step 3.

64-72%: Hail Season: For a period of time in the year, hail falls. This hail's size varies from a few millimeters to the size of basketballs!

73-81%: Windy: The landscape is struck with extremely strong winds.

82-91%: Tornados and Hurricanes: The planet suffers from many tornados and hurricanes. These can be focused in a general area, but that area will be victim of a year-long storm.

92-100%: Earthquakes: At a certain time in the year, earthquakes shake the grounds.

52-54%: Special Planet Satellites: The planet possesses other things than just moons. **Note:** Each of these special planet satellites replaces a moon (at the G.M.'s discretion). Roll randomly or choose one of the following:

01-15%: Moons that can support life.

16-25%: Ley Line Storm: A constant ley line storm circles the planet.

26-35%: Gases: The planet has a gas that circles it, making it appear as a very large gaseous planet.

36-60%: Rings: The planet possesses rings around it. The rings can be composed of asteroids, ice and/or dust.

61-70%: Space Station: A space station circles the planet. It may or may not have been placed there by the inhabitants.

71-80%: Ring of Debris: Debris and trash circles the planet, making it look like it has a ring around it.

81-90%: Mine Field: A minefield surrounds the planet.

91-100%: Graveyard: Circling the planet is a cemetery of ships. This may have been caused by some war or other reason, but the debris of ships and parts gives the planet a "ring."

55-59%: Many Moons: The planet has captured more moons than it should be capable of holding. It is unknown how this is possible. Either add 3D4 moons *or* multiply the current number of moons by a factor of two or three.

60-62%: Larger Moon: The planet has one* or more larger moons. Multiply the moon's diameter by a factor of 1D6+1. **Note:** the maximum size of the moon(s) cannot exceed half of planet's own diameter.

63-65%: Toxic World: The planet's pollution has condemned it to become a waste planet. It is possible that multiple other star systems will send their excess of trash to be disposed at this planet. Or, it is now avoided since it is no longer suitable for life.

66-68%: Barricade: An actual barricade has been built, taking up an entire orbital "level." This barricade may be of different types like a net, a series of pods that will produce a powerful force field, or any other construction at the G.M.'s choice. The main purpose is defensive. The actual builders may or may no longer exist.

69-71%: Faster Orbital Time: The planet rotates around the sun much faster than it should. The current speed it is traveling should send the planet shooting out of the gravitational pull of the sun, but yet, it does not. The cause is likely unknown. Reduce the normal time for the planet to do one rotation (year length) by a factor of 1D8+2!

72-74%: Slower Orbital Time: The planet rotates around the sun at a much slower pace than it should. At the current speed it is traveling, the planet should be pulled to the sun, but yet, it is not. Increase the normal time for the planet to do one rotation (year length) by a factor of 1D4+1!

75-77%: Barrier: The planet possesses a barrier that surrounds it. This could be in a form of an impenetrable atmosphere, a naturally formed force field, or whatever you might desire. The point is that characters are unable to reach the planet in a normal fashion. Magical civilizations will "Rift" themselves away from the barrier onto a moon or a station orbiting the planet. Technological civilizations could have found a natural opening or doorway that will permit small to medium sized ship to go through. But this window will only be open for 3D6x10 minutes (or less), each 3D6 days (or more). G.M.s can always use other techniques permitting people to leave the planet, or can just say that no one can come in or out!

79-82%: Thick Atmosphere: The planet's atmosphere is extremely thick. As a result, it will affect one (or more at the G.M.'s choice) of the following.

01-50%: Limited Communications: The atmosphere absorbs or deflects all radio and microwaves. Only at certain places can communications be received or sent, and they will be fragmented. This makes the planet incredible "isolated."

51-75%: Visibility/Light: The atmosphere causes only a limited amount of the sun's rays to come through. The visibility is comparable to dusk during the day. In addition, lasers and other energy weapons will partially be absorbed, reducing the damage to 1/2 normal.

76-100%: Ricochet Lasers: The atmosphere will prevent *all* high intensity beams from going through. This means that any weapon being fired that causes more than 50 M.D.C. is completely absorbed in the atmosphere or simply bounces off. Massive laser bombardment on the planet will not be effective at all.

83-85%: Shallow Interior: The planet has a hollow crust or possesses air pockets (or other gases). These pockets may permit life to grow there.

86-88%: Fragmented World: The “planet” is formed out of fragments. Millions of asteroids or large rocks circulate a core. An atmosphere exists in the floating islands where life may prosper. It is unknown how this can be nor why the islands don’t crash down to the core.

89-91%: Atrocity: The planet has suffered an atrocity that has almost destroyed it, but it still managed to stay alive. The remaining atmosphere of the planet may vary from one to 100 years. Possible atrocities could vary from part of the planet having exploded, to excessive mining having caused the planet to “crumble,” collision with a stellar body, or any other atrocity that the G.M. may think of.

92-94%: Vortex: The planet is trapped in a vortex that alters space or time. Time may pass faster or slower, or the planet itself will “skip” time or space. Roll randomly or choose one of the following:

01-20%: Temporal Anomaly: On the planet, time actually flows backwards instead of forward. From an outsider’s perspective, people, animals and vehicles do everything in reverse. It is up to the G.M. if visitors are affected or not. Unaffected characters are still in the same time flow as the rest of the universe, meaning they see the inhabitants do everything in reverse, but affected characters follow the same time flow of the planet.

21-40%: Space Vortex: The planet is trapped in a space vortex. After each 1D8 months (or years), the planet will enter a space vortex, which will send the planet through time and space to another area in the galaxy or even in another dimension. It is up to the G.M. to determine the amount of “destinations” which the planet visits and the amount of planets participating in the same “loop.”

41-60%: Temporal Vortex: The planet (including all of its moons) is trapped in a temporal vortex. It will “jump time” every 1D4x10 years (or months) to 2D6x10 years (or centuries) later. All inhabitants will feel dizzy while the jump occurs, but none will age or experience any other side effects.

61-80%: Temporal Vortex: Slow Time Fluctuation: Time flows more slowly on the planet than in the rest of the universe. For each hour that goes by on the planet, two hours has actually gone by. This means that for each day spent on the planet, two days’ time has actually passed. The G.M. is free to alter the speed of time for the planet as he sees fit.

81-100%: Temporal Vortex: Rapid Time Fluctuation: Time flows faster on the planet than in the rest of the universe. For each hour that goes by on the planet, only 30 minutes have actually passed in the outside universe.

95-97%: Protector: A creature protects the planet (or solar system) from intruders or trespassers. The reason why the creature protects the planet is unknown. It may be a supernatural creature, a giant entity, or even a herd of smaller creatures. The inhabitants may have a way to prevent the creature from attacking them, or it may prevent all from leaving or arriving to the planet.

98-100%: Moving Tectonic Plates: The planet’s tectonic plates actually move a fair distance each year. They can move up to 4D6 feet a year (or meters, or even miles). The G.M. will decide if massive earthquakes occur or not. The

planet can’t easily be mapped, since the continents move, and in a matter of a short period, the current map will be inaccurate.

Part Four

Infinite Dimensions

It is very simple to create a random dimension with these rules. G.M.s can just create a planet, and there’s your dimension. The size of your dimension can be limited to a continent, a planet, a solar system, a star system or even an entire galaxy. It’s all up to you. The following are optional material that you can use to “limit” the size of your dimension as you see fit.

To the edge: The following are optional ways to *limit* the size of your dimension. In other words, it’s what you’ll find at the far end of the dimension.

Star System or Solar System: Can also apply to all.

- Nothing! There is nothing beyond the borders of the star system but a void!
- A strange impenetrable cloud or force field preventing everything from leaving.
- A loop, the characters come out right on the opposite side.
- A wall, or bubble, or indestructible glass; the characters can see something on the other side, but can’t go through.
- A large ley line storm that prevents anything from leaving. No one knows how thick it is.

Planet: Can also apply to continents.

- The civilization just hasn’t perfected space travel.
- Some great force within the atmosphere prevents any ship from safely leaving the atmosphere (like Rifts Earth).
- A supernatural force (or other) destroys any ship from leaving/coming to the planet.

Continents:

- The world *is* flat!
- At a certain distance from land, strong seas and bad weather prevent the safe travel of any vessel.
- In the middle of the ocean, the world stops. You’ll fall off the edge if you go on.

Example of a Star System

The following is an example of a star system with basic information. It tells the general appearance of the star system and the solar systems found within it. There is also a brief explanation of the current events of the star system that gives the G.M. possible adventure ideas. Have fun and let your imagination reach the stars.

The Cormak System

Three civilizations inhabit the Cormak system. They are the Cormakians, the Karpakians, and the Kriptakians. The system was originally named after the Cormak home world (the other two cultures resent this and would like to see the name change) since they were the first to make first contact with aliens beyond

their star system. Also, they were the first of the three to master space travel.

All three societies have now mastered minimal FTL capacity. What this means is that their greatest ships can voyage to a maximum speed of 0.5 to 1 FTL. Unfortunately, their constant fighting prevents them from actually exploring the galaxy. These battles go back over a thousand years and they no longer know the reasons why or how it all began. The wars are now based on vengeance for the lost families at the hands of their fighting.

Weapon suppliers enjoy this triangle of struggle. They supply all three factions and are getting richer with each passing battle. But rumor has it that each faction has attempted to contact outside assistance. Mercenaries and other civilizations are offered riches to aid in the genocide of the other. It is just a matter of time before they end up destroying each other.

Star System Size: Medium; the Cormak System is comprised of 4 stars, where 3 of those stars are actually solar systems. The solar systems are called Cormak, Karpak, and Kriptak. There is also a Nebula within this region called the Thornion Nebular, or "*Point of no Return*."

Number of Livable Planets: 3; they are Cormak-3, Karpak-5, and Kriptak-2.

The Thornion Nebula: This nebula is avoided, after multiple incidents where space ships (including military ships, transports, and multiple civilian craft) are said to have disappeared there without a trace. The disappearances are completely unexplained. Those who pass buy the nebula claim to have seen strange "lights" within. Exploration ships have never penetrated beyond 150 miles (240 km) within the nebula.

Cormak

Solar System Size: A typical solar system with 6 planets.

Planet Types: Cormak-1, 2 and 3 are mineral planets. Cormak-4 and 5 are gaseous planets. Cormak-6 is a planetoid.

Livable Worlds: Cormak-3 is the home planet of the Cormakian people.

Other Info: Cormak-2 is used as a mining planet, as are two moons of Cormak-5. Cormak-6 is used as a military outpost.

Cormak-3:

- Planet Type: M-Class.
- Size: Small planet of 11,582 miles (18,532 km) in diameter.
- Rotational Period: 383 Earth days for one year; 26 hour day.
- Sky Color: Blue.
- Number of Continents: 7.
- Water Coverage: 2/3 land coverage.
- P.P.E. Level: None!
- Climate: The general climate is Spring-like, lasting about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the year, and a hard rainy season lasting $\frac{1}{4}$ of the year.
- Terrain: The terrain is mostly plains with scattered forests everywhere.
- Number of Moons: 1; a medium sized rock of 1750 miles (2,800 km) in diameter.

Karpak

Solar System Size: A large solar system with 14 planets.

Planet Types: Karpak-1 through 7 are mineral planets.

Karpak-8 through 12 are gaseous planets. Karpak-13 and 14 are planetoids.

Livable Worlds: Karpak-5 is the home planet of the Karpakian people.

Other Info: In addition to the planets, there are two asteroid belts in the 4th orbit and the 6th orbits. The Karpakians have established multiple mining facilities on the following planets and moons: Karpak-3, 4, and 6, Karpak-10D, and Karpak-12G. Also, the Karpakians are attempting to terra-form Karpak-3 and Karpak-4.

Karpak-5:

- Planet Type: M-Class.
- Size: Small planet of 5015 miles (8024 km) in diameter.
- Rotational Period: 14.9 Earth years for one year; 40 hour day.
- Sky Color: Mix; orange at the morning, then green the "noon" hours, and colorless in the afternoon.
- Number of Continents: 6.
- Water Coverage: 50/50.
- P.P.E. Level: Low.
- Climate: The general climate is Autumn-like with a mild Winter. Both seasons are relatively the same length.
- Terrain: Valleys and plateaus mostly cover the terrain, with foliage forests and some areas are very rocky.
- Number of Moons: 3; an asteroid, a giant rock, and a frozen moon (in order of orbit around the planet). The sizes in diameter are 445 miles (712 km), 1720 miles (2,752 km), and 2055 miles (3,288 km), respectively.

Kriptak

Solar System Size: A typical solar system with 8 planets.

Planet Types: The planets are in an abnormal order, not following the generally accepted "rules" of physics. Kriptak-2 and 5 are mineral planets, Kriptak-3 and 6 are gaseous planets; Kriptak-1, 4, 7, and 8 are planetoids.

Livable Worlds: Kriptak-2 is the home planet of the Kriptakian people.

Other Info: Kriptak-2 has many moons which are used as military bases and strategic defensive positions. Kriptak-5 is used for mining, but has poor quality metals compared to the Kriptakian home world. Kriptak-5F, the mineral moon, has natural M.D.C. metals.

Karpak-5:

- Planet Type: M-Class.
- Size: Small planet of 10,215 miles (16,344 km) in diameter.
- Rotational Period: 154 Earth days for one year; 90 hour day.
- Sky Color: Blue.
- Number of Continents: 4.
- Water Coverage: Mostly land; 75% land coverage.
- P.P.E. Level: Low.
- Climate: The planet has a normal Summer and Spring; their Winters are actually hard rains.
- Terrain: Mostly valleys and plateaus cover the landscape. The planet possesses jungles at the equator level, coniferous forests in the upper continents and rocky areas throughout the planet.

- Number of Moons: 9; the planet possesses 2 giant rocks, 1 trapped comet, 3 asteroids, 1 frozen moon, one mineral moon, and one gaseous moon which has extremely strong winds.

Possible Adventure Ideas

- The player characters are part of a mercenary group or military and are sent to assist one of the three civilizations in their war effort.
- The player characters are sent by the CCW (or the FAR, if **Aliens Unlimited™**) to get an overview of the situation and report back (they don't want to get involved in a genocide).
- The player characters are sent to settle a peaceful solution between the three civilizations, but the probability of them listening is pretty slim. The player character must find "other" ways to convince them.

Palladium Fantasy RPG®

Song Magic

Optional Source Material for The Palladium Fantasy RPG®

By Joseph Larsen

The warm sea wind brushed through Bradley's hair. He was finally returning home. Only two days remained in this week-long voyage. Without his mentor as a translator, his limitation of using sign language to communicate had made this voyage a difficult one. For the first time in a long time, he had regretted never being able to hear. Being deaf proved time after time to be a hindrance in this world. Often during this voyage he had found himself the object of ridicule by the crew of this ship. He could read their insults as they spawned from their silent lips. It would definitely be good to get back home.

Finished with his rest up on deck, he stared at his feet as he wandered back to his meager quarters. Just before he reached the entrance to the lower level, he noticed his shadow dissolve from the deck. Looking around, he saw the eerie fog that had overtaken their ship. "That's strange," he thought, "the weather was so clear you could see the shore a moment ago. Now I can barely see the top of the mast." Looking around, he watched his tormentors, the crew, marveling too at the sudden change. At the same time he could read what their lips said.

"Listen to that."

"What is it?"

"It's so beautiful."

"I've never heard anything so wonderful."

"Quiet. I'm trying to listen."

All at once their mouths stopped. Everyone around him stared towards the shore. Even the children were affected.

His mind raced, "What's happening? This doesn't make any sense. Why am I not affected?" Panicking, he scrambled around the ship to see if anyone was still unaffected. There was no one else.

He stumbled, and almost fell, as the ship suddenly changed course. He looked towards the captain at the wheel. The captain was steering the ship into the rocky shore! "No, this can't be! What's he doing? Doesn't he know we'll all perish?"

Bradley soon found that the captain was unaffected by any attempts to catch his attention. He courageously grabbed the wheel and fought the captain to turn it in the other direction. The captain's gaze remained steady as he resisted and corrected the heading back to the shore. The struggle continued for what seemed like a panicked eternity. Both had their hands firmly on the wheel, with each one prying it in the opposite direction. Even pain didn't seem to have any effect on the captain. Desperate, Bradley used his whole body weight to slam into him. Luckily, his last attempt to overtake the wheel was successful. With the captain lying on the deck, Bradley was able to steer the ship back away from the shore. It was just in time too. As the ship turned, he could barely make out the cliffs that would have meant their doom through the dense fog.

Safe now, the crew and passengers slowly regained themselves. They were totally unaware that Bradley had saved them

from peril. He never found out exactly what caused this, but the next two days' ridiculing on the voyage didn't seem so bad, even though nothing changed. He was a hero, but only he knew it. He learned that day that being deaf actually had its benefits.

Song Magic is not new to the Palladium Fantasy World. Legends tell of mystic Sirens at sea which used their beautiful, enchanting songs to lure ships into the rocky shores. These songs were believed to have controlling effects on the seamen who heard them. It is also believed that the Sirens would control the weather, causing a deep fog to overtake the shore. The ship's crew would have no idea how close they were to the shore until it was too late.

Up until now, Sirens have been the only known users of this magic. But, over many, many years, a group of magi have perfected songs that could mimic the Sirens' mystic effects. Therefore, this type of magic could be considered "new" in the sense that this is the first time it has been able to be reproduced by a being other than a Siren or another mystical creature. In that way, it is still in its infancy.

Charging a great price, these magi have taken apprentices to learn this form in combination with other forms of magic. Some kingdoms have sent musicians to learn this magic so that they would have this as part of their knowledge base. These few kingdoms use these tunes in different ways. A common way is to have flutes or bagpipes playing along side the armies to inspire them before battle or help them march further.

There are some magi who were apprentices at one time but have gone out on their own and taken on their own apprentices to teach. These musicians usually have a good knowledge base of the tunes and other magic spells.

Each tune consists of a series of special notes that have been compiled and recorded in the tomes of the magi who developed these tunes. More are being created or discovered as time goes by.

This form of magic is used to produce different effects on living creatures' minds. It is able to control objects only to a limited degree, and demons and the undead are immune to this type of magic. To be effective, the victims will need to be able to hear the music. Things such as loud noises would need to be constant (or half the tune's length) in order to cancel out the effects of the music. If there are a few short, loud interruptions, the music's power is not affected. The musicians must be careful because these songs will also affect friends within the affected area.

Simply playing the tunes on any old instrument will not produce the effects. The mage must use a combination of an enchanted musical instrument and P.P.E. to produce the magic effects. The enchantment on these instruments allows control of the range and the basic direction of the music. So, if the mage decides to play in a specific direction or range, his friends may stand out of the way to not be affected. The tunes may also be contained to an area as small as a bedside. For example, if a mage were to play the healing song quietly for a sole colleague on a battlefield, the others around would not be able to hear it and therefore would not be affected. All good quality instruments have a maximum range of 100 feet (30.5 m), +25 feet (7.6 m) per the mage's level of experience.

The songs may also be sung. In order to do this, the singer must spend 3 more P.P.E. than listed in each spell. But this adds a +10% to the skill roll of the song (listed in the song spell's information). This allows a singer to use the spells without an instrument. The mage must have a Singing skill of 60% or better, due to the quality needed to make the magic work. The Song Mage may opt to have singing as an option, but the time used to develop the voice will deduct from the Play Musical Instrument O.C.C. Skill. If a magic tune is being sung, roll the percentage on the tune spell, not the Singing skill. The range for singing is usually a maximum of 80 feet (24.4 m), +10 feet (3 m) per the mage's level of experience.

A down side to singing is that the mage can only sing for a limited amount of time. They can sing for half their P.E. in hours per day without any penalties. They can sing a maximum of their P.E. in hours per day. But if they do end up singing that long, they will need one or two days to recover. If they do not rest, and try to press their voice, then they receive a -15% accumulative penalty to singing each day they press their voice. On top of that, roll an accumulated 20% chance each day of gaining laryngitis (losing their voice) for 1D4 days.

These spells start taking effect HALF way through the song's noted length. Anyone in the affected area must roll to save vs magic at this time. But for the tune's effect to achieve the listed duration, it needs to be performed completely. If it is interrupted after the halfway point, then the effects are immediately canceled. Once the tune is played in its entirety, its effect may last minutes or hours. The song may be played again immediately or later to reset the duration. Additional songs may be played after a song is already effective to accumulate the desired effects. Victims that are already under the influence of a music spell are -6 to save vs any following music spells.

These tunes may be taught and practiced by any type of magic user, provided they can play an instrument well or sing well. When singing or playing the tunes, the mage must be in a state of concentration, which is similar to meditation. They must be performed correctly, as well. This is why they must roll to see if the skill is performed successfully.

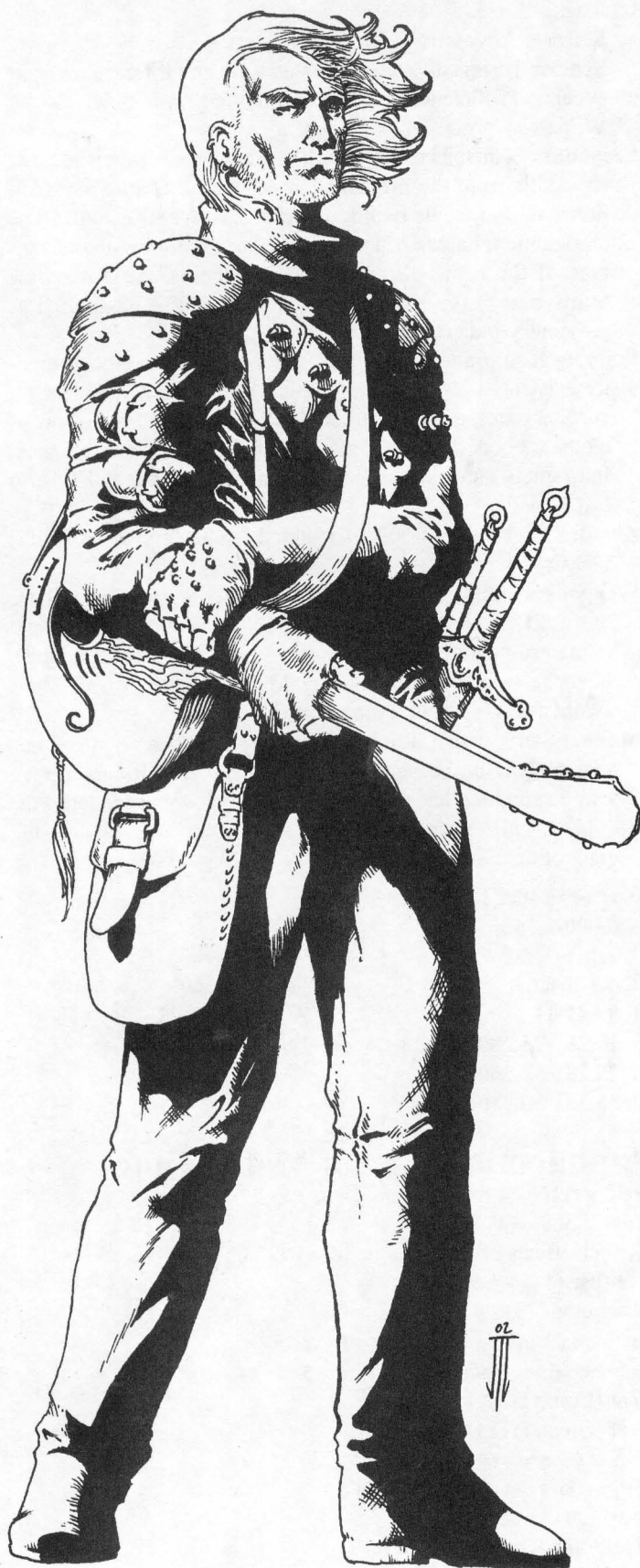
While the mage plays the instrument at any volume, he or she has a bonus of +8 to save vs any other Song Magic, but they don't have to roll to save if they want the effects. They will never be affected by their own music. During this concentration, they may do simple things like walk, but they cannot dodge or attack.

The saving throw for most Song Magic spells is 14. Any bonuses given by P.E. to save vs magic apply.

The Song Mage

Some kingdoms have assigned Song Mage to travel with their armies. Along with using them during combat and sieges, many have a set of musician magi to march along side the army while playing their flutes and or bagpipes. They do this to inspire and strengthen their troops prior to battle. These tunes can also allow the troops to march faster and longer while the music is played.

These Song Magi have become valuable and are protected members of the armies of these kingdoms. For obvious reasons magi that belong to the kingdoms have more availability of learning new magic tunes than the rogue magi do. But they are



also more closely monitored and regulated. The rogue magi have gone out and ventured on their own and would need to belong to a guild if they were to have a high availability of new tunes and spells.

The Song Mage is also very skilled at playing all music. They may be able to hear a tune and repeat it with little practice. The only problem with using this method to learn new magic tunes is if they would have to keep from being affected by the tune's magic.

Even though the Song Mage is taught basic abilities for using this type of magic, they can also learn other magic spells. Likewise, any other magic user may learn to use these tunes, provided they have the Play Musical Instrument skill at 50% or better or have the Singing skill at 60% or higher.

Because of the effective range and power of these tunes, they are regulated as much as possible by the military. Rogue Song Magi are outlawed in most kingdoms. They are not allowed to perform in concerts in any city. It is becoming more common for kingdoms to do their best to check all the instruments and voices of a performing orchestra prior to performances to make sure they are not enchanted. This is for the people's safety, and more importantly, the royalty's own protection.

Song Mage and Armor: The Song Mage prefers leather armor for agility.

Song Mage O.C.C. Abilities and Bonuses:

1. Special Song Mage Skills:

Literacy: Music: This is the ability to read and record music on paper. A Song Mage will have a book available to record tunes that they have learned. The Song Mage may also write their own non-magical tunes for entertainment or other purposes. They will know how to write the musical notes down so that they can refer to it at any later time. The base skill is 60% +4% per level.

Recognize Magic and Magic Tunes: The Song Mage can listen to a tune and recognize if it is enchanted or not. They will be able to feel the magic coming from the tune. This will give them time to warn others and/or start playing the Cancel Effects of Song Magic tune. The basic skill for this is 65% +4% per level. They will be able to recognize the effects of regular magic as well.

Recognize Enchanted Instrument/Voice and Instrument Quality: Upon examination of any instrument, the Song Mage will be able to determine if it is enchanted for the purpose of playing Song Magic. The mage will also be able to tell if the instrument is poor, good, excellent, or superior in quality. On top of this, the Song Mage will be able to use this skill, along with the Sense Magic spell, to determine if someone's voice can sing magic tunes. To do this, the mage just needs to hear the person speak or sing. The skill base is 50% +6% per level.

2. Starting Level Musical Spells: The basic tunes that are taught are all of them at level one. These are Calm/Soothe, Cancel Effects of Song Magic, and Inspire/Encourage. Select one second level song spell as well. With a good quality instrument, the range for the spells is 100 feet (30 m) +25 feet (7.6 m) per the mage's level of experience.

3. Additional Spells: The Song Mage will most likely have learned non-Song Magic spells as well. Select the Sense Magic spell as well as three other first level spells to start.

4. Learning New Spells: Like most magic users, at any time the Song Mage may learn any other spells, musical or not, regardless of the mage's level. This is provided the character can find an instructor and pay the fee. In addition, at each new level,

select two spells (Song Magic or non-Song Magic spells) from the character's level or below.

5. See and Use Ley lines: The Song Mage can see powerful magic energy lines known as ley lines and the points where they junction known as nexus points. The mage recognizes these lines and points as places of power where their own magic abilities can be enhanced. The mage can absorb P.P.E. energy from the ley line as well. See the Magic section in the **Palladium Fantasy RPG®** for more details and bonuses.

6. Ley Line Rejuvenation: When standing on a ley line or nexus, the mage can absorb ley line energy to double the rate of the character's natural healing. To do this, the mage must concentrate on healing while relaxing on a ley line. Instant rejuvenation can also be used once every 24 hours. After about 10 minutes of concentration, 2D6 Hit Points and 2D6 S.D.C. are magically restored; no P.P.E. is expended to do this.

7. P.P.E.: Permanent P.P.E. Base: 3D4x10+20 in addition to the P.E. attribute number. Add 3D6 P.P.E. per each level of experience, starting at level two. The mage can also draw P.P.E. from ley lines and nexus points. At ley lines and nexus points, the range, duration and effects are increased appropriately.

8. Magic Bonuses: Each Song Mage receives a bonus of +1 to save vs magic at levels three, six, nine, twelve and fifteen. They also receive a +3 to save vs Horror Factor.

Spell Strength (the number others must roll to save against when a tune is played, or spell is cast) gains +1 at levels four, eight, twelve and fifteen. The base to save vs Song Magic is 14.

Alignment: The Song Mage may be any alignment.

Attribute Minimum Requirements: I.Q. 10 or higher; a high M.E. is recommended but not required.

O.C.C. Skills:

Play Musical Instrument: Select 2 (+35%; OR +25% if Singing is chosen as an O.C.C. Skill).

Hear and Repeat Music: 55% +6% per level.

Language: Native Tongue at 98% plus two of choice (+20% each).

Literacy: Two of choice (+15%).

Lore: Magic (+20%)

Lore: One of choice (+15%)

Mathematics: Basic (+20%)

W.P.: One of choice.

Hand to Hand: Basic

Hand to Hand: Expert may be selected, but at the cost of 2 O.C.C. Related Skills.

Optional: Singing (+30%; counts as 1 O.C.C. Related Skill. Reduce bonus to Play Musical Instrument to +25%.)

O.C.C. Related Skills: The Song Magi are usually well educated, but not trained well physically. They are trained to defend themselves at a basic level. Select nine skills at level one. Plus one additional at levels three, six, nine and twelve. All new skills start at first level proficiency.

Communications and Performing Arts: Any.

Domestic: Any (+20% to Play Musical Instruments).

Espionage: Forgery or Intelligence only (+5%).

Horsemanship: General only.

Medical: Any except Surgeon.

Military: None (may choose Military Etiquette if in military).

Physical: Running, Forced march (if military), and Athletics only.

Rogue: None.

Science: Any.

Scholar/Technical: Any (+10% on Lore and Literacy).

Weapon Proficiencies: Blunt, Sword, and Knife only.

Wilderness: Any.

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select four Secondary Skills from the previous list at level one, and one additional skill at levels two, four, seven, ten and thirteen. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the advantage of the bonus listed in the parentheses. All Secondary Skills start at the base skill level. Also skills are limited as previously indicated in the list.

Starting Equipment: The mage starts out with one good quality enchanted instrument of choice, a music notebook for recording tunes, a set of quill and ink to write with, two sets of clothes, boots, hat, belt, blanket, backpack, one large sack, four small sacks, a water skin, and dried meats and fruit to last 1D4+1 weeks.

Armor: Starts with a suit of studded leather armor (A.R. 12, S.D.C. 40).

Weapons: A knife and one additional weapon of choice. All are basic S.D.C. weapons of good quality. Magic weapons and items are acquired later (except one enchanted instrument). Favorite weapons of the Song Mage include knives, short swords, staves, blunt weapons, and slings.

Money: Starts with 150 in gold or equipment. Can be used immediately to purchase any available items. Additional money can be acquired later via adventures or payment rendered for jobs. If enlisted in an army, they automatically receive the rank of Corporal and the base pay is 220 gold per month.

Experience Table

1. 0,000-2,160	
2. 2,161-4,320	8. 50,841-72,280
3. 4,321-8,640	9. 72,281-97,560
4. 8,641-17,280	10. 97,561-132,840
5. 17,281-25,280	11. 132,841-190,280
6. 25,281-35,560	12. 190,281-240,560
7. 35,561-50,840	13. 240,561-297,880

Alphabetical List of Magic Tunes

Believe (10) — Level 4

Calm/Soothe (4) — Level 1

Cancel Effects of Song Magic (4) — Level 1

Confuse (5) — Level 2

Discourage (5) — Level 2

Enchant an Instrument (50) — Level 5

Enhance Endurance (14) — Level 5

Fear (Lesser) (6) — Level 3

Fear (Greater) (15) — Level 6

Forget (Lesser) (9) — Level 4

Forget (Greater) (35) — Level 8

Frustrate (7) — Level 3

Heal/Regenerate (4) — Level 2

Infuriate (20) — Level 7

Inspire/Encourage (3) — Level 1

Lure (14) — Level 5

Obey (Lesser) (11) — Level 4

Obey (Greater) (25) — Level 7

Move Object (special) — Level 5

Remember (7) — Level 3

Sleep (12) — Level 4

Strengthen (16) — Level 6

Weaken (17) — Level 6

Wither (40) — Level 9

Magic Tune Descriptions

Believe

Duration: 1D4 minutes per level.

Length of Tune: 30 seconds (2 melees).

P.P.E.: 10

Saving Throw: Standard.

Spell Level: 4

Skill: 50% +5% per level.

This grants the mage the power of suggestion over the victim. The affected will believe anything that they are told, true or not, as long as they have not saved vs the tune. They will even deny being able to see when their eyes are open if they are told to do so. It is similar to hypnosis. Once the duration is past, the affected will no longer be susceptible to further suggestion. Once the effects are over, roll vs M.E. to determine if they will continue to believe the "not-so-obvious" things that they have been told while under the spell.

Calm/Soothe

Duration: 1 minute +1D4 minutes per level.

Length of Tune: 15 seconds (1 melee).

P.P.E.: 4

Saving Throw: Standard.

Spell Level: 1

Skill: 70% + 5% per level.

This tune will cause any fears or anger to be dashed. This tune seems more like a lullaby. The affected will not worry about anything and will have +5 to save vs Horror Factor. It will also soothe the anger of anyone within the effective range. This is useful against things such as angry mobs.

Cancel Effects of Song Magic

Duration: Only while tune is being played.

Length of Tune: 15 seconds (1 melee).

P.P.E.: 4

Saving Throw: Standard.

Spell Level: 1

Skill: 70% + 5% per level.

This tune may be used to cancel out effects of any other tune that is being played. It also may be used to cancel out already effective Song Magic. To prevent a tune from becoming effective, this tune is played while the other is being played. This will cancel out any level of tune that is first being played (before it takes effect), but it can only cancel out a tune's existing effects that are lower to or equal to the Song Mage's level. For example, a second level Song Mage cannot cancel out a third level spell's effects, if that spell has already taken effect. If this tune is played to cancel a tune that is being cast, but not yet completed, this tune gives a bonus to save of +7 to save vs Song Magic. For someone that is already under a song spell's effect, the affected needs to re-roll the save vs magic with a bonus of +4. A successful save will cancel the effects on the victim.

Confuse

Duration: 2 minutes per level.

Length of Tune: 15 seconds (1 melee).

P.P.E.: 5

Saving Throw: Standard.

Spell Level: 2 **Skill:** 65% +5% per level.

This causes the affected to be in a confused state. They will act as though they do not know what is going on. They might stop doing what they're doing just to try to figure it out. They will lose 1 attack and have -3 to initiative each melee during the effect of the tune.

Discourage

Duration: 2 minutes per level.

Length of Tune: 15 seconds (1 melee).

P.P.E.: 5

Saving Throw: Standard.

Spell Level: 2

Skill: 65% +5% per level.

This will cause the affected to become discouraged and depressed. They will feel as if they can't do anything right, but they don't want to get mad about it. They will most likely quit what they are attempting to do and either sulk, or just walk away.

Enchant an Instrument

Duration: Permanent.

Time to enchant: 2D4+2 hours.

P.P.E.: 50

Spell Level: 5

Skill: 35% +5% per level.

A Song Mage may take any instrument and enchant it so that it can be used to play Song Magic. This takes a lot of P.P.E. and time to do. The instrument quality will also play a part in the range of the music played. Poor quality instruments have a -25 feet (7.6 m) penalty to range, while good quality instruments have no bonuses or negatives to range. An excellent quality instrument (rare) adds 50 feet (15.2 m) to range, and a superior quality instrument (very rare) adds 75 feet (22.9 m) to range.

Enhance Endurance

Duration: Only while tune is being played.

Length of Tune: 15 seconds (1 melees).

P.P.E.: 14

Saving Throw: Standard (if unwilling).

Spell Level: 5

Skill: 45% +5% per level.

This will give the affected temporary endurance to march longer, endure hunger better, or carry more. They will gain a temporary bonus of +4 to P.E. and will be able to march twice as long, twice as fast. Note that this does not double their top running speed, but the pace of a long, sustained march.

Fear (Lesser)

Duration: 2 minutes per level.

Length of Tune: 15 seconds (1 melee).

P.P.E.: 6

Saving Throw: Standard.

Spell Level: 3

Skill: 60% +5% per level.

Magi use this tune to cause the affected to gain a sense of fear. This will enhance the Horror Factor of anything around, including places, things, or people, causing a -3 to save vs Horror Factor for the affected. This is usually used to make people flee, or stay away from something. Roll once to save vs music and roll again to save vs Horror Factor.



Fear (Greater)

Duration: 1D6 minutes per level.

Length of Tune: 30 seconds (2 melees).

P.P.E.: 15

Saving Throw: 12

Spell Level: 6

Skill: 40% +5% per level.

This is like the Lesser tune except that it is usually used by itself, without any other source of fear. This will be enough to cause an extreme, unexplainable fear to overcome the affected, creating a Horror Factor of 14 by itself. Roll once to save vs music and roll again to save vs Horror Factor.

Forget (Lesser)

Duration: Permanent (until reversed).

Length of Tune: 15 seconds (1 melee).

P.P.E.: 9

Saving Throw: Standard.

Spell Level: 4

Skill: 55% +5% per level.

This is the ability to cause the affected to forget up to the last 1D6 minutes of time, +1 minute per level. They will not remember unless the Remember tune or another similar spell is used.

Forget (Greater)

Duration: Permanent (until reversed).

Length of Tune: 30 seconds (2 melees).

P.P.E.: 35

Saving Throw: Standard.

Spell Level: 8

Skill: 30% +5% per level.

This is the ability to cause the affected to forget 1D4 days at a time, plus 12 hours per level. They will not remember this period of time unless the Remember tune, Cancel Effects tune, or a similar spell is used.

Frustrate

Duration: 2 minutes per level.

Length of Tune: 15 seconds (1 melee).

P.P.E.: 7

Saving Throw: Standard.

Spell Level: 3

Skill: 60% +5% per level.

This tune will cause the affected to become frustrated. Their response will likely be to become irrational and even sloppy. They will complain and be ready to give up soon, even if the affected isn't trying to do anything. This will give a -3 to strike, parry, and dodge and will give a -10% to any attempted skills while affected.

Heal/Regenerate

Duration: Only while tune is being played.

Length of Tune: 15 seconds (1 melee).

P.P.E.: 4

Saving Throw: Standard (if unwilling).

Spell Level: 2

Skill: 65% +5% per level.

This tune will put the affected into a light meditation or sleep, which helps the body to regenerate at a rate of 30 Hit Points per hour (1 every two minutes), plus 5 I.S.P. and/or 5 P.P.E. per hour, while the song is played. The tune needs to be played all the way through once before it takes effect. After that, the mage must continue to play the song for the effects to continue.

Infuriate

Duration: 1D4 minutes per level.

Length of Tune: 30 seconds (2 melees).

P.P.E.: 20

Saving Throw: 10

Spell Level: 7

Skill: 35% +5% per level.

This will cause the affected to be enraged at anything and everything, causing an almost uncontrolled fury. The affected will be angry with anyone near them for any or no reason. They will be so distracted by others around them that they will lose 2 attacks per melee for the duration of the tune.

Inspire/Encourage

Duration: 2 minutes per level.

Length of Tune: 15 seconds (1 melee).

P.P.E.: 3

Saving Throw: Standard.

Spell Level: 1

Skill: 70% +5% per level.

This is usually played before battles to raise morale. This will give all those affected a temporary bonus of +2 to initiative, strike, parry and dodge.

Lure

Duration: Only while tune is being played.

Length of Tune: 30 seconds (2 melees).

P.P.E.: 14

Saving Throw: Standard.

Spell Level: 5

Skill: 45% +5% per level.

This tune will cause the affected to move towards the sound of the tune. The follower will make any change in direction or attempt to overcome any obstacle to get to the tune's origin.

Move Object

Duration: Only while tune is being played.

Length of Tune: 5 seconds (2 attacks).

P.P.E.: 3 per 10 lbs (4.5 kg) of weight.

Saving Throw: Standard (if target is alive), or a strength roll to keep hold of an object.

Spell Level: 5

Skill: 45% +4% per level.

Weight Limitations: 50 lbs (22.5 kg) per level of experience.

This tune will allow the mage to move objects, similar to Telekinesis. This only allows the mage to move things in basic straight lines, though he may change the direction, and the object only moves at a pitiful speed of 3. The mage can use this to pull levers from across a chasm, attract objects through the air, or lift an object off of a person. Combat using this method is impossible since the movement is so slow.

The object must be in sight of the mage, and must be within range of the mage's instrument or voice.

Obey (Lesser)

Duration: 1D6 minutes per level.

Length of Tune: 15 seconds (1 melee).

P.P.E.: 11

Saving Throw: Standard.

Spell Level: 4

Skill: 55% +5% per level.

The affected will obey basic commands. This is not powerful enough to cause the affected to do something against their alignment, but it can be something simple such as, "put your weapon down," or "give me the medallion." If the save is unsuccessful, the victim will obey the suggestion without hesitation.

Obey (Greater)

Duration: 1D4 minutes per level.

Length of Tune: 30 seconds (2 melees).

P.P.E.: 25

Saving Throw: 8

Spell Level: 7

Skill: 35% +5% per level.

This is more powerful than the Obey (Lesser) tune in the sense that the affected will be willing to do things that are against their alignment or loyalties. The victim still may not be forced to kill himself or a loved one, and note that this spell has a very low saving throw.

Remember

Duration: 3 minutes + 1D4 per level.

Length of Tune: 45 seconds (3 melees).

P.P.E.: 7

Saving Throw: Special.

Spell Level: 3

Skill: 50% +5% per level.

This is the ability to allow the affected to remember things that the mage requests. This can undo the Forget tunes or similar spells, but the song must be played one time per day for 1D4+1 consecutive days to make the memory restoration permanent. Each time this spell is cast, the affected may roll a new save against the spell which originally caused the memory loss. The affected gains a cumulative +2 to save for each day that the Remember tune is successful. If any of the saves are failed, in the case of a permanent memory loss, this spell's effects are only temporary.

Sleep

Duration: 1D4 hours per level.

Length of Tune: 30 seconds (2 melees).

P.P.E.: 12

Saving Throw: Standard.

Spell Level: 4

Skill: 45% +5% per level.

This causes the affected to fall into a deep sleep, far deeper than normal. The affected will only be able to be awakened when the duration wears off, or when another magic song is played. Other forms of magic can wake the affected as well.

Strengthen

Duration: 1D4 minutes per level.

Length of Tune: 30 seconds (2 melees).

P.P.E.: 16

Saving Throw: Standard (if unwilling).

Spell Level: 6

Skill: 40% +5% per level.

This will give an adrenaline rush, which will temporarily strengthen the affected. They will gain a temporary bonus of +4 to P.S. and P.E. They will gain a temporary +3 to damage ONLY if P.S. is not high enough to add a damage bonus.

Weaken

Duration: 1D4 minutes per level.

Length of Tune: 30 seconds (2 melees).

P.P.E.: 17

Saving Throw: Standard.

Spell Level: 6

Skill: 45% +5% per level.

This will cause weakness to occur in the affected. They will not be able to lift, carry, or do as much damage as normal for the duration of the effect. The spell will reduce P.S. and P.E. by 4 for the duration of the tune.

Wither

Duration: Only while tune is being played.

Length of Tune: 45 seconds (3 melees).

P.P.E.: 40

Saving Throw: 12

Spell Level: 9

Skill: 20% +5% per level.

This is the opposite of the Heal/Regenerate tune. It causes any living creature to lose Hit Points, I.S.P. and/or P.P.E. while they are under the effects of the tune. The effects will occur after the first time it is played through completely. The tune must be played over and over again to remain effective. The affected will lose 1D4+1 S.D.C./Hit Points per melee. They will also lose 1D4 I.S.P. and/or 1D4 P.P.E. per melee. They will also



temporarily receive a -2 penalty to P.E. for the duration of the tune.



Wormwood

Optional Source Material for Rifts®: Wormwood™

By Eric Thompson

The Symbiotic Warrior O.C.C.

Of the humans who have developed a bond with Wormwood, only those with shamanistic or priestly powers, such as the Wormspeaker or Priest, possess the ability to manipulate the living planet through a magic called *Communion*. These so-called

“shamans” are able to fabricate dwellings and create food sources, as well as having a limited influence over the environment. However, none would be so bold as to use the planet as a means to power, or dare pervert its creations for the purpose of a tool or weapon. None, that is, except for the daring individuals known as *Symbiotic Warriors*.

Symbiotic Warriors are creatures, human or D-Bee, who rely on the powers provided to them through symbiotic organisms. However, life forms created by Wormwood are *not* naturally symbiotic and must be found or summoned and joined to the body using special magic. Through the bonding of life forms, the warrior is able to use the creatures’ natural abilities as if they were his own. Other characteristics are also commonly discovered as a byproduct of the unnatural union, characteristics such as supernatural strength and endurance, and paranormal abilities similar to invocation magic or psionic ability, neither of which are native to the planet. It is not known why these side effects occur, though many are quick to blame the forbidden magic, which is largely a cause for the planet-wide fear and hatred of these individuals.

Similar to a cyborg’s complement of bionic and cybernetic systems, the Symbiotic Warrior is an arsenal of living components. Each of these components is created from living creatures and fused to the body through powerful magic. Once bonded, one cannot be separated from the other by any normal means; only magic of equal power can separate the creatures without harm. Death of the host will kill any organism attached to the body; what one feels, the others do as well, and what one thinks, the others understand. The warrior will have at least a few various symbiotes attached to his body, and will likely continue to add or change his complement as time goes on. For him it’s almost an addiction to add or create new symbiotes.

The creation of symbiotes from the planet is another dimension to the powerful *Communion* magic known as *Control Communion*. Like Necromancy, it is seen as a dark and perverse doctrine, branded as taboo, and associated with evil and corruption; to enslave a living creature is a crime against the church, and defiling the natural (human) body with unnatural modification is another. To seek this power is to cast away virtue and honor for power and debauchery. Those who are discovered to have an unhealthy interest in symbiosis, and who cannot be persuaded back to the path of righteousness, are thrown into exile, provided they’re not convicted of heresy and executed first.

This leaves the individual in a lonely world of isolation and distrust, where one needs to be careful who they talk to — sympathy is rare and friends are almost nonexistent. The enemy is more abundant than pores on the skin. The very presence of the Symbiotic Warrior subjects them to the fear and prejudice of others.

It is no surprise, then, that a network of who-you-can-trust has developed from individuals subjected to the same fate, and a secret society of sorts has manifested itself among Symbiotic Warriors and their few sympathizers. A product so pure that even the vilest of warriors will see others of his kind as a “brother” or “sister.” The society is locked tight from outsiders and ruled by the sword and pen; Symbiotic Warriors take care of their own whether it be reward or punishment, acclamation or death. In this sense, the society is like a family and every warrior knows of each other, at least by name, be they newcomers or old-timers, green or veteran, virtuous or despotic.



Symbiotic Warriors are the epitome of the lone wolf. Even among their own kind they often prefer solitude and the company of their own thoughts. This is not to say that they shun the company of others, it simply means they are very self-reliant. Many are active in resistance cells and mercenary groups, but most are solitary adventurers, soldiers-of-fortune, bounty hunters, or killers. In any case, the Symbiotic Warrior can be trusted to take care of himself.

It is typically understood that the demographic of the Symbiotic Warrior is that of uneducated, uncivilized, or weak people with a vengeful, debaucherous lust for power. The same is said of Juicers, Crazies, and Cyborgs, but this is hardly the case. The Symbiotic Warrior is driven by his passions and guided by his heart. Because they cast off the shackles of society and denounce the Cathedral as their ruler, they are branded heretics, brigands, and minions of evil. Not that they really care; bickering nobles are said to be more irritating than swarming flies.

Finally, bonding with another life form, especially for the first time, can be a traumatic experience, with side effects from the union manifesting both physically and psychologically. As more creatures are added, the "noise," or communication between the host and symbiotes, as well as symbiote communication between each other, can be more than the person can handle. Unfortunately, feeble-minded characters who become paranoid or insane do nothing to help the overall reputation of the class.

Powers & Abilities of the Symbiotic Warrior:

1. Alignment: Any, but most seem to be Anarchist, Unprincipled, Scrupulous, or Aberrant. All follow some sort of code or another, some as bare-bones as their alignment, while others are more like the *Code of the West* or the *Code of Chivalry*.

2. P.P.E.: Roll 1D4x10 to determine the permanent base P.P.E. with an additional 1D6 per level of experience. Additional P.P.E. can be drawn from attached symbiotes, crystals, stones or special talismans. P.P.E. cannot be obtained from other living beings other than symbiotes, nor can it be drawn from animal sacrifices, magic cauldrons, or ley lines. Also, at first level, the character is *not* trained in the art of Meditation (see *Magic Communion* for this ability).

3. M.D.C. base is 4D6+30 added to the character's P.E. attribute, with an additional 1D6 per level of experience. Additional M.D.C. can be gained from skill bonuses (one S.D.C. equals one M.D.C.). In an S.D.C. environment, roll Hit Points and S.D.C. as usual, with an S.D.C. base of 4D6+30 S.D.C.

4. O.C.C. Bonuses: +1 on initiative, +1 to pull punch, +1 to roll with punch, fall or impact, +1 to save vs psionic and supernatural possession, +2 to save vs Horror Factor at level one with an additional +1 to save at levels three, five, seven, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen and fifteen. These bonuses are in addition to those attained through hand to hand combat, Magic Communion, physical skills or high attributes, as well as those gained from symbiotic organisms.

5. Penalties and Insanities. Every level of experience, starting at first level, the character must make a successful **save versus insanity**; 12 or higher with any M.E. or other special bonuses added. A failed roll means he begins to develop insanities as per the Crazie O.C.C. (see *Rifts RPG®*). Roll at each new level. A failed roll means the character slips further into insanity (next on the list) while a successful save means no change (no improvement, either).

Off-World Penalties (optional). When the character is anywhere other than Wormwood, Communion Magic that relies on Wormwood itself will not work, and magic involving symbiotes is only half as effective. Additionally, the character's M.D.C. and P.P.E. are reduced by half. Symbiote M.D.C., P.P.E., bonuses, and abilities are also reduced by half (unless otherwise

noted). Symbiotes will also die within 1D6 hours if not within the immediate area of the character (about three feet/0.9 m). The Symbiote Warrior is considered to be a "fragment of Wormwood," meaning that symbiotes, stones, and other objects dependent on Wormwood to exist, will remain as long as they are within the immediate area of the character.

6. Communion Magic. The Symbiotic Warrior has the ability to master very special Communion abilities that allow him influence over life forms, both living and dead. The following are basic Communion abilities known to Warriors at first level: Close an Opening, Create an Opening, Locate Home Town, Ride Giant Parasites, and Attune to Symbiote.

The character can select one new *Control Communion Magic* ability with each additional level of experience starting at level one. No other forms of Communion Magic are available to the character (unless he were to give up his ways as a Symbiotic Warrior and become a Hermit, Wormspeaker Shaman, or <gasp> Priest).

7. Symbiotic Organisms. At first level the character can select up to four organisms from any category, for a total of four. Additional organisms can be added at any time at a "Symbiote Forge" (a place, not unlike a chop-shop, where warriors can get new symbiotes) or if the character has the Communion Magic abilities to Mold and Bond with Organisms.

Limitations and Penalties: Generally speaking, there is no limit to how many organisms the character can wear at one time. Too many for too long, however, will drive him mad. Thus, the "safe" amount is equal to the character's *M.E. divided by two*. **One additional symbiote** can be added at levels two, four, six, eight, ten, and twelve; thus, a first level character with an *M.E.* of 8 can wear up to 4 organisms at one time. For each symbiote over this number, the character is -1 to save vs insanity and is -2% on all skills. Furthermore, for every two additional symbiotes, the character is -1 on all combat and saving throws (not counting Insanity), and for every three additional symbiotes the character is -1 melee attack, and all penalties are accumulative; i.e. if the same character with the *M.E.* of 8 were to wear six symbiotes, he would be -2 to save vs insanity, -4% on all skills, and -1 on all combat bonuses and saving throws. If he were to wear nine symbiotes he would be -5 to save vs insanity, -10% on all skills, -2 on all combat bonuses and saving throws, and -1 melee attack.

8. Horror Factor: The Symbiote Warrior has a base Horror Factor of 8 even if he is not wearing any symbiote or they are not visible (the character just has an intimidating aura). This base is increased by one point at levels three, six, nine, eleven, thirteen, fourteen and fifteen, as well as by wearing symbiotes.

Note that Horror Factor will likely frighten humans as well as monsters. Ill sentiment towards the character, his reputation, or Symbiotic Warriors in general could see the Horror Factor increased to as much as double the base depending on the situation (G.M.'s discretion). This intimidation cannot be "shut-off" and may do more harm than good, especially when dealing with peasants who are already frightened or up in arms, or citizens of the Cathedral (i.e. Knights of the Temple are ordered to kill *all* Symbiotic Warriors on sight regardless of their alignment, deeds, or reputation).

Attribute Requirements: None really, though the higher the *M.E.* attribute the better. **Note:** Reduce all skill bonuses by half

OR reduce the number of available O.C.C. Related Skills and Secondary Skills by half if the *I.Q.* is below 6.

O.C.C. Skills:

Language: American (+30%)

Language: GuildSpeak: Symbiotic Warrior (**Special!** This is a melding of American and Gobbly with a sloppy accent that is practically incomprehensible to anyone without this skill; sounds as if they're talking backwards). **Base Skill:** 70%+5% per level of experience.

Language: Select one additional (+20%).

Lore: Wormwood Organisms (+20%; applies to any and all, including parasites).

First Aid (+5%)

Land Navigation (+10%)

Wilderness Survival (+10%)

Horsemanship: Exotic Animals: General (+5%)

W.P.: Six of choice.

Hand to Hand: Expert

Hand to Hand: Expert can be changed to Assassin without skill cost, or Hand to Hand: Judo at the cost of one O.C.C. Related Skill, Hand to Hand: Commando, Aikido, Jujitsu, Karate, or Kendo, at the cost of TWO skills, or any other advanced martial art (i.e. Ninjitsu) at the cost of FOUR skills. However, Martial Art Powers are NOT included with the selection of advanced martial arts, only techniques, attribute bonuses, and any special skills.

Other Skills: Select eight skills from any of the available categories; plus an additional skill at levels three, six, nine and twelve. All new skills start at first level proficiency. **Note:** Available skills may include "off-world" skills such as Botany, Chemistry, Computer Operation, and piloting tech-vehicles.

Communication: Performance only (+10%).

Cowboy: Any (+5%); convert to apply to Wormwood as needed.

Domestic: Any (+10%).

Electrical: None.

Espionage: Any (+5%).

Mechanical: None.

Medical: None, other than O.C.C. skill.

Military: None.

Physical: Any (+5% where applicable).

Pilot: Any, except power armor, robots, tanks, and space-ships.

Pilot Related: None.

Rogue: Any (+10%).

Science: Any.

Technical: Any (+5%).

W.P.: Any.

Wilderness: Any (+5%).

Secondary Skills: The character gets to select an additional four skills from the list above, with two additional skills at levels two, five, eight and twelve. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the benefit of bonuses listed in parenthesis. All Secondary Skills start at base skill level.

Standard Equipment: One hooded cloak or cape, or other heavy jacket fit for wilderness travel, two shirts, two pairs of pants, a pair of boots, pair of gloves, sleeping bag, blanket, 1D4 small pouches, one medium-sized sack, backpack or saddle bag, 1D4 utility belts, bandoleers, or quivers, 100 feet

(30.5 m) of rope, grappling hook, 2D4 weeks of "rations," and some personal items.

Weapons: One non-magical weapon of choice for each Ancient Weapon Proficiency. One magical weapon of choice, which can either be a nice Techno-Wizard weapon, such as a black powder rifle or flaming sword, or a weapon made with a lesser Blood Stone or lesser magic crystal. *Archers* will have a decent bow (W.P. Bow) or crossbow (W.P. Crossbow) and 24 normal arrows/bolts, and 24 assorted special arrows/bolts to start. *Skirmishers* (W.P. Archery & Targeting, W.P. Sling, or W.P. Javelin) will have a bow, sling, or chuck stick and ammunition as noted for the Archer. Weapons from other worlds can also be used.

Armor: Most choose to rely on symbiotes for defense, though it is not uncommon to see a Warrior wearing light armor as well (cloth, quilted, riveted, or chain mail types; 10-40 M.D.C.). For simplicity's sake, resin armor weighs about one pound (0.45 kg) per point of M.D.C. unless specifically noted. Therefore, heavier armor can be used, but applies penalties to the Symbiotic Warrior; -1 on all combat maneuvers, -5% on skills, and tires 30% faster for medium armor (40 to 80 pounds), -2 on all combat maneuvers, -10% on all skills, -1 melee attack and tires 50% faster for heavy armor (80 to 120 pounds; double penalties if armor exceeds 120 pounds). With proper training (W.P.: Armor) the above penalties are reduced by half.

Transportation: Most walk. Some use some kind of riding animal (parasite, horse, ostrich, etc.), a few use truly exotic animals like the Gryphon, thrill-seekers use Skelter Bats or Feathered Serpents, and the truly daring use Hell Hounds. The remaining few are powerful enough to provide their own transportation.

Cybernetics & Bionics: Virtually non-existent on Wormwood. However, the character isn't necessarily opposed to augmentation, and it does not interfere with their form of magic aside from not being able to fuse animals to non-living portions of the body (even bio-systems).

Symbiotes: See Powers and Abilities, number seven.

Control Communion Magic

Control Communion can be explained as a mix between Necromancy and Bio-Manipulation. Most of the magic abilities in this section deal with control and manipulation of Wormwood to the whim of the user. It is in stark contrast to the shamanistic Harmonic Communion that is used by the Cathedral and the

so-called forces of light. This is the magic rumored to have been created by the Host and used by Dark Priests and Symbiotic Warriors. The limitation of the magic is to the self and the planet. Others can only be affected through force and no Communion yet allows for one to use the magic on other life, such as to create a symbiote borg. In the case of symbiotes, they can only be created and attached to the one using the magic.

Attune to Symbiote

Range: Self only.

Duration: Permanent until canceled.

Requirements: One melee action.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 4 per each symbiote or per each action.

This ability allows the user to evoke the special abilities of many symbiotes for twice the usual duration. In some cases, particularly with powerful parasites, symbiotic armor, or symbiotic devices (sentient or not), this ability is required in order to use them. A mental bond is created between the user and the symbiote which allows for direct communication between them, similar to a combination of Telepathy and Empathy.

Bond Organism (Symbiote)

Range: Self only.

Duration: Permanent until canceled.

Requirements: One melee of concentration (one melee action for Symbiote Warriors).

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 12 (6 for Symbiotic Warriors) per each symbiote.

This is the ability that allows a character to bond symbiotes to his body. It is much different from the Shaman ability to Summon and Use Symbiotes because the character already has them on his person. Thus, all he has to do is place the symbiote against the skin where he wants it to attach, and use this ability. Additionally, Symbiotic Warriors can use this power to bind symbiotes to one another or to other *non-living* objects, such as armor, weapons, or vehicles. This power only works on creatures that have already been converted to symbiotes and cannot be used on other living creatures.

Domination

Range: 300 feet (91.4 m), plus 30 feet (9.1 m) per level of experience; by line of sight.

Duration: Instant; control lasts one minute per M.E. point, plus one minute per level of experience.

Requirements: One melee attack.



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Saving Throw: Varies.

P.P.E.: 20

Penalties: Very mind consuming; characters with low M.E. (8 or less) cannot take any other action when using this power. Average M.E. (9 to 12), reduce melee attacks and combat bonuses by half and skills are -20%. High M.E. (13 to 18), reduce melee attacks and combat bonuses by one third and skills are -10%, but can still use Communion or spell magic. Extraordinary M.E. (19 and up) receive no penalty. Domination can be canceled at any time by the user.

This ability allows the user to project his will over an organism or parasite of Wormwood. It can be said that Domination is more of asking Wormwood to mediate control than it is a direct force of will, but either way, when domination is secured, the target is under complete and total control of the character. It will obey him without hesitation and carry out any order, to the death if necessary.

Domination: For characters of good alignment, control over natural Wormwood organisms is automatic, but control over evil creations and parasites requires a roll of 14 or higher (16 or higher in evil dominated lands). For evil characters the reverse is true. Characters of selfish alignment need to roll a 12 or higher to dominate either kind of organism at any location.

Battle of Wills: If the target is currently controlled by another force, it is possible to usurp that control by engaging in a brief mental wrestling match. Both parties roll a twenty-sided die five times with their M.A. attribute added to each roll. High roll wins and the first to win three out of five rolls has control over the target. Be warned that a failed battle can leave the character vulnerable to retaliation.

Ownership

Range: Touch; self or others.

Duration: One month per level of experience, or permanent.

Requirements: One minute of concentration.

Saving Throw: None unless the magic is resisted, then normal

P.P.E.: 25; 200 to make permanent.

This interesting ability is used to attune objects to their owner through binding magic. This can be any non-living thing, a symbiote, magic stone or crystal, gun, radio, toaster, and so on, that once bound, can only be used by the owner, as determined by the magic. This means that the object or device will only work for the owner; motorcycles will not start, Techno-Wizard weapons will not activate, guns will not fire (energy weapons will not power up, cartridges will not fire), stones, crystals, and talismans will be useless, symbiotes will not respond, televisions will not get a reception, etc., for anyone else. As long as the object has a function, it will only work for the one it is attuned to. In addition, the owner can sense any and all items attuned to him when they are within 500 feet (152.4 m). Symbiotes will also sense their host in this range and may look for him. Normally, objects are only attuned to one user.

Sense Purpose (Symbiote)

Range: Touch.

Duration: Instant.

Requirements: At least one melee of concentration and examination.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 8

This ability, similar to Object Read, allows the user to examine an organism to find a possible use for it as a symbiote. The character will begin to understand the physiology of the specimen, its natural abilities, intended purpose, and possible side effects from a union. Although helpful, this ability isn't required to create symbiotes. If used on parasites, the character can get an idea of why the thing was created and if it is on any particular mission, provided the subject isn't bound by magic seals or carrying misinformation. Knowledge gained by the character is permanent, provided he doesn't forget.

Sense Symbiotes

Range: 120 feet (36.6 m) plus 20 feet (6.1 m) per level of experience.

Duration: Two minutes per level of experience.

Requirements: Evocation requires one melee attack to perform.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: 6

This power allows the shaman to sense and pinpoint the location of organisms utilized as symbiotes. He will know the exact location of the symbiotes and host even if the host is disguised by normal or magic means (concealment, metamorphosis, invisibility, shadow meld, and similar), or if the symbiotes are internal. Furthermore, the ability works on all symbiotes, including off-world varieties like Splugoth Bio-Wizard components, weapons, armor, and similar, as well as the Mask of the Apok. However, it is far less refined when sensing foreign symbiotes, limiting information to a general number (1 or 2, 3-6, 7-14, or 15 or more) and whether they are near (within 50 feet/15.2 m), or far (beyond 90 feet/27.4 m). The character can tell whether the symbiotes are from Wormwood or not, largely a "yes or no" answer unless he has specific experience with a particular variety or *Lore: Symbiotes* skill.

Shape Organism (Symbiote)

Range: Touch.

Duration: Varies, though the effects are permanent.

Requirements: Strict, uninterrupted concentration.

Saving Throw: Standard.

P.P.E.: 50, plus 10 per each 5 minutes of shaping.

This powerful magic is one of the handful of forbidden abilities at the core of Command Communion. It is used strictly for the purpose of shaping and reshaping life forms into suitable symbiotes. It is a very time consuming task that is fraught with complications. Should the magic fail at any time, the shaman must recast the magic, expending another 50 P.P.E., plus additional P.P.E. required to finish the job.

All living creatures have at least one saving throw against this magic. The more sentient the creature, the more saving throws it receives and the greater the chances that the magic will fail. Wormwood organism are ideal for this magic because they have no consciousness of their own; they are products of the living planet and receive no saving throw. However, any creature that has at least minor animal intelligence will have an initial saving throw, plus one additional saving throw every 30 minutes. Medium animal intelligence receive an additional saving throw every 20 minutes and high animal intelligence receive an additional saving throw every 10 minutes. Any natural resistance to magic should be noted, including resistance to transformation magic. Human equivalent intelligence is also a problem

because these creatures are capable of independent thought. Unfortunately, this is far from making them an exception. Human intelligence provides a saving throw every 5 minutes in addition to the initial saving throw. All bonuses to save vs magic, as well as resistance to transformation, should be considered. Supernatural creatures and creatures of magic are immune to this ability. Dead creatures and non-living objects have no saving throw.

Remove Symbiotes, Summon Flies, Summon & Use Symbiotes, and Summon Wind

Same as Communion. Symbiotic Warriors can cast the magic at half the P.P.E. cost and failed rolls (where applicable) do not expend P.P.E.

Summon Edible Grubs, Repel Symbiotes, Ride Giant Parasites, and Summon Entities

Same as Communion.

Meditation (General & Advanced)

Range: Self Only.

Duration: Varies.

Requirements: Undisturbed meditation.

Saving Throw: None.

P.P.E.: None.

Meditation is an ability that allows the character to slip into a mild, trance-like state that allows energy to cultivate and flow more freely within his body. The character's P.P.E. is recovered at a rate of 10 points per hour of meditation. Selecting this ability twice (Advanced Meditation) will double the character's rate of healing and will allow him to substitute one hour of meditation for one hour of sleep (i.e. eight hours of meditation would equal eight hours of sleep). Although in a trance, the character is fully aware of his surroundings and can instantly break meditation at any time without penalty. However, if the character is *disrupted* in his meditation, no P.P.E. for that hour is replenished, even if he had been meditating for 50 minutes, and he will likely be in a bad mood.

Special! With *Advanced Meditation* the character can use the ability to replenish the spell casting ability of stones, crystals, and symbiotes. One hour of meditation will replenish two spells to their full casting ability. Exact time to fully replenish any given item varies with the number of spells it contains. While the character is replenishing the object he does not regain any P.P.E., M.D.C. or Hit Points/S.D.C. It is instead channeled into the object.

Combat Symbiotes

Since symbiotes created for combat are the simplest to modify, a short list of revised organisms is included below. The expanded form is meant to give the symbiotes more definition, and hopefully some insight on use and tactics (for those of us who like to "think outside the box"). Following this is a small set of notes and tips on the Symbiotic Warrior to consider when using, making, or modifying symbiotes, creating symbiotic armor, and such.

The number and variety of Wormwood symbiotes is somewhat limited at the moment, so if this seems to set things back a bit, by all means, import organisms from other settings or create your own. The Splugorth Bio-Wizard industry is a monster machine that has vast amounts of organisms ready to be grafted to unwilling subjects, making it a perfect reference for the Symbiotic Warrior (see **Rifts®: Atlantis** and **Rifts®: Splynn Dimensional Market™**). Of course, seeing that the character is a master of the symbiotes he wears, the Symbiotic Warrior O.C.C. can also be used to create Bio-Borgs in Rifts or Phase World, or in any other horror/fantasy setting, for that matter.

P.P.E. and I.S.P. cost, or Attune to Symbiote. There are two ways to handle the special abilities of certain symbiotes, either assign them a P.P.E. and I.S.P. cost or require the user to have the *Attune to Symbiote* Communion ability. Magic spells that are associated with symbiotes, as well as stones and crystals, can be handled in two ways as well. Activating the spell could require the user to channel P.P.E. or I.S.P. into the object, or a set number of evocations per 24 hour period (typically 2 per spell, per day for lesser objects, 4 per spell, per day for greater objects and most symbiotes).

Note: Symbiotic Warriors can use the special abilities of an organism at half the listed P.P.E. or I.S.P. cost.

M.D.C. varies between the types of symbiotes, but generally speaking, claws have 40 M.D.C., crawlers have 50 M.D.C., stars have 30 M.D.C., small worms have 10 M.D.C. and larger worms have 30 M.D.C., all of which can regenerate 1D4x10 M.D.C. at the cost of 1 P.P.E. point, as often as once per melee round. *Weight* is typically one pound (0.45 kg) per 10 to 20 M.D.C. depending on the creature's size; e.g. large symbiotes weigh one pound per 10 M.D.C. while tiny symbiotes weigh one pound per 20 M.D.C.

Leaving Wormwood (optional) will cause symbiotes to die within 1D6 hours, causing them to crumble into dust. The only exception is the Symbiotic Warrior who is, for the sake of argument, a "living extension of Wormwood." See the Symbiotic Warrior O.C.C. for more details (personally, I ignore this rule to make for better cross-setting characters or N.P.C.s).

Booster Claw. This claw attaches to the side of the head, usually above the ear, but can also attach to the side of the neck. Claw-like tendrils spread across the side of the face and partially encircle one of the eyes.

Powers & Abilities: Acts as a living energy battery; can store up to 50% of the wearer's P.P.E. and I.S.P. (if applicable). *At the cost of 10 P.P.E.* (20 I.S.P.), the character's M.D.C. can be increased by 50%, non-M.D.C. creatures will see their Hit Points temporarily converted to Mega-Damage; lasts 1 minute per level of experience. If additional M.D.C. is depleted, the power cannot be used for one minute. **Note** that damage is subtracted from this increase first and will not scar or cause pain. *Expending 12 P.P.E.* (24 I.S.P.) will temporarily raise the power level of magic or psionics by one level (i.e. a fourth level Shifter can cast magic equal to a fifth-level mage. Also applies to magic cast through symbiotes); can be maintained for one minute per level of experience. Also grants the abilities to see invisible and see aura (constant; no P.P.E. or I.S.P. cost).

Penalties: Reduce P.B. by 20%. The character will tend to rely more heavily on magic and the abilities of his symbiotes than skills or equipment; -10% to skills that are not physically



oriented. Psychologically, the character becomes more cocky and arrogant. Evil and selfish characters may become more power hungry.

Combat Claw attaches to the hand like a gauntlet or a vambrace with the claw-like extensions fixed like a forearm blade or adhered to the fingers. Vambraces protect the arm up to the elbow and provide an additional 20 M.D.C. (60 M.D.C. total), while standard Combat Claws cover only a few inches past the wrist.

Powers & Abilities: Adds an additional 1D6 M.D. damage to punch attacks. *At the cost of 2 P.P.E.* (4 I.S.P.), the claws can be magically extended to twice their length and add a total of 2D6 M.D. to punch attacks; lasts for up to 5 minutes per level of experience. *By expending 8 P.P.E.* (16 I.S.P.) the character can become temporarily enchanted with supernatural strength! Lasts up to 1 melee per level of experience. The character can also evoke an adrenal rush *at the cost of 4 P.P.E.* (8 I.S.P.) that provides him with a bonus of +2 on initiative, +1 to strike, parry, and dodge in hand to hand combat (-1 to strike with ranged weapons), an additional +2 to damage, and one additional attack per melee; lasts for one melee per level of experience.

Penalties: The character may get bored quickly or frustrated more easily and has difficulty focusing on anything other than combat; loves combat and challenge and may be quick to compete or take risks. Reduce P.B. by one point, add +5% to physical skills or when the character can exert his strength, but is -5% to all others. Only one Combat Claw can be worn per pair of hands and bonuses from more than one claw are not accumulative.

Clawed Feet are similar to the Combat Claw and one pair attach to the top of the feet or around the ankles.

Powers & Abilities: Increase running speed by 25%, add an additional 6 feet to leaps (1.8 m; height and length); double leap length with a short run, triple at full speed, +10% to Climb and balance skills, also add +10% to Prowl skill. Kick attacks inflict an additional 1D6 M.D. *At the cost of 5 P.P.E.* (10 I.S.P.) the character can run at full speed without tiring; lasts for 10 minutes per level of experience. *At the cost of 2 P.P.E.* (4 I.S.P.) the character can instantly accelerate to a full speed run, leap twice the normal height (about 20 feet/6.1 m for humans), or perform an instant *Automatic Dodge* (use normal bonuses or is +2 if the character has no bonus to dodge); instant effect. *At the cost of 6 P.P.E.* (12 I.S.P.) the character can increase his normal running speed up to ten times! Lasts for one minute per level of experience.

Penalties: Tends to prefer wide open spaces and wilderness areas to closed confines of buildings and cities. -5% to skills that are not physically oriented.

Bug Wraps (Somewhat New!) are organisms that resemble an insect with a long body, head, pair of eyes, antennae and eight long legs. There are several types of wraps; the largest is the chest wrap, large enough to cover a person's upper body, with several smaller wraps that vary in size to cover the arms, forearms, legs, and feet. When attached to a humanoid, the body of the creature rests in the center of the chest. The two front legs reach up around the neck, four legs wrap around the rib cage, and the remaining two extend downward towards the groin and wrap around the upper legs. Arm and leg wraps attach to the elbow or knee joint. Two legs extend upwards and two towards the end of the limb. The remaining four wrap to secure the creature around the joint. Hand and feet wraps, the smallest of the creatures, use three legs to secure themselves around the wrist or ankle and the remaining legs attach over the top of the fingers or

toes. In any event, when used, a thin, resilient membrane quickly materialized between the organism's legs to provide the wearer with additional armor protection. It is possible to have an entire suit of armor made up of wraps.

Powers & Abilities: M.D.C. by location noted below. Chest Wrap: By expending five P.P.E. (10 I.S.P.) the character can use the creature as a breathing apparatus in *any* hostile environment. The two front legs penetrate the wearer's neck and trachea and allow him to breath without inhaling through the mouth or nose (treat the same as an air purification system); lasts 3 minutes per level of experience. Does not hurt or scar, and the puncture wound heals instantly when the legs withdraw.

M.D.C. by Location:

Main Body — 30; 80 plus 10 per level of experience at the cost of 6 P.P.E.

Arms — 15 each; 40 each plus 5 per level of experience at the cost of 3 P.P.E. each.

Legs — 20 each; 60 each plus 5 per level of experience at the cost of 3 P.P.E. each.

Hands and Feet — 10 each; 30 each plus 2 per level of experience at the cost of 2 P.P.E. each.

Regenerates 10 M.D.C. per hour, per location.

Duration: 5 minutes per level of experience or until M.D.C. is depleted. If depleted, armor cannot be used for one hour while the symbiote regenerates. Depleting the M.D.C. of the organism as well kills the creature and inflicts 3D6 M.D. (or 1D6 directly to the Hit Points) to the wearer.

Special Bonuses: Arm, wrist, leg, and foot wraps add a special bonus of +1 to save vs joint lock, bone breakage, and pain to that location.

Penalties: Reduce P.B. by one point per wrap used. Weight is approximately one pound (0.45 kg) per 10 M.D.C. but does not increase with the added magical protection.

Limitations: Tight clothing and additional armor cannot be worn over these symbiotes, the creature will simply rip them to shreds or constrict the wearer to imply all sorts of movement penalties. Thus, clothing must be loose fitting (cloaks and tunics are ideal) and armor must be specially crafted so it will not interfere.

Worms of Armor is made up of several large, thick worms that coil themselves around the upper body (chest and waist), and parts of the arms and legs. The worms do not attach to the body like other symbiotes and remain a separate organism. Consequently, this does not provide the worms with abilities typical of other organisms, but does give them an advantage at the same time.

Powers & Abilities: Offers protection of 60 M.D.C. and regenerates damage at a rate of 10 M.D.C. per melee round. The worms can move along the body to protect any area the wearer wishes, effectively allowing him to divide the M.D.C. between locations or group the entire protection to one area, such as an arm or leg. Furthermore, the worms can be extended away from the body to protect other objects or people, or they can be completely removed and placed on another person. There is no P.P.E. to perform any of these options.

Penalties: -10% to Prowl, Acrobatics or Gymnastics skills, and -5% to Climb. Weighs about 20 pounds (9.1 kg).

Worm Fringes (New!) are a lesser version of Worms of Armor in that scores of thin, long, flat worms wrap firmly around the body like many leather straps. Unlike Worms of Armor, fringes are a symbiotic organism that attaches to the user's body and feeds off it for nourishment. The symbiote itself is a small, flat organism about the size of a half-dollar (or about an inch/2.5 cm or so in diameter) that attaches to the body in protective areas, such as the armpit, groin, back of the knee or elbow. When the armor is evoked, each organism sprouts several bodies, or "tails," that entwine the user's body with protective armor that is flexible and responsive to moment, but solid as steel under force.

Powers & Abilities: M.D.C. by location listed below. Note that each location is a separate organism. At the cost of 3 P.P.E. (or 6 I.S.P.) the surface of the worms becomes shiny and slick, making them very difficult to grasp or restrain; +15% to Escape Artist skill, +3 to save vs holds or locks, +2 to roll with punch or impact (but not explosions, gun fire, and similar). By expending 3 P.P.E. (6 I.S.P.) similar effects can be reversed to make the worms incredibly clingy. On the hands and feet, this provides a bonus of +10% to climb (can climb completely sheer surfaces at half climbing skill or 30%+2% per level of experience without the skill) and +1 to maintain balance (or +5% to balance); lasts for 2 minutes per level of experience.

M.D.C. by Location:

Main Body — 40 at the cost of 4 P.P.E.

Head — 20 at the cost of 2 P.P.E.

Arms — 20 each, at the cost of 2 P.P.E. each.

Legs — 30 each, at the cost of 3 P.P.E. each.

Hands and feet — 10 each, at the cost of 1 P.P.E. each.

All locations increase 2 M.D.C. per level of experience.

Duration: 3 minutes per level of experience per location.

Regenerates: 5 M.D.C. per location, per minute (4 melees).

Penalties: -5% to Prowl; weight is roughly one pound (0.45 kg) per 10 M.D.C.

Limitations: Tight clothing and additional armor cannot be worn over these symbiotes because the creature will simply rip them to shreds or constrict the wearer, implying all sorts of movement penalties. Clothing must then be loose fitting, cloaks and tunics are ideal, and armor must be specially designed.

Worm of Shadow (New!) is armor similar to fringes that consists of only one worm that attaches somewhere on the front of the torso, usually at the base of the neck or on the abdomen. It is a worm that provides magical properties for stealth, making it ideal for thieves and assassins. The armor wraps scarcely around the chest and shoulders, making it impractical for combat; its powers lie in its magic abilities.

Powers & Abilities: M.D.C.: 20 to upper body plus 2 per level of experience. Spell Magic: Shadow Meld, Chameleon, Concealment. P.P.E. cost same as spell for practitioners of magic, four times per 24 hour period for non-magic users. Duration and other effects equal to spell.

Penalties: Reduce P.B. by one point. Weighs less than one pound (0.45 kg).

Limitations: Tight clothing and additional armor cannot be worn over the symbiote. Clothing must be loose fitting and armor must be custom fit, which will cost more and offer less protection.

Notes, Guidelines, and Other Miscellaneous Information

All humans native to Wormwood can use Techno-Wizard items. They also have a much higher P.P.E. base than off-world humans; adults have a base P.P.E. of 5D6 (5D6+6 for females), adolescents have 1D4x10 (1D4x10+10 for females), children 13 and under have a base P.P.E. of 1D6x10 (1D6x10+15 for females). Bonuses from the character's O.C.C. are added to this base amount.

Modifying Symbiotes. Using *Bond Organism* allows the character to attach objects to symbiotes as well as attach different symbiotes to one another. Size and weight must be taken into account when doing this; i.e. a character can create a combat claw studded with several blades, but if the total weight is more than his P.S. attribute can accommodate, the weapon becomes unwieldy and useless.

Making Armor. Armor can also be made using *Bond Organism* by attaching symbiotes to conventional armor. However, since the symbiotes never physically touch the wearer, the Attune to Symbiote must be used in order to access any special abilities the organisms may have, such as supernatural strength or combat bonuses. At the same time, though, the character can suit up and shed the symbiotes much more easily, like normal armor. Furthermore, other characters may be able to suit up and use the armor. M.D.C. bonuses are applied the armor, not the wearer.

M.D.C. by location may be a good idea, especially if the character has several different symbiotes. These figures are generally taken from the main body; legs are 50%, feet are 25%, arms are 30%, hands are 15%, and the head is about 20% of the total M.D.C. Symbiotes can then be allocated and their individual M.D.C. noted.

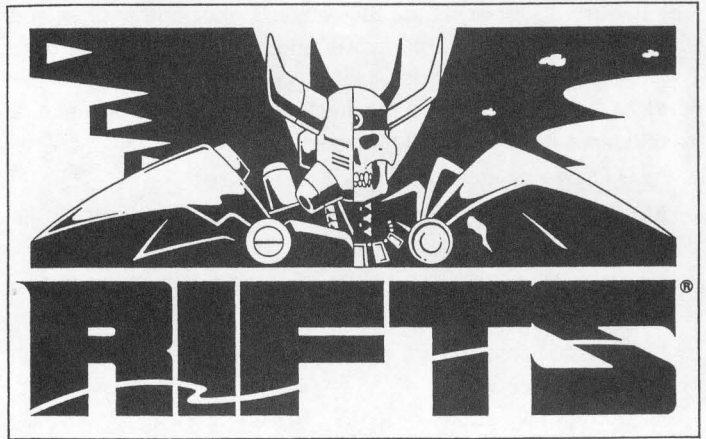
Off-world symbiotes like Bio-Wizard symbiotes and microbes can be used with little or no modification. Any M.D.C. is added to native Wormwoodians like a bonus, so if the Chest Amalgamate shares its M.D.C. of 4D4x10+20 with its host, it becomes a bonus added to the character's base M.D.C. Furthermore, damage bonuses are in Mega-Damage.

Using Communion to bind with Bio-Wizard organisms allows the character to link to the creature without trauma or too much disfigurement. He can also remove the symbiote without killing or hurting either (wounds heal as normal, though some conditions may be permanent). This is true even if the host was joined via a transmutation chamber! This could be of some interest to the Splugorth — they could care less about the well being of the host, but Communion is much less tedious than using the transmutation process. Lower production cost means higher returns — that's good!

Remember that all psionics on Wormwood are at half range and duration, so psionic ability gained from symbiotes will reflect this. The same is true of M.O.M. implants and psyntetics.

Domination used on Bio-Wizard creations can give the character complete control over it. However, there are some things to remember: Generally, the item already has an owner, which will require the character to engage in a battle of wills with the owner. Also, if the item itself is sentient, like a Staff of Eylor, a battle of wills must be fought with it as well, as often as once

per 24 hours. To handle this, use the item's I.Q. attribute as if it were its M.E. attribute. Rune weapons can be dominated in much the same way, even those of conflicting alignments, although it is much more dangerous (higher I.Q., it can use its own special powers, etc.). Still, there's much mischief to be made if the character has a high M.E.



A Long, Dark Walk

Optional Material for Rifts®

By Kimara Bernard

"Sit down, human!" the voice roared. "You'll be sacrificed soon enough — don't rouse the High Priest's wrath now! Bother these things..." The voice became more faint. "I don't know why we have to use these little pests."

First Lieutenant Evan Jarrel sat on the floor of the dank cell. This was not how he'd planned to spend the weekend. His plans had been for a little R&R with his sweet new girlfriend, Tracy, and then to shine up his armor and be in the parade. Just one patrol — one small, but strange, sighting to check out — and then he'd get to home for a wonderful weekend. Instead, he was lying on this concrete floor, dimly lit by some weird magical light that was probably going to poison him or mangle him into a monster. Not that he'd have to wait long under it, though — the demons would come back and drag him off to be sacrificed first, that was certain.

He could remember how the creatures had surprised them, flying out of nowhere on their rotted wings, landing on the Spider-Skull Walker, literally digging into it, ripping it open, even as he and his men desperately tried to shoot them off... but it was too late, they were in, they were killing the pilots...

And then he had felt the claws in his back, had seen his men dying. A trap! They had been tricked! When he had blacked out, he had been praying for a quick death. Instead, he had awakened in their stronghold, some hole in the ground they had hidden, and his wounds had been healed. Dark magic, no doubt about what had healed him. They had left his watch on him, and

only hours had passed. He glanced at it in the dim light: 2100 hours. Probably they would sacrifice him at midnight.

He shook his head, and leaned back against the wall. He shrugged to himself, wishing he'd died with his men, or at least he could have gone in some more humane way. Not by empowering these beasts.

Then Jarrel noticed something. The floor... the floor was glowing. He glanced up, and saw that the walls and ceiling were glowing too, except that the magical light hanging above him was getting dimmer. He leapt to his feet, figuring some new magical curse was planned for him. As the light became stronger, it gained a hue of bluish-green, with the wall opposite the door becoming brighter... then...

The light flowed into the center of the room, and formed into the shape of... a woman? It faded from view as she appeared in the room. She was not particularly tall or very noteworthy in appearance, dressed in rugged clothing typical of a wandering scout or villager. Except, her eyes seemed particularly bright, of the same shade as the light that had flowed into the room.

She glanced around the room, and then stared at him. She nodded as she saw his insignia. "We've got to get out of here," she said calmly.

"We??? Who are you? Demon? Mage? I —"

"Listen, those demons are going to be back soon, to dress you for sacrifice. I didn't mean to 'port into a locked cell, but it'll have to do," she shrugged. "In the meantime, make yourself feel better," She took a common Wilk's pistol out of the pack on her back and handed it to him. "Now if you want to shoot me you can. I'm not a demon or a mage, though. Look, I promise, you can shoot me perfectly well right now."

"You could be controlling me to keep me from shooting you anyway. That proves nothing — and one pistol isn't going to get us out of here," Jarrel replied, then sighed deeply. "This place is crawling with them. I guess I don't have much of a choice but to trust you — who are you?"

"I know," she replied. "And they call me Wanderer. I'm a psychic. Let's go, hotshot. We've got your comrades to rescue too."

A psychic who teleports blind into the middle of a building? he thought — but then he latched onto the last thing she had said. "They're alive?" his eyes widened.

Wanderer nodded, then pulled out another pistol and casually shot the door. "I've lowered the power on this." The shot was noisy, but the plain steel lock — and, weakened, most of the door around it — was melted away. "They're a ways away, and they haven't noticed," she said, tilting her head in a fashion that made Jarrel think of a Dog Boy tracking something. "We're okay, but one of your buddies is peering out of another cell over there."

Jarrel shoved past her, pushing the door open and peering into a dark hallway. Splatters of blood, some long dried, some more recent, were all over the walls and floor. Across the hall he heard, faintly, "Lieutenant! Help!"

A wrist grabbed his hand from behind. Jarrel reflexively turned to fire, but it was just this woman — this Wanderer — who smiled at him. "Get your men out of the cells, we're getting out of here."

"How?" he demanded.

"Shoot the locks! They're coming!" She tossed him the weakened laser pistol.

Jarrel yelled, "Men! Stay away from the doors, I'll have you out in a second!" and began shooting the doors with the weaker pistol. Seven other men came out of the cells; the rest were empty — the rest of his men were indeed dead. As he was shooting, he could see the woman standing there, concentrating. The men came running up.

"Sir!" a young grunt about screamed, "What's going on? Who's that?"

"She's the one rescuing us," Jarrel replied grimly. "Wanderer —"

"Not now," she replied tersely.

One of the other men asked, hesitantly, despite the situation, "Is she human?"

"I'm human," she replied before Jarrel could answer. "Quickly! Stand next to me!"

The men stared at their remaining leader. "Do as the woman says," he replied. "They can hang me later."

The men quietly clustered around her. Under normal circumstances, there might have been a few cat calls, but all were silent as they saw their demonic captors rushing down the hallway... and just as they reached her, they bounced off a shield that appeared out of nowhere!

"God, what a day," Wanderer said. "Keep cool!" And she closed her eyes.

For a second, Jarrel wondered if they had died anyway. The grim hallway melted away, the sight of the monsters, the world was becoming a darker place than before...

And then they were in moonlight, standing in a grove of trees, their familiar moon above them. Some ways in the distance, light could be seen from a village. They were still all close together, and Jarrel could see that every muscle in the woman's body was tensed, and then suddenly relaxed. She put her hand to her head, shook her head.

"What the — where are we?" young Jenkins asked. "How did we get here?"

"I..." Jarrel cut himself off. He knew how, and he at least had an inkling of how she'd done it. "How did we get here, ma'am?" he asked.

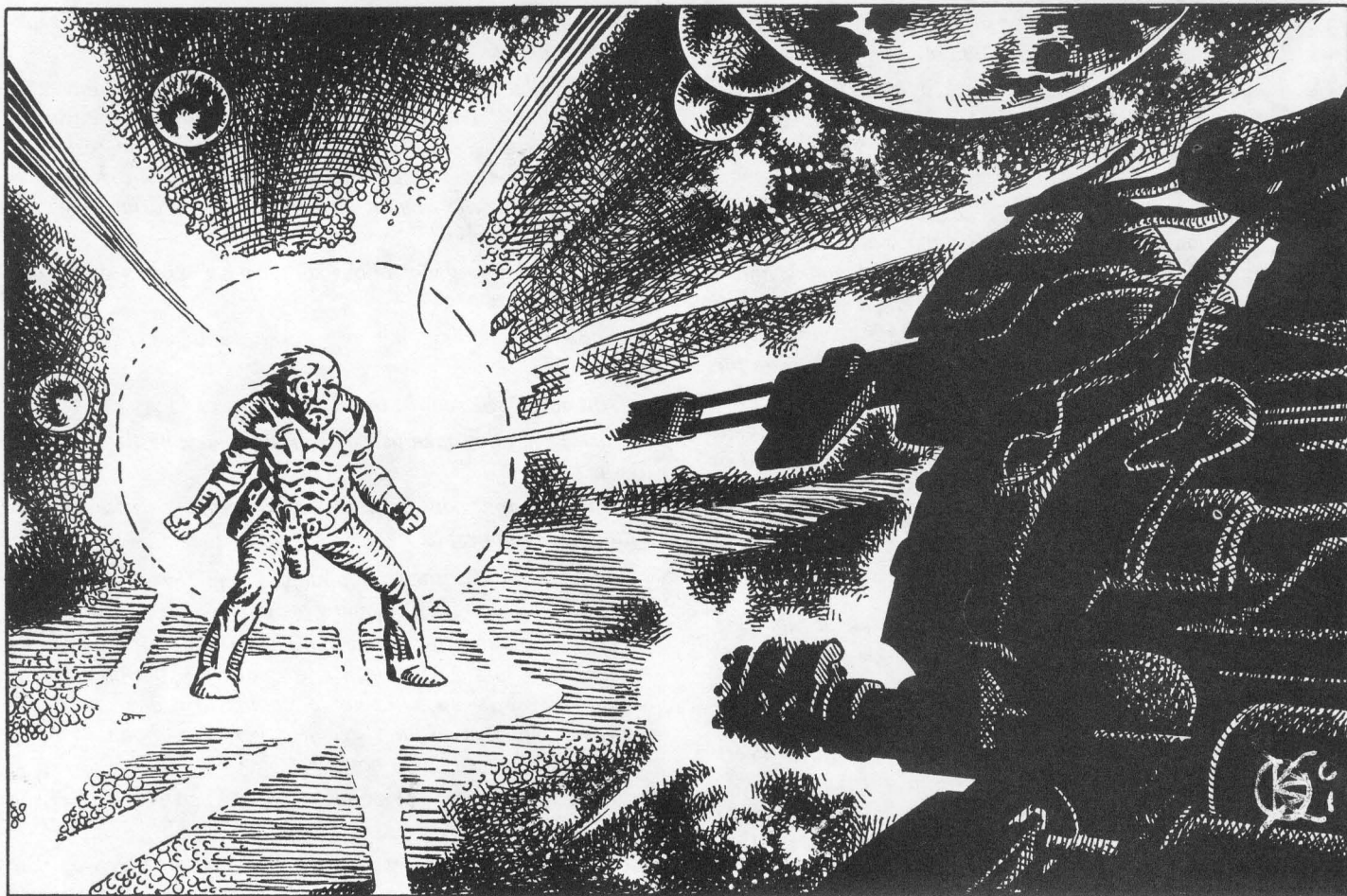
"A lot of work. Lose some weight!" she glanced up at him and grinned, but he could see she had a nosebleed and was in pain. "There's a village a short ways from here. They're friendly to your people, and they'll get you back to your troops. I'm sorry the rest of your men died."

Quiet murmurs of startled thank-you's went up from the troop of men. Jarrel stood up strongly and quietly said, "Thank you, ma'am, we..."

"Don't worry about it; I'm sure you'll go back to shooting me tomorrow anyway. Maybe you'll think for a second, maybe not," she shrugged. "I've got to go."

And with that, and the strange blue-green light, she was gone. Jarrel and his men slowly walked to the village, the Lieutenant wondering what he'd file in his report.

If he filed one at all.



The Wanderer Psychic R.C.C.

The Wanderer is a Psychic Racial Character Class which holds some things in common with the Burster and Mind Melter. Like those two, Wanderers are born human, but are a distinct mutation from the norm. Wanderers appear completely human. The actual title "Wanderer" comes from *the Wanderer*, Eliara Elan, who is known throughout many worlds for her prowess at escaping incredible situations. On many worlds where humans are known, Wanderers are also called "Shadowpath Walkers" and "Dimension Walkers," but as Eliara Elan has become more famous, so has the title "Wanderer." Only with her advent into the mishaps of Rifts Earth has this type of Psychic R.C.C. become widely known.

Wanderers tend to discover their powers in their early to late teens, although some of the more powerful ones do manifest later in life. At first, the easy teleporting ability manifests, then their abilities become stronger and stronger. Sadly, especially on Rifts Earth, they are frequently driven away from their homes because of the distrust and misinterpretation of their powers. Because Wanderers, especially young ones, tend to teleport themselves or others by accident, there are incidents of them being mistaken as Shifters (see the comment about ley lines and nexuses, below). Really, however, they are simply too rare to be yet fully understood, and have virtually nothing in common with the Shifter.

Wanderer Innate Abilities

1. Teleportation: The character can teleport 5 miles (8 km) per four I.S.P. Any distance less than these increments rounds the I.S.P. cost up to the closest 4 point interval. They do not have to know a location to teleport in that direction. In other words, a Wanderer can declare "I'm going to teleport eight miles north to see what's there." If a Wanderer tries to teleport, but would teleport into a solid object, the power automatically fails, but the character loses the I.S.P. normally anyway. (If they teleport into a fight, they have other problems; see the note at the end of this power description!) In addition, the character is dizzy (-1 to all combat rolls and -10% to all skill rolls) for 1 round per four I.S.P. lost. Following the above example, if the character went to teleport eight miles north, and eight miles north is a large wall, they would simply "blip" for a second, then stagger around dizzy for two rounds and lose 8 I.S.P. anyway. *Note: This power cannot be used while the character is in combat! For combat, see the power below.* **Range:** Maximum range of teleport is equal to 20 miles (32 km) per level of experience. **Cost:** 4 I.S.P. per 5 miles (8 km).

2. Combat Teleport: This extremely useful ability gives the Wanderer an Automatic Dodge at +3, with no other bonuses, regardless of other skills, etc. A Wanderer can only do this a number of times per melee round equal to their level. **Cost:** 3 I.S.P.

3. Placewalk: The more efficient version of Teleportation, Placewalk allows a Wanderer to instantly teleport to any location they know well *on the same world they are currently on*. Placewalk is not limited by distance, but by memory — but on

the down side, it requires a skill roll and is expensive. Like Teleportation, Placewalk cannot be used while the character is in combat. Teleporting to an unknown location that has been described to the character is possible, but at a severe skill penalty (-20% or more, as determined by the Game Master and the depth of the description). **Cost:** 25 I.S.P., or 30 I.S.P. for an unknown location. **Skill:** 25% +3% per level of experience.

4. Worldwalk: The signature power that makes Wanderers most famous, this allows a character to teleport to another world. **This power is not gained until fifth level.** Worldwalk is simply an extrapolation on the Placewalk power. Like it, Worldwalking is not limited by distance, but by memory — but unlike Placewalk, allows one to go to another dimension. It cannot be used while the character is locked in combat, and the character can teleport to a place personally unknown to them, but described to them. (The penalty is at least -20% to skill or more). With this power, a Wanderer could potentially go from Rifts Earth to any of the worlds described in the Dimension Books (or whatever worlds your G.M. is allowing). **Cost:** 40 I.S.P., or 50 I.S.P. for an unknown location. **Skill:** 20% +4% per level of experience.

5. Teleshield: This power is the Wanderer's strongest innate defense ability, and is prized for its versatility. A Teleshield is a psychic dimensional mini-Rift, which grabs anything that enters it and sends it flying back out in another direction. The Teleshield appears as a blue, shimmering force field, and reminds one of a ley line or Rift. This "shield" can only be placed over an area of the character; it covers the entire front of the body (something like a tower shield), and can be moved at will to cover the left, right, or back of the character. They may also move it a short distance away from themselves to protect a small group around them. The shield doesn't do anything strange with wielded objects that hit it; they just wear down the shield. But any time someone shoots or throws something into the shield, it disappears into the shield, only to fly out in any of a multitude of possible directions. In game mechanics, whenever someone hits the shield, a roll should be made on percentiles:

Teleshield Random Directions Table

01-10% Shot or thrown object goes straight back at the person who originated it; an attack roll should be made by that being, to see if he hits himself!

11-30% Shot or thrown object goes to the left of the Wanderer, striking whatever is over there, for half of the original attack's damage.

31-50% Shot or thrown object goes to the right of the Wanderer, striking whatever is over there for half of the original attack's damage.

51-80% Shot or thrown object goes straight up into the sky or ceiling; objects stick in the ceiling permanently (unless you have something incredible to remove it) or in the open sky, keep flying for seemingly ever. (A laser blast would dissipate, a bullet or flechette would fly impossibly high and essentially disappear, and a heavier object, when it falls, is something you do *not* want to be under!)

81-90% Shot or thrown object goes straight into the ground less than a foot from the Wanderer. This might do something very bad if the ground is unstable.

91-00% Shot or thrown object disappears and is never seen again — or goes flying out of the next Rift the party runs across...

Teleshields can take 15 M.D.C. (25 S.D.C. on non-Mega-Damage worlds) per level of experience before they dissipate; this includes the damage done by objects or blasts that go into the Teleshield and are redirected, or melee attacks that simply hit the shield. This power doubles in strength (30 M.D.C. or 50 S.D.C. per level) when a Wanderer is standing on a ley line or nexus. However, it is a *very bad idea* to use this power while standing on a major nexus or one that opens Rifts very frequently. For each level of experience, there is a 5% chance that activating the shield on one of these more volatiles nexuses will open a random Rift. (This may be higher at the G.M.'s discretion. Beware!) **Cost:** 10 I.S.P. A Teleshield takes one melee action to activate.

6. Additional Persons: As a Wanderer increases in level, they may take other people with them on their journeys. For each level above the first, the Wanderer can use their powers on an additional person for an additional 5 I.S.P. For instance, Eliara Elan, who is a level 10 Wanderer, can take nine other people with her on a Worldwalk, for an additional 45 I.S.P.! This ability makes a Wanderer a useful transporting character, but it consumes a great deal of I.S.P. very quickly. A Game Master may allow a Wanderer to teleport large objects, especially vehicles, and make them count as a certain number of people. Said objects should be *moveable*; a large rock, firmly stuck into the ground, or a building, cannot be teleported.

7. Sense Rift and Sense Ley Line: The Wanderer, like many other classes, is attuned to the dimensional and magical powers of Rifts and ley lines. Neither of these abilities cost I.S.P. **Sense Ley Line Range:** 10 miles (16 km) per level. **Locate Ley Line Skill:** 25% +5% per level of experience. **Sense Rift Range:** 40 miles (64 km) + 10 miles (16 km) per level. No skill roll is required to locate Rifts. This ability will only vaguely tell if a Rift is weak or powerful.

Additional Psychic Abilities: On top of this list of powers, the Wanderer is considered a Master Psionic (10 or higher saving throw versus psionic attack) and can select five additional powers from the Healing or Sensitive categories. At level ten they gain an additional power from any category, including Super. (They may not take the Psi-Shield ability; this ability is precluded by the defensive abilities given above.)

Additional Bonuses: Wanderers gain an addition +1 to save versus Horror Factor at levels 2, 5, 8, 11 and 14. This reflects the fact that once they have attuned themselves to their powers, they wander around and see things — and if they survive it, they tend to be less startled by horrible things they see later. (That does not, however, mean they are not disturbed by it — it just means that in dangerous situations, they don't panic as readily.)

Notes: Most Wanderers tend to have some quirk associated with their abilities — generally a glow or aura with a color appropriate to the person's physical or mental state.

Attribute Requisites: Wanderers who don't have the will to deal with the things they teleport into don't last long. Minimum I.Q. 12, M.E. 15. Also highly recommended are good scores in Mental Affinity (for dealing with strange worlds) and Physical Endurance (for surviving the aforementioned worlds).

P.P.E.: Surprisingly, Wanderers do retain some of their potential psychic energy, but most becomes I.S.P. **Permanent P.P.E. Base:** M.E. + 1D4.

I.S.P.: Base: M.E. + 3D4x10. Wanderers gain 2D6 I.S.P. per level of experience.

Skills: At first level, a Wanderer knows the following skills: their native language (generally American in most **Rifts®** games) at 98%, any two other Languages at 90%, Wilderness Survival (+10%), Land Navigation (+15%), Navigation (+15%), Hand to Hand: Basic, any one modern Weapon Proficiency, and finally, any four other skills with a +10% bonus. In addition to these skills, a Wanderer has six secondary skills, which receive no bonuses other than the potential I.Q. bonus. The four additional skills and the six secondary skills may be selected from the following categories:

Communications (except Surveillance Systems and Radio: Scramblers), Domestic, Espionage, Medical (First Aid Only), Physical (except Acrobatics, Body Building, and Wrestling), Pilot (except Robot Combat: Elite), Pilot Related, Rogue, Science, Technical, Weapon Proficiencies, and Wilderness.

At fourth, eighth and twelfth levels, Wanderers gain an additional 3 secondary skills.

Equipment: Wanderers, considering that their nature befits their nickname, don't generally own more than they can carry — especially if they're in trouble. (Any types of special carrying devices, technological or magical, appeal to them in the extreme, but unfortunately such things are rare.) Hence, a starting Wanderer starts with little equipment:

A sturdy set of travelling clothing, an extra set of clothes, backpack or bag, an extra bag, belt with pouch or possibly an ammo belt, any light Mega-Damage armor, sleeping bag, two canteens, three weeks' rations, gas mask, knife. In addition, the player may select for their character one non-Mega-Damage melee weapon, one energy rifle or pistol, and one S.D.C. ranged weapon. Like other psychics, Wanderers can use Techno-Wizard gear, but they won't have any when starting out.

Money: 3D6x100 credits and 5D4x1000 in saleable items. They tend to try to make these items portable, but Wanderers often have a weakness for neat items from obscure places, partially as proof that they've been there.

Experience Table: Wanderers use the same experience table as the Ley Line Walker and the Mind Melter (**Rifts® RPG**, page 17).

The Wanderer (Eliara Elan)

Alignment: Unprincipled. **Experience Level:** 10th.

Attributes: I.Q. 20, M.E. 25, M.A. 14, P.S. 14, P.P. 17, P.E. 18, P.B. 14, Spd 17.

Hit Points: 51. **S.D.C.:** 30.

I.S.P.: 181. **P.P.E.:** 28.

Height: 5 feet, 5 inches (1.6 m). **Weight:** 120 lbs (54 kg).

Hair: Brown. **Eyes:** Blue-green (see below).

Appearance: Eliara is an attractive young woman, somewhat mundane save for her strange and very beautiful blue-green eyes. Her unique quirk as *the Wanderer* is that her eyes seem to glow when using her abilities, especially matching the shades of her Teleshield. This glow and an associated aura affects her powers much of the time. In dangerous situations, Eliara is strong and a bold leader; the rest of the time she is

shy, almost diffident around many people. She is truly and deeply caring and affectionate once well-known, however. Unfortunately, her life has contributed to her not knowing people well, and she distances herself intentionally now. Generally, Eliara is dressed in simple, rugged clothing that suits the styles as closely as she can manage for that area, without spending whatever money she has on her at the time.

History: Eliara claims to have been born on a version of Earth, but not Rifts Earth. Her Earth, she states, was destroyed in a cataclysmic nuclear conflagration, similar to Rifts Earth, but less forgiving. They had done far more irreparable damage to their world in their war. Her Earth was also somewhat more aware of the supernatural; people having psychic abilities was fairly common, even though magic was not. Eliara was used to psychic powers and had previously exhibited minor abilities. However, on the day of the destruction of her homeworld, her full powers activated and she was literally thrown out of her home dimension. She is the only known survivor of her world, and carries a powerful psychic impression of it. In other words, she carries the dying impressions of billions of people. Only a person of such incredible mental fortitude could have survived such an ordeal. Currently, she is wandering Rifts Earth, and is considering making it a semi-permanent residence. It is reminiscent enough of her home to make her both very happy and very unhappy.

Abilities: Eliara has all the abilities of a Wanderer of her level, and additionally the powers of Healing Touch, Resist Fatigue, Empathy, Sixth Sense, Detect Psionics and Mind Block Auto-Defense. Her Mind Block works oddly: it is a psychic backlash against any who would invade her mind, and is apparently unique to her. Whenever someone tries to invade the Wanderer's mind, they are immediately assaulted by the powerful "last moment" psychic impression which she carries. The person trying to invade her mind must immediately make a saving throw versus psionics or be stunned, taking 1D6 S.D.C. (or 1 M.D.C. for a Mega-Damage creature). The stunning lasts a number of melee rounds equal to the damage taken (i.e. 2 S.D.C. of damage and 2 rounds of stunning). Eliara herself, however, also experiences a "flashback" whenever this occurs, and is stunned for a round as well.

Skills: American 98%, German 98%, Spanish 98%, Wilderness Survival 91%, Land Navigation 93%, Navigation 98%, Motorcycle 98%, Literacy: American 98%, Lore: Demons and Monsters 98%, Computer Operation 98%, First Aid 96%, Gymnastics (all 98%), Prowl 81%, Athletics, Climbing 98%, Read Sensory Equipment 85%, Basic Mathematics 76%, Dragonese 81%, Literacy: Dragonese 46%, Streetwise 34%, W.P. Sword, W.P. Energy Pistol, W.P. Automatic Pistol.

Combat Skills: Hand to Hand: Basic.

Attacks per Melee: 6 physical or psionic.

Bonuses: +2 to damage, +1 to strike, +4 to parry, +4 to dodge, +7 to roll with a punch, critical strike on a natural 19-20, body throw/flip, kick (2d4).

Other Bonuses: +1 to save versus poison, +5 to save versus psychic attack/insanity, +6% to save versus coma/death, +3 to save versus Horror Factor. As a Master psionic, Eliara's base saving throw versus psionics is a 10, so she generally needs only a 5 or higher.

Equipment: Eliara has a tendency to carry very little, as she's worried about getting slowed down when she's on the run from the alarming amount of monsters on Rifts Earth. She tends to have piecemeal armor on her, totaling 60 M.D.C., generally surplus Coalition stuff.

Current Whereabouts: Eliara is currently wandering around North America, but with the outbreak of a massive war, she's beginning to consider trying Europe, except that she would have to leave behind a few friends. The vignette above is an event that happened about a year before the war between the Coalition and Tolkeen broke out. Eliara has considered searching for the psionic homeland she's heard about, but is uneasy of other psychics because her powers seem so unlike many of them. Her friends do include a psychic, Alex Dyson (6th level Burster), who knows a bit more than he's let on about psionics on Rifts Earth (in particular, he knows about Pyscape, but hasn't felt ready to talk to her yet). For now, she's settled in an obscure village west of Chi-Town. Two months ago, three Coalition soldiers, who'd been left for dead in a battle, moved into town, abandoning their nation. One was Evan Jarrel; he'd come back looking for her.

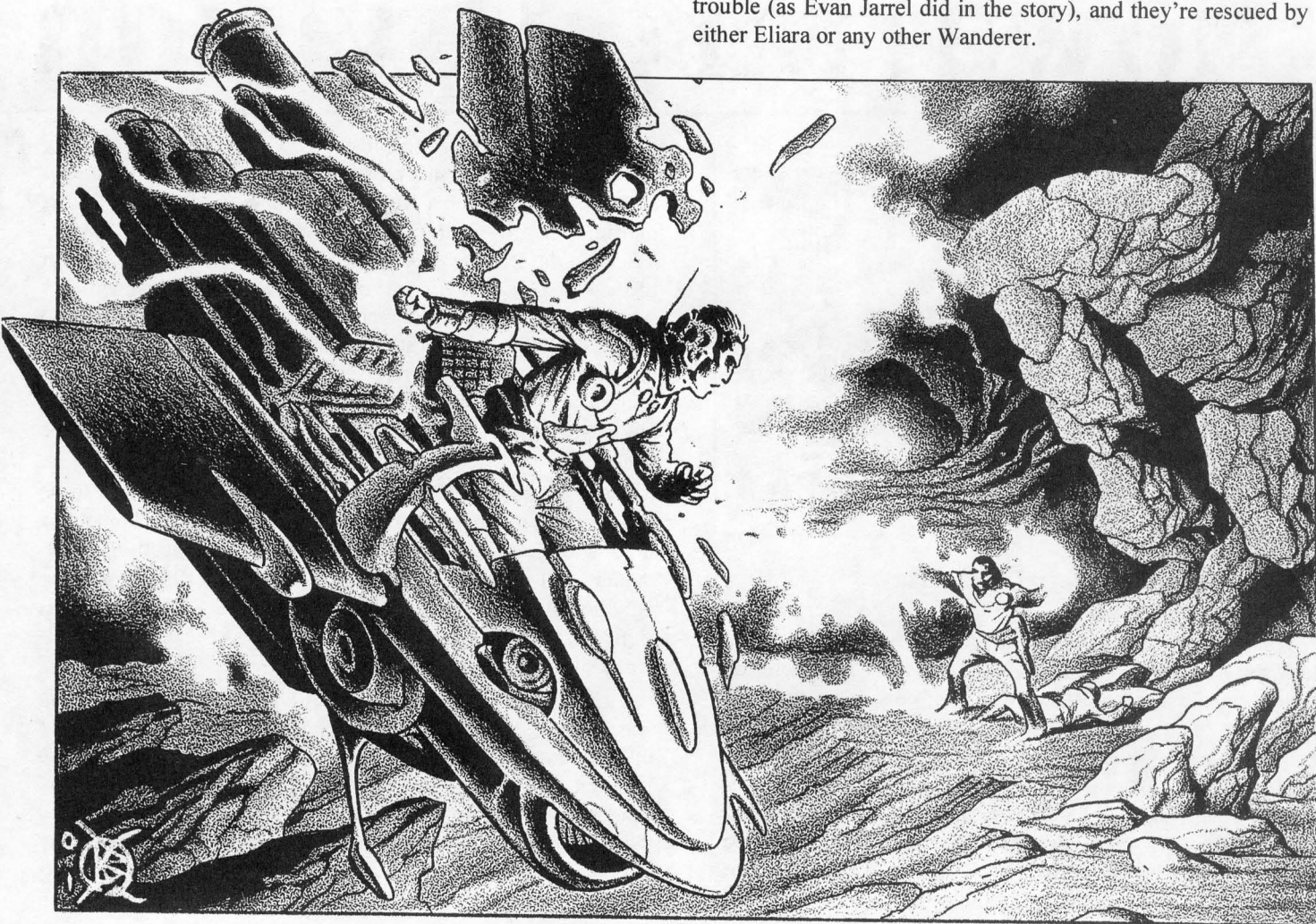
Plots and Ideas

Wanderers — As Player Characters or Non-Player Characters

Wanderers make wonderful player characters, people who can be introduced into a campaign at the drop of a hat. In addition, they're ideal for that unstable player who can only make it to the Saturday night game three out of four times a month. Their abilities also allow a Game Master to expand their game outward, allowing quick transport to new locations, exploring the latest World Book or Dimension Book to be purchased.

The flip side of this is keeping the Wanderer under control. The fact that they can sometimes teleport halfway across Rifts Earth shouldn't be allowed to interfere with the Game Master's campaign. Instead, circumstances should be introduced, quietly, when the powers could possibly interfere. For instance, Wanderers *are* affected by the presence of ley lines, nexuses, and Rifts. The villainous invading sorcerer, for instance, would *of course* build his new Keep of Conquest on top of a nexus! Thus, the party can't teleport directly in and invade. They could, of course, find a way to lure the sorcerer out and then teleport in to ambush him...

As non-player characters, Wanderers are good as the famous/infamous G.M. Plot Device. A crazed Wanderer, desperate to get even with the Shifter that ruined his good name, teleports the party in, gives them a whole bunch of otherworldly goodies, and begs them to trash the Shifter. Or, the party gets in trouble (as Evan Jarrel did in the story), and they're rescued by either Eliara or any other Wanderer.



The Wanderer

The Wanderer herself can easily be placed in a campaign circulating around the recent war between Tolkeen and the Coalition. She's been living west of the Coalition for some time, and the stories have started coming back. Eliara isn't the type of person to take such a thing sitting down, although she may be patient about getting herself involved. She's been on Rifts Earth just long enough to really get to like the place, and she's got good friends where she is now. The place she's living in accepts her (although her town isn't fond of magic). Anything that has a chance of trashing her neighbors' lives or hers deserves to be looked into.

Evan Jarrel himself is a good plot device leading into a potential conspiracy. Maybe, unlike the vignette above, Jarrel didn't like her at all, or believes she *is* a demon. If so, he could show up in the Wanderer's town as actually a Coalition spy, sent to capture or kill this potent psychic. Higher-ups in the Coalition might be interested in finding out if there are others like Eliara, and training such people to ambush their enemies. Or

they may simply be interested in wiping out such a potential threat — but keep in mind that the Coalition has a lot of enemies already, and may not be very interested in one woman. It's much more likely to be one leader making a power play.

There's also Eliara's friend Alex Dyson. He's a powerful Burster with an interesting past — a past that can be written and customized by a devious Game Master. He could, like Jarrel, be a friend or a foe, and despite Eliara's bad experiences, she's a generally trusting person. A story could be centered on the group having to fight off powerful psychics to rescue Eliara, at the town's behest or because she rescued them at some point earlier in the campaign.

Finally put, the Wanderer herself is a very powerful character, high level and able to show up most anywhere. She's a great safety-net for the emergency in which half the players showed up to the game and the underpowered party is about to get killed. In addition, she can have incredible amounts of information from most anywhere, and can pass on this information at the G.M.'s discretion to help guide lost players.

Coalition Biowarfare Division



Optional Source Material for Rifts®

By David Liam Moran

Whatever else one wishes to say about Emperor Prosek, you can't call him stupid. He had the vision and intelligence to realize that large, toothy monsters weren't the only things that could potentially come through a Rift — there were other, more subtle dangers to worry about, as well. Along with angry alien creatures from other dimensions came alien microorganisms — viruses and bacteria never before seen on Earth. Invisible menaces that could threaten the relative peace and stability the Coalition has worked so hard for. Prosek wasn't about to see the greatest civilization in North America crumble because of some alien plague. He wanted to be prepared for everything.

A group of genetic scientists, virologists, epidemiologists, and other medical personnel were assembled, initially as an offshoot of the Coalition's Rift Control Study Group (RCSG). At the time, they were officially — and somewhat long-windedly — called the Disease & Xenobiological Threat Defense Branch of the RCSG, and theirs was purely a research assignment. For years they did nothing but monitor and analyze the microscopic output of the Rifts. Thousands upon thousands of alien and unknown microorganisms were identified, catalogued, and warehoused in the bio-containment vaults at the small Biowarfare Division Facility in Amarillo, Texas, just north of the Lone Star Complex.

Years passed and, during this time, the DXTDB came to be considered a rotten assignment. Most Coalition brass thought of it as a useless exercise that was a waste of Coalition time, money, and manpower. Reputation-wise, the DBTDB was the ugly younger brother of the more respectable RCSG. Those assigned to this branch were called "Bugboys" because of the microscopic fauna that they studied.

Around 102 P.A., partially out of a feeling that the Coalition was wasting the potential of those alien microbes, partially out of frustration with her current assignment, and partially because it was a slow, boring Friday night, Dr. Anna Raskolnikov, the head of the DXTDB, drew up a long report formally requesting that the DXTDB be made separate from the Rift Control Study Group. This report further requested that their charter be extended to include the manipulation of the alien viruses for military purposes.

She expected nothing of importance to come of it, and promptly forgot she ever wrote the report. Miraculously, her proposal flew through the Coalition bureaucracy like a greased weasel. It went from one pair of hands to the next, all the way to the top, to the Proseks, who found her ideas very sensible indeed.

They granted her every request, and more. The new charter of this small group of scientists and researchers — renamed the Biowarfare Division — gave them authority independent of all other branches of the Coalition military. In matters relating to Biological Warfare, and the safety of Coalition troops or citizens facing Biological Warfare, the word of the Biowarfare Division is law. They are charged with the dual mission of both protecting the citizens of the Coalition States against such threats posed by these microorganisms, and harnessing these same organisms for potential use as weapons. Emperor Prosek even upgraded their Amarillo facility and granted them additional personnel, in the form of both more researchers and garrison soldiers.

At first, it appeared that the Proseks had made a colossal blunder. For months, the new Biowarfare Division yielded little in the way of results. They made absolutely no progress towards the harnessing of alien microbes for their military uses. Nada. Nothing. In another fit of weekend boredom, Dr. Raskolnikov, more frustrated than ever, and perplexed by the sheer incomprehensibility of some of the organisms, decided to mix the alien organisms with things she was more familiar with — human germs.

Stored in the bio-containment vaults of the BD facility were samples of just about every infectious disease known to man, and quite a few that were unknown. She spliced these ordinary, human viruses and bacteria with some carefully selected alien microbes. The results were unpredictable, but at least they were results.

This was the breakthrough everyone had all been waiting for. After this innovation, work progressed at a lightning pace, and still continues to do so. Since then, Raskolnikov and her team have perfected several alien/human germ hybrids into viable biowarfare strains that look as if they might make the Coalition very happy in the years to come. The research and development of Coalition bioweapons is still in its infancy, but optimistic estimates anticipate that the CS could implement a full-scale Biowarfare program in less than 6 years.

Currently, Eight pairs of Biowarfare Experts (treat as a specially trained CS Commando or CS Military Specialist), each accompanied by a CS Biowarfare Operative, are operating in the field. These trios are each attached to squads with various different types of missions — reconnaissance, search & destroy, pacification, strategic assault, sabotage, guerilla attacks, surgical commando strikes, intelligence gathering, etc. — to fully explore the combat applications of the current Biowarfare substances and their delivery systems in a variety of real combat situations. The Coalition also has one experimental squad whose sole purpose is Biowarfare, although their roles have thus far been largely restricted to the support of larger platoons, and to the attempted contamination of enemy water and food supplies. This Biowarfare Squad consists of: 2 Super SAMAS specially equipped with Biowarfare delivery devices, 1 light Dog Pack Tracker (Bloodhound), 2 Psi-Stalkers, 1 Heavy Infantry Soldier

(full conversion 'Borg), 4 Biowarfare Experts, and 3 Biowarfare Operatives, one of whom is also a major psionic. Every member of the team carries with them some form of biowarfare.

Raskolnikov's successes have attracted other attention, as well. For the past year or so, Dr. Desmond Bradford, the administrative head of the Lone Star Complex, has been petitioning the Emperor to have the Biowarfare Division placed under his jurisdiction. He wants their facilities, their research, their personnel, and all their equipment — currently housed in nearby Amarillo — to be moved to the Infectious Disease Center on Level 7 of the Lone Star Complex.

Understandably, Dr. Anna Raskolnikov does not want to sacrifice her position and independence to become a coffee-pouring secretary to a man who she suspects is not only rather insane and demented, but homicidal. On a scientific level, she believes that the accommodations in the Lone Star Complex are not properly equipped with the production facilities and level of containment that the Biowarfare Division absolutely requires, and she is right.

Also, not without justification, she fears Dr. Bradford himself. Raskolnikov knows he is not a man to play games with, as people who cross him have the distressing habit of turning up dead in curious circumstances. She has heard the rumors of Bradford's involvement in the murder of Lt. Louis Emerson, a Coalition intelligence operative. Being in Amarillo, so close to Lone Star, makes her tremendously uncomfortable, since her paltry military garrison would be no match for the forces loyal to Dr. Bradford, should he attempt to take her research and materials by force.

Returning to her quarters one night, not too long ago, Anna Raskolnikov walked into her bedroom and found her bed occupied by one of Bradford's hulking and savage-eyed Kill Hounds. It sat there and stared at her and said nothing. Scared dumb and trembling, Raskolnikov tried to run, but couldn't. Inching along, shaking, she edged towards the phone. The thing followed her with its eyes. Rumbling, a low growl passed its bared teeth but still it didn't move and said nothing. She stopped.

She assumed the thing was there to kill her. Deciding that screaming would be a waste of her energy before dying, she closed her eyes and tried to prepare herself. Tried to have a few moments of inner calm before being ripped to pieces. Seconds, minutes passed, and nothing happened. When she opened her eyes again, the thing was gone — although it had fouled her bed before it left. Once her pulse slowed down to the normal range, she realized what the Kill Hound had been. It was a living telegram that had told her: "I can get to you whenever I want. Sleep well."

For the time being, the Biowarfare Division continues to operate as an independent unit solely because of the efforts of Joseph Prosek II, the CS Head of Propaganda, who dislikes Desmond Bradford intensely. Joseph Prosek II has an inkling of Bradford's illegal activities, but does not yet have evidence to prove it. He has no doubt, however, that he does not want Bradford to have any more power or authority than he already has. Dr. Anna Raskolnikov continues to feel intimidated by the un-

spoken threats of Bradford, and has made a plea to Joseph Prosek II to have the Biowarfare Division's Headquarters moved to a different facility, further away from Lone Star. Nevertheless, while fearful for her life, she has become even more firm in her resolve that Bradford should never inherit her work, which she believes to be too dangerous to place in the hands of such a madman.

It has yet to be seen how this matter will be settled.



The “Bugboys”

CS Biowarfare Division Operative O.C.C.

Trained as medical doctors, with a specialization in virology and epidemiology, the CS Bugboys are perceived by many to be a little... well... strange. They are the ones responsible for researching, developing, testing, and using the Coalition biowarfare substances, and, as such, they are on a constant quest for knowledge. The Operatives spend a great deal of their time looking at infinitesimally small creatures through microscopes, cultivating them, talking to them, giving them personal names (“I call this new cholera sample ‘Frank’”), spending their free time with them (“I can’t hang out tonight, my bacillus anthracis is beginning to ferment”), and generally acting as if reality were a stranger who hadn’t visited them in a very, very long time.

As members of a Division that hasn’t been around too long, and has yet to justify its existence in the eyes of many Coalition soldiers, the Bugboys act like they have something to prove. And very often, they do. Other Coalition soldiers tend to give them a hard time — nothing more severe than insults and practical jokes of an extremely embarrassing nature — and the Bugboys have learned to give as good as they get. They are some truly devious oddballs. Often they let the pranks and the

insults slide but, occasionally, a CS grunt who takes the pranks too far has learned what it’s like to mysteriously develop an intestinal infection that causes four hours of nonstop diarrhea.

The Bugboys are primarily men of science. Because of their military training, they are tougher than the average microscope-jockey, but they’re not nearly as physically rugged as other branches of the CS military. They tend to solve conflicts through wit and guile rather than brute strength (although in no way does this mean that they are pacifistic and opposed to violence). Resourceful, inventive, levelheaded, quick thinking. Strange. That’s the Biowarfare Division in a nutshell.

About one-third of the Biowarfare Division’s personnel is stationed at their facility in Amarillo, Texas. The other two-thirds are out doing fieldwork or conducting tests of the new biowarfare substances. For now, these are the only people (except for select commando squads) with whom the Coalition will entrust the care of their biological weapons. The Bugboys are intimately acquainted with the properties, weaknesses, and strengths of all the biowarfare substances, and the CS doesn’t yet want anyone else messing with them.

Some of the Biowarfare Division Operatives working in the field are still assigned to “Collector” duty, which basically means that they have to take samples of everything unusual or unknown that they encounter. Player characters killed a monster? Get a blood and tissue sample. The player encounters a D-Bee who seems to be suffering from some exotic, alien flu? Get a blood and mucus sample. A town’s well water is making the townspeople sick? Get a water sample. You get the picture.

Attribute Requirements: Must have an I.Q. of 12 or higher.

O.C.C. Skills:

- Math: Basic (+20%)
 - Math Advanced (+20%)
 - Literacy: American (+30%)
 - Language: American at 98% and two of choice (+20%).
 - Chemistry (+20%)
 - Biology (+20%)
 - Computer Operation (+15%)
 - Computer Programming (+10%)
 - Radio: Basic (+15%)
 - Intelligence (+10%)
 - Nuclear/Biological/Chemical Warfare (+30%)
 - Lore: Demons/Monsters (+20%)
 - Pilot: One of choice (+10%).
 - W.P. Energy Rifle
 - W.P. One of choice.
 - Hand to Hand: Basic (can be changed to Expert at the cost of two O.C.C. Related skill selections or Martial Arts for the cost of three skill selections.
- O.C.C. Related Skills:** Select four skills from one of the following areas of special training: Medical, Military, Science, or Technical. All of these special MOS skills get a +15% skill bonus.
- Three other skills can also be selected from any of the following categories at level one, and two skills each at levels four, eight and twelve.
- Communications: Any (+5%).
 - Domestic: Any.
 - Electrical: Any (+10%).
 - Espionage: Wilderness Survival only (+10%).

Mechanical: Any (+5%).

Medical: Any (+15%).

Military: Any (+10%).

Physical: Any except Gymnastics and Acrobatics.

Pilot: Any (+10%) except robots, power armor, tanks, APCs and combat aircraft.

Pilot Related: Any.

Rogue: None except Computer Hacking.

Science: Any (+20%).

Technical: Any (+15%; +25% to Language and Literacy skills).

W.P.: Any.

Wilderness: Any.

Secondary Skills: The character also gets to select five secondary skills at level one, and another two at levels four, seven, nine, and thirteen from the previous list. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the advantages of the bonus listed in parenthesis (). All secondary skills start at the base skill level. Also, skills are limited (any, only, none) as previously indicated on the list.

Standard Equipment: Note pads, pens, portable hand-held computer with micro-printer, surgical gowns, gloves, surgical kit, petri dishes, med kit, specimen containers, and other implements of medical science.

One Safesuit. One CS Personal Decon & Detox Fieldkit. RMK Robot Medical Kit. IRMSS Internal Robot Medical Surgeon System.

Light Coalition "Dead Boy" body armor, choice of energy rifle and energy sidearm, four extra E-Clips for the rifle, Vibro-Knife, survival knife, dress uniform, PDD pocket audio recorder, portable video camera, portable language translator, pocket laser distancer, pocket flashlight, portable tool kit, laser scalpel. Air filter & gas mask. Iodine cup (for purification of drinking water). One Infector or Puffer weapon, with fully loaded satchel, containing either 124 or 42 sample bulbs, respectively. One Mister weapon, with 3D6 extra cartridges containing a bio-toxin (most likely SEB or Myco T-2). *May* start with a Fumigator.

Money: The character gets a roof over his head, food, clothing, and all other basics provided free as part of his pay, as well as access to military facilities. His monthly salary is 1700 credits, plus combat pay.

Starts off with 6D6x100 credits.

Cybernetics: Starts with clock calendar, gyro-compass, molecular analyzer and headjack with basic ear amplification. Additional cybernetics and bionics *may* be authorized.

Viral Warfare Agents

A virus is a tiny organism (as small as 1/100,000 of a millimeter) that lacks a system for its own metabolism — in other words, it has an incomplete body — and is dependent on the machinery of its host cell to survive. Viruses are intracellular parasites: they invade other cells, use them, abuse them, and throw them away. Imagine that you have no stomach. In order to eat, you have to borrow someone else's stomach, and you don't always take very good care of it when you borrow it. Sometimes you misuse it, return it in poor condition, or do not return it at all. That is essentially what viruses do.

The cultivation of viruses is time consuming and complicated. In the lowest level of the Biowarfare Division Facility are dozens of huge fermentation tanks — cylinders, each about fifty feet (15.2 m) long and ten feet (3 m) in diameter — where the virus and bacteria cultures mature. Ordinarily, biological weapons are designed to kill or incapacitate large numbers of humans over a period of days or weeks. Unfortunately, large numbers of humans weren't what the Coalition was worried about. They were trying to preserve human life. It was monsters and D-Bees that were their problem.

What the Coalition needed was biological weapons that would affect a variety of species, but that humans would be resistant to. They needed bioweapons that would be effective in a relatively short time-hours instead of days. They needed fast-acting, non-species-specific germs. It took years for the Coalition scientists to adapt their human germs-spliced with alien micro-organisms-to inhuman hosts; long years of frustrating research that are just now beginning to pay off.

The only problem then was how to deliver the germs. Before the Cataclysm, it was mostly done by aerosol: having a plane fly over the target area to dump hundreds of pounds of powdered viruses or bacteria cultures into the atmosphere. But the problem with that is that not all supernatural creatures need to breathe, and some (like men in robots and power armor) carry their atmospheres with them. This problem was solved with the invention of the CS "Infector" which is basically a hypodermic syringe made out of a laser beam, and the later invention of the "Puffer" and "Mister". Coalition scientists have not yet perfected a "safe" way of equipping CS missiles and mini-missiles with biowarfare warheads.

In most cases, even though the names remain the same as they did in the 20th century, these diseases are only cousins to their namesakes. The strains of Junin, Smallpox, Brucellosis, Glanders, etc, listed below have all been re-bioengineered and spliced with alien microorganisms. They can cause damage, debilitate, and/or kill much faster than the ones used hundreds of years ago (some of them act up to thirty times as fast as they did in the 21st century).

However, regardless of how advanced these strains are, the effects still take some time—generally a few hours. They are not instantaneous. Biowarfare agents are generally NOT meant to be used in a straight up, face to face fight. They are tactical weapons that require planning and intelligence to be used effectively.

The general strategy of someone using these biological weapons is to shoot a few rounds from an Infector (or lob a few Puffers) at the target and then scatter away and hide while the virus takes effect. The soldiers assigned to the CS Biowarfare Division have become masters at this sort of guerilla hit-and-run style of attacking. They pop up quick, hit the target with as many toxins and infectious attacks as they can, and then disappear to give the viruses and bacteria time to work their deadly ways.

Hopefully this biowarfare alone will be enough to kill or completely incapacitate the enemy. At the very least, it softens up the enemy up for a full-on assault by a heavily armored CS attack squad, who can usually mop up the poor, diseased wretches with little or no difficulty.

Another favorite tactic is a sabotage-raid to contaminate the food or water supplies of an enemy.



Infection and Recovery

Another (slight) drawback is that all of these diseases have an incubation period ranging from a few melee rounds to a few hours. During this incubation period, the diseases can be cured instantly by a dose of simple antibiotics (and, even *after* the incubation period has passed, treatment with antibiotics can sometimes work, but it is a longshot, and only works in an average of 5% of cases).

Most victims will not realize that they have been infected, so even if they have some antibiotics with them, it likely will not occur to them to inject themselves with the antibiotics (or with some other curative agent). Usually by the time the victim begins feeling the symptoms, it's either too late or the victim mistakes these symptoms for something else: a mundane, ordinary illness (many of the early symptoms of these biological warfare weapons resemble the symptoms of other, less dangerous sicknesses like the flu, bronchitis, or mono), or a magical or psionic attack perhaps.

Even doctors who examine a patient with one of these diseases may have some difficulty in reaching an accurate diagnosis, and are at -20% on any attempt to diagnose or treat the illness. Part of the problem is that some of the diseases used to produce these biowarfare weapons are so rare and exotic that any given doctor is likely to have no experience with them whatsoever ("Venezuelan Equine Encephalitis? Never heard of it."). And the ones that the doctor *will* be familiar with (like the more common Smallpox), have all been spliced with alien microorganisms that are designed to resist standard medical attempts at curing.

Contagion and Communicability

The Viral and Bacterial Warfare weapons listed below are **CONTAGIOUS**. Once a host is infected, any unprotected indi-

vidual approaching within three or four feet (0.9-1.2 m) has a 25% chance of contracting the disease as well. That chance is doubled if the person makes physical, skin-to-skin contact with the host, and tripled if some of the host's blood gets on another person. If some of the host's blood splashes on the open wound of another person, the chance raises to a 99% certainty.

Doctors treating a patient infected with such diseases must take elaborate, anti-contamination precautions: at the least, one must always use a facemask, always wear sterile, protective clothing, exercise **EXTREME** caution when taking blood samples, and not remain in the presence of the patient one second longer than absolutely necessary. The patient's clothes and bedsheets — and anything else they may have touched that may be infected — must be either burned or *thoroughly* sterilized (infected cloth remains infectious for as long as 1D4 days) if they are to be used again.

Quarantine procedures are often wise in cases like these.

Once the disease runs its course (a time specified in each individual entry listed below), the person is no longer contagious — assuming they survive the disease. For those that die from the disease (if it is a lethal one), their corpses will remain highly contagious and infectious for 2D4 days.

However, outside of a host body, most of these biowarfare substances have a short half-life of only a short while (generally 2D4x10 minutes). Which means that, upon exposure to the air, they begin to disintegrate very rapidly (exposure to sunlight will double the speed of their decay). The reason the Scientists engineered this short lifespan of these substances is because they want to be able to affect specific targets, without risking their own populations. They do not want to be responsible for an epidemic that spreads to Coalition citizens. Believe me, these diseases are things you *really* don't want floating around in the atmosphere for weeks or months.

About the Biowarfare Substances

Whenever the word “effectiveness” is used in conjunction with the following diseases, it usually means the roll of a percentile die. For example, when it is said that a certain vaccine has 75% effectiveness against the Brucellosis bacteria, that means that when administering a dose of the drug, the character has to roll a percentile. 01-75 means that the drug was effective (cures the disease), and 76-00 means that it was ineffective (does not cure the disease — does nothing, other than to add a +1 bonus to all future saving throws against the disease made in the next 24 hours).

Incubation Period is a measure of how long the biological warfare agent remains dormant in the host’s body before becoming active. For most of these biological weapons, a strong dose of antibiotics administered before the microorganisms have fully incubated will completely eradicate the microorganisms from the host’s system (luckily for the Coalition, most monsters from the Rifts do not carry antibiotics around with them).

When a biowarfare description says that “effects begin one hour after infection”, this means one hour after the *incubation period* has elapsed, and not one hour after the initial exposure to the biowarfare substance.

Infectiousness indicates the penalty to the victim’s saving throw when rolling to save against the effects of the disease.

Virulence indicates the relative strength of the virus or bacteria, meaning how often, in terms of hours, a victim may re-roll his saving throw AFTER the Incubation Period as ended. 1 = once an hour, 2 = once every 2 hours, 3 = once every 3 hours, etc. This also relates to how long a particular biowarfare agent will remain active without a living host. More virulent diseases will remain infectious for a greater amount of time than less virulent ones.

Method of Delivery is how the toxin or infectious substance must be introduced to the host body — by the CS Infector, Puffer, Fumigator, or Mister biological weapons delivery systems, by subcutaneous injection, by aerosol, by contamination of the host’s food or water supply, etc.

Sequelae is what the after-effects of the biowarfare substances are, after the disease has run its course. Some of these diseases linger with you for a long, long time, and the after-effects can last anywhere from a few hours to a few months. Typically, these are not much more than common illness symptoms: runny nose, fatigue, light headache, cough, but in some cases these can be almost as nasty as the initial disease.

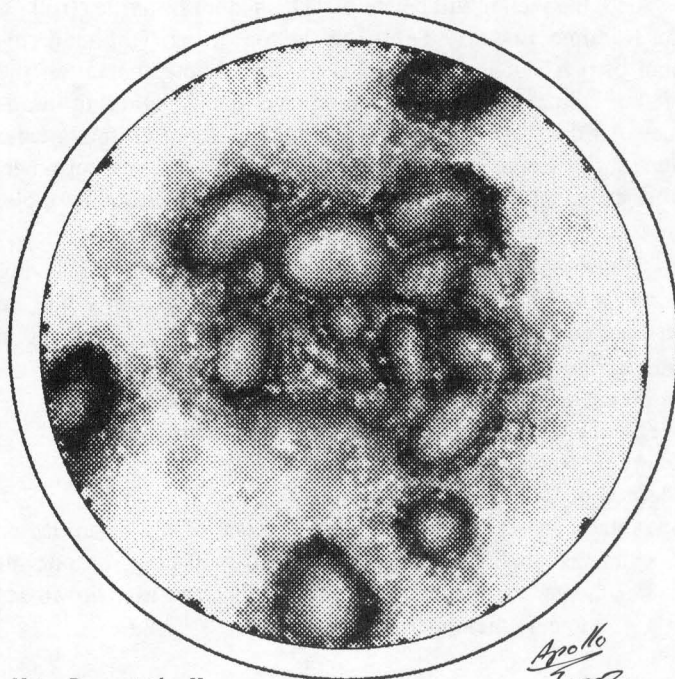
Important Note on Human Saving Throws: For what the Coalition intends, these biological weapons had to be designed for effectiveness on a wide variety of species and creatures. However, they are also designed to have a dramatically *weakened* effect on the human body. Humans enjoy a +2 bonus to their saving throw to resist the effects of the CS’s Viral and Bacterial agents. CS Bioweapons have no effect on non-organic beings like robots or creatures of magic like dragons. The Coalition is working on Biowarfare agents that will affect these types of enemies, but have not yet been successful.

Secondary Note: Damage from viral and bacterial weapons is NOT cumulative. In the case of multiple infections — even of different viruses — damage is equal to the damage caused by most destructive disease, plus one for each additional infection.

For example, “Plague” causes 1D6 points of damage per hour, and Smallpox causes 1D4. Someone infected with both “Plague” and Smallpox at the same time would suffer 1D6+1 points of Hit Point damage per hour. If someone is infected with “Plague”, Smallpox, and Brucellosis at the same time, the poor fellow would suffer 1D6+2 points of Hit Point damage per hour, and so on.

The same thing goes for the debilitating effects of the diseases. Penalties are not cumulative. In the case of multiple infections that impose similar penalties, whichever penalty is greater is the one that will be counted.

The various viral warfare agents are:



Nairo-Bunyaviridae X
Courtesy Coalition Biowarfare Division

Congo-Crimean Hemorrhagic Dementia Fever “Bloody Laughter”

Nairo-Bunyaviridae X

Also referred to as “The Chuckles” (the way some people refer to the common cold as “The Sniffles”), this is a radically re-engineered, and highly infectious, hemorrhagic fever that is designed to incapacitate an enemy with madness.

The onset of infection is characterized by fever, lethargy, and an odd taste in the mouth — blood.

Internal hemorrhaging causes blood to well up in the throat, and leak from the mouth like drool. Whenever the victim tries to talk, all that comes out is an unintelligible gurgle. This disease is also accompanied by compulsive laughter. It’s not that the victim thinks anything is funny, this is just an irresistible natural compulsion, like a sneeze, or like the urge to scratch oneself when one has an itch. The victim cannot help laughing. In non-human D-Bees and monsters, it may be difficult to tell that the creature is laughing (after all, what would a laughing Rhino-Buffalo look like?), and may appear to the player characters to be merely convulsing loudly.

Despite all the chuckles, the victim of “Bloody Laughter” is actually undergoing a horrible ordeal. He is bombarded by terrifying images from the pit of his subconscious. As long as the victim attempts to remain calm, and is under no other stress, he will be able to resist the terror inspired by these images.

Unfortunately, the victim will not be able to maintain concentration and calmness during the strain of combat — the nightmare images will get the better of him. Every round that the victim participates in combat, he will have to roll against a Horror Factor: 12. A failed roll means that the character is momentarily paralyzed with terror, and unable to take any action for that melee round other than running in some random direction.

Also, the victim will develop 1D4 Random Insanities (roll on the **Random Insanity Table**, on the top of the right-hand column of p. 19 of the **Rifts RPG®**). Every hour thereafter, the victim will develop one more Random Insanity, ignoring Insanities that the victim has already acquired. Under all this mental duress, the victim’s personality will fracture into several other, distinct personalities. Roll on the **Multiple Personality** table, starting at STEP ONE, on p. 59 in the **Rifts RPG®**.

This disease lasts 5D6 hours or until a successful saving throw is rolled. After recovery, the victim’s full sanity will be restored gradually over 2D6x10 minutes.

Incubation Period: 1D4 hours.

Infectiousness: -3 penalty to victim’s saving throw.

Virulence: 8 (re-roll saving throw every 8 hours).

Damage: None.

Method of Delivery: Any.

Sequelae: There is a 15% chance that one of the Insanities or extra personalities will persist for 1D6x10 days, despite all treatments, medications, and spells that are used in an attempt to cure the lingering affliction.

Junin Stinger

Xeno-Adenoviridae Majora

Ordinary Junin is the virus that causes Argentine Hemorrhagic Fever. Junin Stinger is a reengineered version, heavily spliced with alien viruses and P.P.E.-absorbing microorganisms.

Infection with Junin Stinger is characterized by petacial hemorrhaging — which means that thousands of tiny, pinpoint-sized specks of blood appear on the host’s skin. It looks like hundreds upon hundreds of flea bites, all over the body. Blood begins to seep through the skin like sweat. The outer extremities — hands, feet, face — start tingling painfully (which is where the “stinger” appellation comes from). The sense of touch in the hands and fingertips is temporarily lost — they go completely numb, and the only sensation that can be perceived in them is the painful stinging. Tasks that require handling of small objects become impossibly difficult.

From the beginning of a Junin Stinger infection, the host’s available pool of P.P.E. is reduced by 65% + 5D6%. Magic-users will feel painful muscle aches. Later, 1D4x10 minutes after infection, fatigue sets in: the host is -1 (or -5%, for a skill roll) on all rolls of a physical nature — including, but not limited to, rolls to hit, dodge, parry, roll with punch, etc.

1D6x10 minutes later, the host will feel physically exhausted, and is penalized by a -3 (or -15%) on ALL rolls, not



just physical ones. The host’s number of attacks are reduced by one. He will not want to travel anywhere, and will not want to

take part in any activities. He will not want to do anything except sleep.

All these effects persist for 1D6x10 hours (or until a successful saving throw is rolled), at the end of which time they abruptly stop, and the victim returns to normal, except for his pool of P.P.E. (see **Sequelae**, below).

Incubation Period: 2D4 minutes.

Infectiousness: -2 penalty to saving throw.

Virulence: 3 (re-roll saving throw every 3 hours).

Damage: Every 12 hours, the victim will suffer 1D4 points of damage directly to his Hit Points (2D4 M.D., if a supernatural Mega-Damage creature). This damage will not heal until the disease has run its course.

Supernatural or accelerated healing factors, such as Bio-Regeneration, are suspended for the duration of the infection. Magical or psionic attempts at healing a character afflicted with Junin Stinger will only heal half as many Hit Points as it normally would.

Method of Delivery: Any.

Sequelae: After the disease has run its course, the host's pool of available P.P.E. is halved for 2D4 days.

"Plague"

This horrific, artificially produced hybrid virus, simply referred to as "Plague," is made from a mutated Smallpox strain spliced with a rare filovirus called Marburg (a close cousin to Ebola).

During the incubation period, the victim will begin to experience chills, a faint headache, and a slight nausea. Once the incubation period is complete, the victim will, over the next 3D6x10 minutes, begin to experience intense back pain, high fever, and vomiting, with a continuation of the headache. The host will feel drained, extremely lethargic. A -2 penalty to all attack rolls is imposed, and -3 to dodge.

"Plague" infection is also characterized by partial liver-failure. Victims will become jaundiced — the skin, the white of the eyes, and bodily fluids all take on a yellowish cast. Nausea and vomiting become more intense.

1D4 hours after infection, large skin lesions will begin to appear on the victim's face and hands, slowly spreading to the rest of the body. These crusty eruptions go through four distinct stages, starting as discolored spots, then getting red and swollen, then the swellings fill with clear fluid like a blister, and then the liquid becomes a thick, yellow pus. Each stage takes about one hour to complete. These stages are accompanied by profuse internal hemorrhaging, with blood flowing freely from the nose, mouth, and eye-sockets.

Plague infections last 3D6 hours or until a successful saving throw is rolled.

Incubation Period: 3D6x10 minutes.

Infectiousness: -1 penalty to victim's saving throw.

Virulence: 4 (re-roll saving throw every 4 hours).

Damage: Every hour of infection, the victim will receive 1D6 points of damage directly to his Hit Points (or 2D6 M.D. if a supernatural, Mega-Damage creature). This damage will not heal until the disease has run its course. Supernatural or accelerated healing factors, such as Bio-Regeneration, are suspended for the duration of this infection. Magical or psionic

attempts at healing a character afflicted with "Plague" will only heal half as many Hit Points as it normally would.

Method of Delivery: Any.

Sequelae: There is a 30% chance that someone recovering from a Plague infection will spontaneously develop pneumonia. Also, the pock-marks and scars that are left by the pustulent eruptions on the victim's face have a 25% chance of permanently reducing the victim's P.B. by 1 point (assuming the disease had the time to run through all the four stages of skin eruptions).

There is also a 3% chance that the victim's P.E. may be permanently reduced by 1 point. This chance rises by 5% for each successive infection (e.g. if this is a character's third time being infected with "Plague", he has a 13% chance of permanently losing a point of P.E.). Furthermore, 30% of those once infected with "Plague" will develop diabetes within 3D4 weeks of infection.

There is also a 50% chance that the victim will develop Hepatitis A. This causes a persistent, low-grade fever, chills, constant tiredness, loss of appetite, and, and nausea. Victim is -1 on initiative.

Hepatitis A lasts for approximately 2D4 weeks.

Smallpox

Variola Majora

One of the most infectious and contagious of the viral warfare weapons*, Smallpox infection begins with fatigue and a low fever. Within 2D6 minutes of infection, the victim's muscles will feel stiff and sore, while he will develop a painful backache and headache. He will be -1 on all attack rolls, which increases to -2 after 1D4 hours.

Smallpox causes delirium in approximately 15% of its victims, meaning there is a 01-15% chance of anyone infected with Smallpox going temporarily crazy. For those who succumb to the delirium, roll once on the Random Insanity Table (the one at the top of the right-hand column on p. 19 of the **Rifts RPG®**). This delirium persists for the duration of the disease.

1D4 hours after infection, skin lesions will begin to appear on the victim's face and hands, slowly spreading to the rest of the body. These crusty eruptions go through four distinct stages: starting as discolored spots, then getting red and swollen, then the swellings fill with clear fluid like a blister, and then the liquid becomes a thick, yellow pus. Each stage takes about one hour to complete.

Smallpox infections last 4D4 hours or until a successful saving throw is rolled.

Incubation Period: 2D6 melee rounds.

Infectiousness: -5 penalty to victim's saving throw.

Virulence: 2 (re-roll saving throw every two hours).

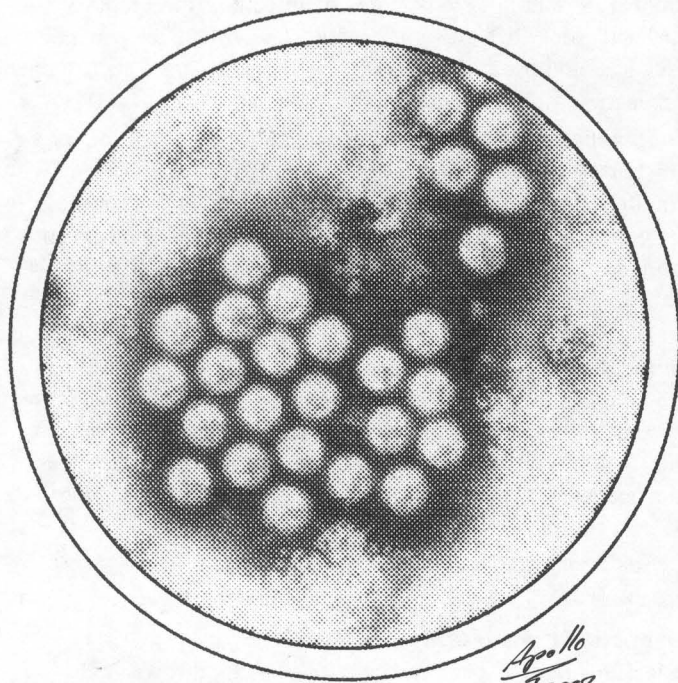
Damage: Every hour of infection, the Smallpox sufferer will receive 1D4+1 points of damage directly to his Hit Points (or 2D4+2 M.D. if a supernatural, Mega-Damage creature). This damage will not heal until the disease has run its course. Supernatural or accelerated healing factors, such as Bio-Regeneration, are suspended for the duration of this infection. Magical or psionic attempts at healing a character afflicted with Smallpox will only heal 25% as many Hit Points as it normally would.

Method of Delivery: Any except Fumigator.

Sequelae: There is a 40% chance that someone recovering from a Smallpox infection will spontaneously develop pneumonia. Also, the pock-marks and scars that are left by the pustulent eruptions on the victim's face have a 55% chance of permanently reducing the victim's P.B. by 1D4 (assuming the disease had the time to run through all the four stages of skin eruptions).

***Note on Smallpox Contagiousness:** Smallpox, on its own, is *extremely* contagious. Anyone approaching a Smallpox sufferer within three or four feet (0.9-1.2 m) should have his nose and mouth covered to prevent germ inhalation (or else be in some kind of safesuit or power armor that has an independent air supply) or risk a 60% chance of catching it each minute spent in the presence of the infected person. Unprotected, skin to skin contact raises the probability to 90%. The Smallpox virus also clings to cloth *very* well, and can survive on a section of fabric (like a shirt, a sock, a uniform or a blanket) for weeks, and has a 90% chance of infecting anyone who wears or otherwise comes into bodily contact with the cloth for more than an hour.

And perhaps the most insidious thing about Smallpox is that even if the victim rolls a successful first saving throw, and doesn't himself contract the disease, he remains a *carrier* for the Smallpox virus, and will remain contagious — possibly passing the virus on to those around him — for the next 2D6 hours.



VEE (Venezuelan Equine Encephalitis)
Courtesy Coalition Biowarfare Division

VEE (Venezuelan Equine Encephalitis)

Not terribly lethal as far as viral warfare weapons go (in only 1% of cases does it turn life threatening), VEE is more debilitating than anything else. A generalized malaise, erratic and spiking fevers, and headache characterize the incubation period.

With the onset of infection comes a painful tenderness in the muscles, especially in the legs. This soreness and muscle pain imposes a -2 penalty on initiative and the performance of all physical skills and actions. Spd and P.S. are both reduced by 25%. The P.P. attribute is lowered by 1D4 points.

Then follows vomiting, cough, sore throat, diarrhea, severe headache, and a *highly* increased sensitivity to light, known as photophobia. Ordinary daylight will be painful and seem blindingly brilliant, and bright light will be excruciating and will literally blind the victim until 1D4 minutes after the light is removed or blocked.

This photosensitivity is caused by an inflammation of the victim's brain and the meninges of the brain. This painful swelling likewise prevents all infected psionic characters from using *any* of their psionic powers for the duration of the disease. Even psionic-based powers, ones that aren't purely psionic in nature — like the natural psionic abilities of certain R.C.C.s and monsters — are totally neutralized by this disease.

Every time an infected psychic attempts to use one of his psionic powers, the already excruciating headache that this disease causes will briefly become a thousand times worse: the character will drop to the ground screaming, and curl up in agony, clutching and clawing at his temples for the next 1D6 melee rounds, unable to take any action at all.

Any children or young of a species who contract this disease are prone (20% chance) to neurological complications: convulsions, coma, and paralysis.

The effects of this disease last 1D4+1 days or until a successful saving throw is rolled.

Incubation Period: 3D6 melee rounds.

Infectiousness: -4 penalty to victim's saving throw.

Virulence: 24! (re-roll saving throw once per day).

Damage: None.

Method of Delivery: CS Infector only.

Sequelae: After the infection has passed, the patient will be extremely lethargic and will have a persistent headache for 1 to 2 weeks. -1 penalty on initiative, -3% penalty on all skill performance.

Once the victim recovers from the VEE infection, he is also immune to further VEE infections for the next 2D4 months.

Note: This virus can be rather easily destroyed by heat. A temperature of 115 F (46.1 C), sustained for at least one half hour, will completely eradicate the virus from the host's system. While a body temperature of 115 F for any amount of time would be lethal to a human, there are many D-Bee species that can withstand body temperatures of that extreme.

Bacterial Warfare Agents

Bacteria are unicellular organisms, generally spherical or rod-shaped. They are as much as fifty times larger than viruses, and therefore are too big to be carried upon the hypodermic beam of the CS Infector weapon. Otherwise, they behave similarly to the biowarfare viruses previously mentioned.

Brucellosis

brucella melitensis

Intended to be debilitating rather than lethal, weapons-grade Brucellosis causes a host of negative effects to the victim. It's like a miserable "Pandora's Box" of symptoms. Everything but the kitchen sink, that's Brucellosis.

During the Incubation Period, the victim will experience a slight weakness, sweats, chills, lack of appetite, and hiccups of the central nervous system like excessive and uncontrollable blinking, or facial tics. Once the incubation period is over, the fun begins.

Brucellosis takes 4D4 hours to run its course. In this time, severe muscle and joint pain flare up. The character is at -1 on all rolls of a physical nature. The flesh around the spinal cord becomes inflamed, leaving a long, painful swelling down the character's back. There is a 5% chance that the victim is left temporarily blinded because of pinched nerves in the neck and spinal cord.

One hour into the infection, the depression and mental changes begin. The victim becomes despondent and unhappy (-5% on all skills). He is convinced that life is unfulfilling and empty. There is no point to anything. This disease is going to last forever and he doesn't care. He wishes he had never been born. The victim also develops one randomly chosen Neurosis and one randomly chosen Phobia, both of which can be found in the **Rifts RPG®** p. 19-20.

The following are a listing of the possible accompanying effects of Brucellosis. A victim may suffer some, all, or none of the following effects, and the percentile for each of the seven following effects should be rolled separately:

20% of cases develop a constant, severe cough and chest pain. Conversation with this character is impossible, he is unable to get more than two words out before going into another coughing fit. -1 on initiative. **Sequelae:** Chest pain persists for 2D4 weeks, although no penalties are imposed.

70% develop vomiting, intense stomach pain, diarrhea of blood and mucus (alternating with painful constipation), and jaundice. -2 to all strike, dodge, and parry rolls. -4 to initiative. -20% on the performance of all skills. **Sequelae:** These symptoms persist for 1D4 days, although in weaker form. The penalties are halved after the initial infection has run its course.

63% develop painful swelling in the liver and lower intestines, enough for them to visibly bulge out from the abdomen. -1 (-5%) on all rolls of a physical nature. The victim's P.E. is temporarily reduced by 4. Plus, on the round that this swelling appears (and trust me, even if you can't see it, you can feel it) the victim must roll to save vs a Horror Factor of 11 (fear and disgust at what's happening to his body). **Sequelae:** None.

50% develop severe infections of the hip joints, accompanied by swelling. These infections are very, very painful and reduce the victim's top speed to hobbled crawl. Spd is reduced by 75%. **Sequelae:** The hip joints will remain mildly infected for 2D4 weeks unless treated by a weeklong regimen of antibiotics and uninterrupted bed-rest. Until then, Spd is reduced by half.

In men, **20%** develop epididymo-orchitis (painful, swollen testes). This is an agony which causes a -2 (-10%) penalty to ALL rolls except saving throws. P.S. and P.P. Are temporarily

reduced by 1D6. Spd is reduced by half. **Sequelae:** None, thank God.

25% receive 4D6 points of damage directly to their Hit Points (1D6x10 M.D., for supernatural Mega-Damage creatures).

5% develop disgusting, pus-dripping rashes over 75% of the body. Bleeding skin-ulcers appear on the face. Gigantic, painful warts appear on the legs. Spd is reduced by 10%. All the skin that is not affected by this rash becomes a dark, revolting, purplish-black, like a bruise. **Sequelae:** This rash persists for 1D4 days after the disease has run its course. No penalties other than being completely repugnant to look at, and getting pus all over everything you touch; including your clothes, armor, weapons, girlfriend, etc.

Brucellosis lasts 4D4 hours, or until a successful saving throw is rolled.

Incubation Period: 5D6 hours.

Infectiousness: -5 penalty to victim's saving throw. As infectious as Brucellosis is, it cannot be transmitted easily from person-to-person. Consequently, characters can be around someone infected with Brucellosis and not worry about becoming infected themselves.

Virulence: 2 (re-roll saving throw once every two hours).

Method of Delivery: Any except Infector. When delivered in the food or water supply, the victim has an additional -2 penalty applied to their saving throw.

Sequelae: 90% of the time, Brucellosis will cause creatures that are pregnant to spontaneously abort their fetuses. There is a 10% chance that one of the phobias or insanities (G.M.'s choice) acquired by the disease turns out to be *permanent*. Otherwise, each of the effects have their own sequelae. See above.

Bubonic Plague

"The Black Death"

yersinia pestis

A slight variation on the dreaded disease that ravaged Europe in the Middle Ages, this "Black Plague" doesn't carry as much terror as it used to. However, it still makes a moderately effective bioweapon (especially for its capacity to lower a victim's resistance to other bioweapons).

Onset of infection is characterized by high fever, chills, and headache. There is a painful tickling sensation in the chest, and the victim will begin to cough up frothy, bright red blood. Breathing will be labored, difficult. The skin turns a light shade of blue. Lack of oxygen will make the victim feel weakened: -1 on all rolls of a physical nature. Black lesions and pus-filled nodules ("buboes", hence the name) cover the skin.

Bubonic Plague also attacks the immune system, and the victim's resistance to disease will be drastically lowered. A penalty of -3 is applied to further saving throws vs disease and toxins made while under the influence of "The Black Plague."

This disease lasts 1D4x10 hours, or until a successful saving throw is rolled.

Incubation Period: 3D6x10 minutes.

Infectiousness: -3 penalty to victim's saving throw.

Virulence: 5 (re-roll saving throw every five hours).

Damage: Every three hours, this disease causes 1D4 points of damage directly to the Hit Points (or 2D4 M.D. if a supernatural, Mega-Damage creature). This damage will not heal until the disease has run its course. Supernatural or accelerated healing factors, such as Bio-Regeneration, are suspended for the duration of the infection. Magical or psionic attempts at healing a character afflicted with Bubonic Plague will only heal 75% as many Hit Points as it normally would.

Method of Delivery: Any except Infector.

Sequelae: 50% of Bubonic Plague sufferers develop pneumonia.

Glanders

burkholderia mallei

Glanders is a disease, which, in its natural form, primarily affects horses, mules, and donkeys. Human Glanders infections were ultra-rare before the 20th century, when the Glanders bacteria was formally weaponized by several world powers.

The disease starts off slowly with a high fever during the Incubation Period. After the Incubation Period elapses, then comes inflammation of the mucous membranes, especially those of the nasal cavity, and formation of ulcers and pus-filled abscesses all over the skin.

Tiny, pustulent buds begin to form beneath the skin, growing in size and multiplying very quickly like a rash. They break down to a viscid discharge of mucus and pus that has an *extremely* foul smell. A character that is discharging this vile pus will reek abominably, and will inspire revulsion and nausea in anyone who does not have a strong stomach.

1D4x10 minutes later, the victim will begin to feel as if he is suffocating. No matter how hard he breathes in, it will feel as if his body is just not absorbing the oxygen. He will feel cold. He will sweat profusely. There will be a stabbing pain in his side — a “stitch” — as if he had just run a marathon. -1 on all rolls of a physical nature. -3 to P.E. From the victim’s nose, a rivulet of blood-streaked pus and mucus will drip.

The victim’s eyes will discharge tears uncontrollably. He will develop a *highly* increased sensitivity to light, known as photophobia. Ordinary daylight will be painful and seem blindingly brilliant; and bright light will be excruciating and will literally blind the victim until 1D4 minutes after the light is removed or blocked.

15% of Glanders victims develop pus-filled abscesses within their muscles. Reduce P.S. and Spd by 20% for 1D6+4 weeks.

Glanders lasts for 4D4 hours, or until a successful saving throw is rolled.

Incubation Period: 1D6+8 hours.

Infectiousness: 0; No penalty to victim’s saving throw.

Virulence: 3 (re-roll saving throw once every 3 hours).

Damage: Every hour, the victim will suffer 2D6 points of damage directly to his Hit Points (or 4D6+2 M.D., if a supernatural Mega-Damage being). This damage will not heal until the disease has run its course. Supernatural or accelerated healing factors, such as Bio-Regeneration, are suspended for the duration of the infection. Magical or psionic attempts at healing a character afflicted with Glanders will only heal half as many Hit Points as it normally would.

Method of Delivery: Any except Infector.

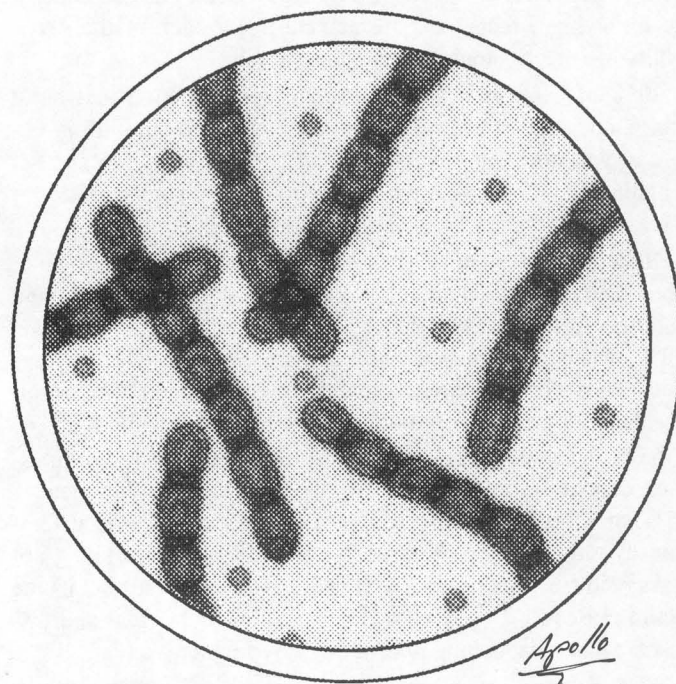
Sequelae: 5% of those who have once had a Glanders infection will develop one of the following after-effects:

Osteomyelitis (01-45%) — An inflammation of the bone marrow in 1D4 randomly chosen limbs. The affected limbs will be extraordinarily painful, and may require the sedation of the patient. Any action that requires the use of one of the affected limbs will be at -8 (or -40% if a skill roll). If one of the affected limbs is a leg, Spd is reduced by 50%. Even with the best available medicines and medical treatment, and complete bed-rest, Osteomyelitis lasts for 1D4+5 days.

Meningitis (46-90%) — An inflammation of the tissues of the spinal cord and brain. Causes fever, loss of appetite, constipation, intense headache, photophobia (see above), increased sensitivity to loud noises, and convulsions. Muscles of the neck and back become rigid and contracted. A character with Meningitis is in no condition to go anywhere. They will be completely delirious, unintelligible. They require bed rest and medical attention for no less than 5D6+10 days. 25% of cases go temporarily deaf or blind during this time, and 40% lapse into a coma.

Brain Abscess (91-00%) — Parts of the brain rot. Roll a saving throw vs coma/death. Failure means death. Success means the character survives, but loses 1D4 points of I.Q. PERMANENTLY.

Note: Glanders is super-fatal to any being that has an even vaguely equine physiology — meaning it resembles a horse. Creatures like Centaurs, Satyrs, and normal horses, mules, donkeys, etc., have an additional -6 penalty applied to their saving throws versus this disease.



Bacillus Anthracis Hyperion
Courtesy Coalition Biowarfare Division

Hyper-Anthrax

bacillus anthracis hyperion

This is a juiced-up version of the standard Anthrax virus that has been a biological warfare standby for centuries. It is still one of the baddest boys on the block.

During the incubation period, the victim will experience a slight nasal stuffiness and mild twinges of pain in the joints. He will feel a little fatigued, and will have a dry, persistent cough. This stage of the virus very much resembles the onset of the flu, actually. These symptoms are annoying, but not so much as to warrant any combat penalties. Fluid-filled blisters begin to appear on areas of exposed skin; hands, arms, and face, usually.

After this, there is a one-hour “eclipse” period, where the symptoms will appear to vanish completely. The character may think his immune system has fought off the infection. He shouldn’t be so self-congratulatory yet, because, by that point, the bacteria will be multiplying furiously in his bloodstream, releasing a toxin that attacks all the internal organs.

Once the “Eclipse” phase is over, the flu-like symptoms return, with a vengeance. The joint pain has become an agony. The dry cough makes his throat feel like burnt sandpaper. The fatigue becomes all consuming. The lungs (if the creature has lungs) will slowly begin to fill with liquid. Breathing becomes difficult. The victim’s skin will turn a faint bluish color.

The victim of Hyper Anthrax will be at -1 to strike and dodge, and -3 on his Spd.

Every hour for the first 1D4 hours of infection, the victim will take 1D6 points of damage directly to his Hit Points (or 2D6 M.D. if a supernatural, Mega-Damage creature). This damage will not heal until the disease has run its course. Supernatural or accelerated healing factors, such as Bio-Regeneration, are suspended for the duration of the infection. Magical or psionic attempts at healing a character afflicted with Hyper Anthrax will only heal half as many Hit Points as it normally would.

From there, Phase II kicks in, and things only get worse. Every hour for the next 2D4 hours of infection, the victim receives 2D4 points of damage to his Hit Points (or 3D6 M.D., if a supernatural, Mega-Damage creature). The -1 penalty to the victim’s strike and dodge, and -3 to his Spd become *cumulative* — meaning that in the first hour of Phase II, penalties are -1 and -3, in the second hour it is -2 to strike and dodge, and -6 on Spd, the third -3 and -9, etc.

Once the disease has progressed to Phase II, no means of healing — magical, psionic, technological, whatever — *nothing* will be able to restore the character’s lost Hit Points until Phase II has run its course (2D4 hours or until a successful saving throw vs poison is rolled, see **Virulence**, below). Magical spells or psionic powers that cure disease *may* (70% chance) still remove the Anthrax bacteria from the victim’s body — although antibiotics and standard medicines will no longer have any effect on the patient.

The fluid-filled blisters on the hands and arms become hard, coal-black scabs (hence the term “anthrax”, which is Greek for coal).

Each breath becomes more painful than the last. The victim will experience a choking sensation, as if he were drowning, and he may begin to panic. He may (25% chance every hour) go into fits and convulsions, rendering him incapable of action for 2D4 melee rounds. If the victim *does* go into convulsions, he must roll a saving throw vs coma/death. If the saving throw fails, the victim falls into a coma, and the disease continues, with the chance of convulsions rising to 45%. If the victim again goes into convulsions while in the coma, he must roll another saving throw. If he fails this one, he is dead.

Now, if the victim has survived all this, the disease begins to subside. No more damage is incurred. For every hour of Anthrax Phase II that the victim endured, the effects take an equal amount of time to reverse themselves (e.g. if a person was in Phase II for 5 hours, incurring a -5 penalty to his strike and dodge, and -10 to his Spd, these penalties take 5 more hours to reverse themselves).

Hyper-Anthrax lasts 3D4 hours, or until a successful saving throw is rolled.

Incubation Period: 1D6x10 minutes.

Infectiousness: -2 penalty to victim’s saving throw.

Virulence: 3 (re-roll saving throw every three hours).

Damage: Special, see above.

Method of Delivery: Puffer, or contamination of the food or water supply of the target(s). Water or soil contaminated with Hyper-Anthrax remains infectious for a *very* long time. At least 3D4 months.

Sequelae: There is a 15% chance that someone who has once been infected with Hyper-Anthrax will develop a permanent immunity to it.

Magic-Reactive Q Fever

thauMATISis coxiella burnetii

Ordinary, terrestrial Q Fever was thought to be a dead-end in the world of biowarfare. It was very infectious, but it had an almost nonexistent fatality rate, and was only mildly debilitating. One lone CS Scientist saw in it possibilities that no one else saw. She bred a significantly new strain of the Fever, and crossed it with an alien microorganism that likewise no one could figure out a use for. Together, they make an effective anti-magic preventative agent — it is positively devastating against magic-users and magic-using creatures.

The onset of Magic-Reactive Q Fever is characterized by chest-pain, fever, weakness, loss of appetite, and chills. The victim is -1 on all rolls of a physical nature, and has their P.E. temporarily lowered by 2 points. In the system of a creature that does not use magic, this is all the effect it has.

In the body of someone who *is* a magic-user, the bacteria also remains relatively inactive... until the creature attempts to cast a spell or otherwise use P.P.E. Whenever a spell is cast, the expended P.P.E. energize the bacteria, which flare up explosively, causing damage to the host body. For every point of P.P.E. spent, the host body receives two points of damage — S.D.C. damage to S.D.C. creatures, and M.D. to Mega-Damage creatures.

This damage will not heal until the disease has run its course. Supernatural or accelerated healing factors, such as Bio-Regeneration, are suspended for the duration of the infection. Magical or psionic attempts at healing a character afflicted with Magic-Reactive Q Fever will only heal half as many Hit Points as it normally would.

In addition, there is a 15% chance that the spell cast by the victim will not work at all, the P.P.E. having been totally absorbed by the bacteria.

Whenever a host body activates this bacteria — by expending P.P.E. — it lights up very brightly and very briefly... like the pop of a flash bulb.

This disease lasts 2D6 days, or until a successful saving throw is rolled. This disease is *not* bioengineered to have a weakened effect on humans, and humans do not enjoy the same +2 bonus to their saving throws against it as they do with all the other biowarfare viruses and bacteria.

Incubation Period: 4D6 minutes. Not curable by ordinary antibiotics.

Infectiousness: -2 penalty to victim's saving throw.

Virulence: 24 (!) re-roll saving throw once per day.

Damage: Special, see above.

Method of Delivery: Any except Infector.

Sequelae: There is a lingering chance of magical "misfire" for quite some time after the main effects of Magic-Reactive Q Fever have passed. For the next 1D4 months, every time the victim attempts to cast a spell or otherwise use P.P.E., there is a 5% chance that the spell will not work. In those 5% of cases, the caster has to roll a successful saving throw vs magic, or the spell "misfires" — the P.P.E. is spent, but there is no spell.

Wolfen Hematemetic Cholera

vibrio cholerae hematemesis

Certainly the most disgusting of the biowarfare bacteria, this Cholera is something you *really* do not want to contract in the middle of a fight. Made from the three-way splicing of ordinary Cholera bacteria, alien bacteria, and bacteria from a deathly-ill Wolfen captive, this nasty Super-Cholera has a quick onset, short duration, and is mostly painless. Nevertheless, if left untreated, it can result in death.

Onset of this disease is incredibly sudden. It begins, in almost the amount of time it takes to snap one's fingers, with the victim vomiting up the contents of his stomach. When his stomach is empty, he will start vomiting dark, acidic-tasting blood. The vomiting is accompanied by a headache and stomach cramps. 1D6 minutes after infection, the uncontrollable diarrhea begins. And does not stop. It is constant and there is nothing the victim can do to hold it in.

Diarrhea resulting from a Cholera infection is painless and... abundant. Very abundant. A victim of Wolfen Hematemetic Cholera can lose as much as 4 to 6 liters of body fluid *per hour*, sometimes more in very extreme cases. The discharge — referred to as "Rice Water" — is watery, almost clear, and filled with tiny, whitish lumps.

The fluid loss due to both the unstoppable diarrhea and the vomiting of blood is extremely life threatening. The victim will feel weak: -2 on all rolls of physical nature.

Every hour that the victim does not replenish at least half of these fluids — by drinking a *lot* of water, by being hydrated intravenously, or by getting a blood-transfusion (preferably all three) — he will be on the verge of passing out: P.S., P.P., and Spd are halved. The victim will be insanely thirsty. He may (40% chance) go into shock; -5/-25% on all rolls.

Victims who are not sufficiently hydrated every hour must roll a saving throw vs coma or lose consciousness. One hour later, if still not rehydrated somehow, he will have to roll another saving throw, with a -2 penalty, or fall into a coma. If one more hour passes in which the disease is not treated at all, he will have to roll one more saving throw — with a -4 penalty this time — or die of severe dehydration and blood loss.

This can be a particularly nasty disease to develop, since the victim may not be aware of what is causing it. Say a player character is running low on water. He stops by a stream to refill several canteens he is carrying with him. He doesn't know the stream is infected with WHC bacteria. He drinks the water in his canteen and becomes infected — *not knowing what is causing the sickness*. All he knows is that he is losing body fluid fast and needs to replenish it. So he drinks more from his canteen, continually re-infecting himself. The more body fluid he loses, the thirstier he gets, and the more he needs to drink. If all the water a character has on him is contaminated, and if he is in the middle of nowhere and cannot find a supply of fresh water, well, he's not going to last too long.

This disease lasts 2D4 hours or until a successful saving throw is rolled. Wolfen receive an additional -2 penalty to their saving throw against this disease.

Incubation Period: 1D6 minutes.

Infectiousness: -4 penalty to victim's saving throw.

Virulence: 2 (re-roll saving throw once every 2 hours).

Damage: None.

Method of Delivery: By contaminated water supply only. The victim does not even have to drink the water. For example, someone bathing or swimming in a lake that is contaminated with Wolfen Hematemetic Cholera can contract it as easily as someone who drinks the contaminated water. Cholera infections do not easily pass from person-to-person, and consequently the chance of catching it from someone else is nil.

Sequelae: 15% chance that the victim of this Cholera will become a hemophiliac.

Biological Toxins & Poisonous Substances

These organic poisonous substances that the CS works with are different from chemical agents such as cyanide, VX, or mustard gas in that they are not man-made. With the exception of Antimony, they are all toxic substances of natural origin produced by an animal, plant, or microbe. The bioengineers of the CS have "tweaked" them a bit, made them more powerful and faster acting, but they remain essentially the same as they exist in nature.

These toxins are mostly used in the contamination of food or water supplies, and in the creation of poisonous gases, since, being poisons, they cannot be carried on the hypodermic beam of the Infector. They are very effective if injected into the victim, subcutaneously (-7 penalty to saving throw), but this is impractical. Who's going to run up to a raging Devil Unicorn with no weapons but a poisonous syringe? Mega-Damage hypodermic darts would work well, and the scientists of the CS are researching the creation of such a weapon, but a prototype has yet to be constructed.

These toxins are not contagious and cannot be spread person-to-person like the viral and bacterial warfare microorganisms can. On the other hand, they are even more fast-acting than the viral or bacterial weapons, and some are devastatingly powerful. Not only that, but there are no vaccines for any of these toxins. Some of them (like SEB and Trichothene Mycotoxin) do

not have any known medical antidotes. Antibiotics do nothing to cure the effects of any of these poisons.

Humans DO NOT receive any bonus to their saving throws against these toxins.

Time of Activation is a measure of how long it is before the victim feels the effects of the toxin.

Toxicity indicates the penalty to the victim's saving throw when rolling to save against the effects of the poison.

Power indicates the relative strength of the toxin, meaning how often — in terms of hours — a victim may re-roll his saving throw. 1 = once an hour, 2 = once every 2 hours, 3 = once every 3 hours, etc.

Method of Delivery is how the toxin must be introduced to the host body — by subcutaneous injection, by aerosol (a gas), or by contamination of the host's food or water supply, etc. The CS Infector and Puffer weapons may not be used with any of the toxins listed below.

Sequelae is what the after-effects of the toxins are, after the poison has run its course. Some of these poisons cause serious damage to the victim's body that can linger for a long, long time.

Aconite

Once used as an arrow-poison by both ancient Chinese and Gallic warriors, Aconite is cultivated from the dried root of the *Aconitum napellus*, a potato-like tuber. It is not terribly powerful, but it is cheap, and easy to produce in vast quantities. It works well against weak enemies.

Symptoms of Aconite poisoning include excessive salivation, excessive perspiration, a tingling sensation in mouth, restlessness, dizziness, slow pulse, slow and shallow respiration, and a noticeable dimness of the victim's vision. He will be -1 to strike and on initiative.

The effects of this poison last 1D4 hours, or until a successful saving throw is rolled.

Time of Activation: 5D4 melee rounds.

Toxicity: -1 penalty to victim's saving throw vs poison.

Power: 1 (re-roll saving throw every hour).

Damage: Every hour, for the duration of the effects of Aconite poisoning, the victim will suffer 1D6 points of damage directly to their Hit Points (or 2D6 M.D., if a supernatural, Mega-Damage creature). This damage will not heal until the poison has run its course. Supernatural or accelerated healing factors, such as Bio-Regeneration, operate at only half efficiency for the duration of the poisoning.

Method of Delivery: Contamination of food or water supply.

Sequelae: None.

Antimony Salt

Antimony is a metallic element that can crystallize into poisonous salts. The victim of Antimony poisoning will feel an acrid, metallic taste in the mouth. This is accompanied by a burning heat all over the body, constriction in the throat, pain in the abdomen, vomiting, cold skin, rash, slowed respiration, and erratic pulse. He will be -1 to strike, dodge, and parry.

Antimony poisoning lasts 1D6+2 hours, or until a successful saving throw is rolled.

Time of Activation: 2D4 minutes.

Toxicity: No penalty to victim's saving throw.

Power: 1 (re-roll saving throw every hour).

Damage: Every hour the victim suffers from Antimony poisoning, he will receive 1D4 points of damage to his Hit Points (2D4 M.D. to supernatural, Mega-Damage creatures). This damage will not heal until the poison has run its course. Supernatural or accelerated healing factors, such as Bio-Regeneration, operate at only half efficiency for the duration of the poisoning.

Method of Delivery: Contamination of victim's water supply ONLY. Unfortunately, this toxin requires that the victim consume large amounts of it before any effects can be observed. The victim must drink, in a time-span no greater than four days, at least 1 liter of contaminated water per 100 pounds of the victim's body weight for the above effects to take place. Any contamination consumed above that level reduces the saving throw proportionately (e.g. if someone who weighed approximately 200 pounds — who would need only 2 liters to be adequately poisoned — drank 4 liters, his saving throw would be penalized by -1; if he drank 6 liters, it would be -2, etc.).

Sequelae: Loss of appetite for 1D4 days.

Botulinum

This group of neurotoxins produced by the *Clostridium Botulinum* bacteria, known as Botulinum toxins (among which is the toxin which causes Botulism Food Poisoning) are some of the most powerful poisons on the planet. They are 15,000 times more toxic than Cyanide, and 100,000 times more toxic than Sarin (a common 20th century nerve gas).

Botulinum poisoning is characterized by a generalized weakness in all the muscles, drooping of facial features (because of the slack muscles), dizziness, dry mouth and throat, and shortness of breath. The victim's vision will be blurred. He will have trouble speaking. He will not be able to swallow any food or liquids because of throat spasms.

The penalties begin 3D4 minutes after poisoning. Spd, P.S., and P.P. are all reduced by 30%. Penalties are -2 to strike, dodge, and parry, -1 on initiative, and -1 on all saving throws. One hour later, these penalties double.

There is a 25% chance that 1D4 limbs will become temporarily paralyzed, and will be useless for the duration of the poisoning.

Botulinum poisoning lasts 4D6 hours, or until a successful saving throw is rolled.

Time of Activation: 4D6 minutes.

Toxicity: -4 penalty to victim's saving throw vs poison.

Power: 2 (re-roll saving throw once every two hours).

Damage: Every hour the victim will receive 2D4 points of damage directly to his Hit Points (or 3D6 M.D. to supernatural, Mega-Damage beings). This damage will not heal until the poison has run its course. Supernatural or accelerated healing factors, such as Bio-Regeneration, operate at only half efficiency for the duration of the poisoning.

Method of Delivery: CS Fumigator, or contamination of food or water supply. It is also possible to deliver Botulinum by the CS "Mister" weapon, but the possibility of an effective poisoning drops to 60%.

Sequelae: None.

Ricin

This potent protein-toxin, manufactured from the beans of the Castor plant (*Ricinus communis*), is an easily produced powder. One hundred pounds of Castor beans — which the CS scientists grow in advanced hydroponics labs — produce five pounds of Ricin powder.

Symptoms of Ricin poisoning include weakness, fever, nausea, joint pain, chest pain, and cough. Also, swelling of the lung tissue and pustular lesions in the windpipe (or ulcers in the stomach, if poison was delivered in victim's food or water supply). -2 on all rolls of a physical nature, and -1 on initiative.

If Ricin poisoning persists longer than three hours (i.e. if the victim fails three consecutive saving throws vs poison), the victim must roll a saving throw vs death or fall into a comatose state for the duration of the poisoning. If he rolls a natural 1 for this saving throw (a critical failure), the character dies of massive cardiac shutdown.

Ricin poisoning lasts 4D4 hours, or until a successful saving throw is rolled.

Time of Activation: 3D6 minutes.

Toxicity: -2 penalty to victim's saving throw (-4 if delivered in the target's food or water supply).

Power: 1 (re-roll saving throw every hour).

Damage: Every hour, the victim will receive 1D4 points of damage directly to the Hit Points (2D4 M.D., if the target is a supernatural, Mega-Damage creature), or double that if the poison was delivered in the target's food or water supply. This damage will not heal until the poison has run its course. Supernatural or accelerated healing factors, such as Bio-Regeneration, operate at only half efficiency for the duration of the poisoning.

Method of Delivery: CS Fumigator, or poisoning of food or water supply.

Sequelae: 25% of those recovering from Ricin poisoning develop Pneumonia.

SEB (Staphylococcal Enterotoxin B)

The fastest acting of all the CS toxins, SEB is the one usually used in the CS "Mister" weapon, since its effects are virtually instantaneous.

Poisoning by SEB causes intense pain, particularly at the point of contact with the poison (usually the face). If the victim gets sprayed in the face with SEB, he will be in anguish, and stunned for 1D4 rounds: -5 on all rolls. No saving throw.

1D4 rounds later, after recovering from the stunning, symptoms of SEB poisoning develop immediately. There is an onset of high fever (up to 106 F/41.1 C), chills, headache, awful muscle tenderness, dry cough, shortness of breath, and extreme chest pain. The victim's Spd is reduced by 25%, P.S. and P.P. are reduced by 10%, and a penalty of -3 is imposed on their strike and dodge rolls. -2 penalty on initiative.

If the poison was squirted in the eyes, the victim must roll an additional save vs poison, or be blinded for 3D4 hours.

The debilitating effects of SEB poisoning last for approximately two hours, or until a successful saving throw is rolled.

Time of Activation: Effects begin instantaneously.

Toxicity: -4 to victim's saving throw vs poison.

Power: Low; re-roll saving throw once every fifteen minutes.

Method of Delivery: CS Mister, CS Fumigator, or by contamination of victim's food or water supply.

Sequelae: 50% chance that the fever will last 1D4+1 days. 40% chance that cough will persist for 5D6 days.

Note: Heavy exposure to SEB (usually only possible with contaminated water) can cause coma. Drinking more than 1.5 liters of contaminated water has an 85% chance of sending the victim into a convulsive stupor (if they fail their saving throw vs coma) in which no action is possible for 1D4x10 minutes.

Trichothecene Mycotoxin (Myco T-2)

Myco T-2 is a toxin produced by various poisonous molds and fungi. It is also commonly used in the CS "Mister" weapon, because of its capacity to cause immediate, intense skin pain at the point of contact — which, if it happens to be the face and eyes, is painful enough to stop anything short of a blood-crazed Kill Hound in its tracks. Direct facial exposure causes the victim to be stunned for 2D4 melee rounds — incapable of any action but screaming and clawing at his face while pieces of skin drop off into his hands.

Exposure to this toxin causes severe itching in the area of exposure, skin pain, and redness. Large areas of exposed skin become morbid (die) and slide off like patches of cloth. Effects on the airway include nose and throat pain, profuse discharge of mucus from the nose, wheezing, chest pain, uncontrollable sneezing and the coughing up of blood.

For the duration of the poisoning, the victim is -3 on initiative, -2 to strike, -1 to dodge, parry, and roll with punch, and -10% on the performance of all skills. If the poison got in the victim's eyes, the victim must roll an additional save vs poison — with a -4 penalty — or be blinded for 2D4+5 hours.

The victim receives 1D4 points of damage directly to the Hit Points (or 2D4 points of M.D. if the victim is a supernatural, Mega-Damage creature) for each exposure.

Myco T-2 poisoning lasts 1D4+6 hours, or until a successful saving throw is rolled.

Time of Activation: 0-3 melee rounds (1D4-1).

Toxicity: -2 penalty to victim's saving throw vs poison.

Power: 1 (re-roll saving throw every hour).

Method of Delivery: Any except Infector or Puffer.

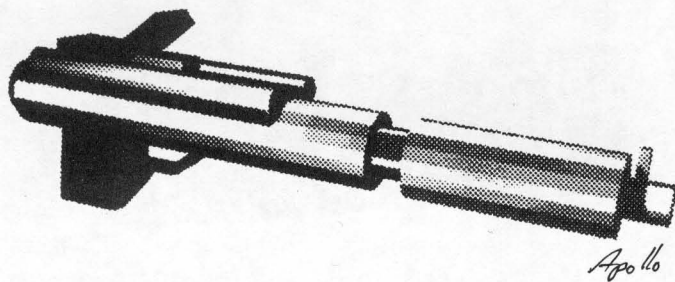
Sequelae: None, except possible scarring where patches of skin were lost.

Weapons & Equipment of the CS Biowarfare

CS "Infector"

This is one of the standard ways that the biological weapons of the CS are delivered. In function, it is basically a laser hypodermic needle.

The Infector is a tube, three feet long, and about the thickness of a flashlight, with a lens at one end and a computer targeting sight at the other. It is extremely heavy for its size. It projects a powerful, ultra-tight laser beam less than ¼ the thickness of a human hair to a distance of up to 200 feet (61 m). This beam by itself causes no damage, but it is powerful enough to pass



through heavy-duty M.D.C. materials like body armor, power armor, and the skin of supernatural, M.D.C. creatures.

The beam will pass through just about anything in its path: through the power armor a person is wearing, and, consequently, through the body of the person in the armor. On this tiny beam of light is carried a few germs of a Biological Warfare Virus, which are released into the bloodstream of the first organic being that the beam encounters.

The beam is so tiny that those who are hit by it may not even feel it. At most, victims will have the sensation of being pricked by a pin, but 65% of the time they will not feel anything at all. Since the beam is so small as to be effectively invisible, it is difficult for a user to tell if he has hit a target or not. There is an indicator on the shaft of the Infector that registers if the last shot hit anything, although it doesn't say exactly *what* the beam hit, or if it hit what it was supposed to, only that it hit *something*.

Weight: 30 lbs (13.5 kg).

Damage: As per Biological Warfare Virus used.

Rate of Fire: The Infector must be reloaded after every shot. Firing takes one melee action, and reloading takes another.

Effective Range: 1000 feet (305 m).

Payload: One shot. Must be reloaded after each firing. Virus samples are carried in a heavy, shock-absorbing satchel that holds 124 sample-bulbs. The bulbs are somewhat delicate, and must be handled with care. If a bulb breaks anywhere within 12 inches (0.3 m) of exposed skin or 30 inches (0.8 m) of an open wound, there is a 15% chance that the person may be infected by the biological weapon. The satchel weighs 26 pounds (11.7 kg) fully loaded and 17 pounds (7.7 kg) empty.

CS "Puffer"

This is another CS Biowarfare delivery system. It is a semi-hollow tube, about the size of a bazooka. It fires ceramic bulbs containing weapons-grade bacteria and viruses, in powdered form. Upon hitting something, the bulb shatters and re-

leases a powdered biological weapon to an area that has a radius of eight feet (2.4 m). This powder dissolves colorlessly into the air like a puff of smoke.

It is not necessary that a Puff-bulb even be fired *at* a particular target, since this circular area will remain infectious for 2D4x10 minutes after the bulb releases its contents (half that in heavy winds). It is conceivable that an area could be infected more than an hour before an enemy passes through it and contracts the disease. With only a few dozen Puff-bulbs, quite a large area could be "mined" like this, so that anyone passing through this space shortly thereafter would stand a strong chance of contracting the disease.

The downside is that the effectiveness of this weapon depends solely on whether or not the target breathes in any of these free-floating particles of biological warfare, or has skin porous enough to allow the germs to pass through (most humans and humanoid D-Bees do). At best, the weapon has a 75% effectiveness against unprotected targets (i.e. who are not wearing a helmet or armor), and 35% effectiveness against semi-protected targets (those wearing non-environmental armor). The Puffer has almost zero effectiveness against enemies that do not need to breathe and who do not have any skin exposed. Although, shooting a Puff-bulb at (or into) the open wound of an enemy is remarkable effective, whether the enemy breathes or not.

However, even shooting a Puff-bulb at a protected target can be effective, in a way. Most of the Biowarfare Viruses and Bacteria will remain active on any kind of surface it hits. So, even if a character is wearing power armor, and a Puff-bulb hits the armor, the biowarfare agent will *remain active on the surface of the armor*. If the character takes the armor off anytime before the biowarfare agent becomes inactive, he has a 35% chance of contracting the disease through contact with the infected surface of his armor — and so does anyone else who comes into contact with this infected surface.

Typically, Biowarfare viruses remain active on a surface like this for one hour per point of **Virulence** the specific disease has. Biowarfare bacteria remain active for two hours per point of **Virulence**. See individual entries for the **Virulence** of each disease.

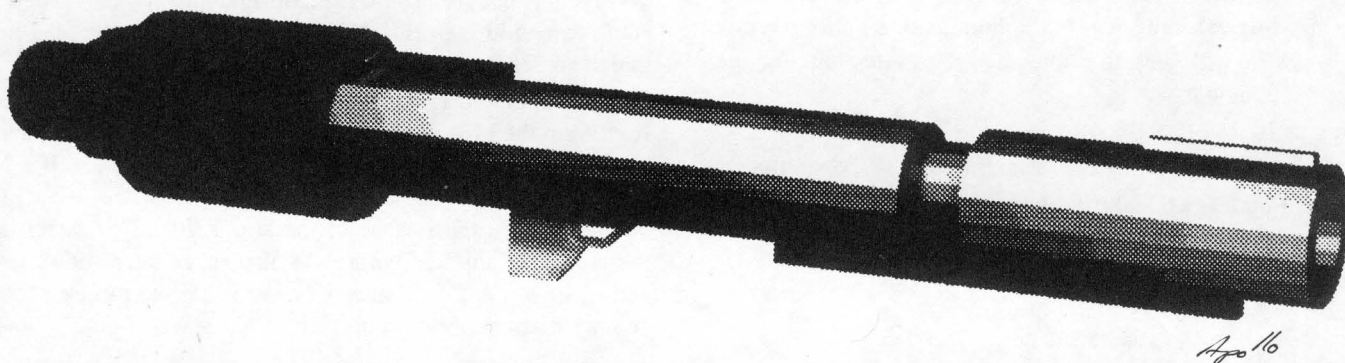
Weight: 5 lbs (2.25 kg).

Damage: As per Biological Warfare Virus or Bacteria used.

Rate of Fire: The Puffer must be reloaded after every shot. Firing takes one melee action, and reloading takes another.

Effective Range: 300 feet (91.5 m).

Payload: One shot. Must be reloaded after each firing. Virus and bacteria samples are carried in a heavy, shock-absorbing satchel that holds 42 sample-bulbs. The bulbs are somewhat del-



icate (although *far* less so than the bulbs for the Infector weapon), and must be handled with care. If a bulb breaks anywhere within six feet (1.8 m) of exposed skin or sixteen feet (4.9 m) of an open wound, there is a 20% chance that the person may be infected by the biological weapon. The satchel weighs 38 pounds (17.1 kg) fully loaded and 27 pounds (10.8 kg) empty.

CS “Fumigator”

The biowarfare equivalent of a fusion block. You set it down, and set the timer, and -POOF-. An area is fumigated.

This flat, heavy disc distributes powdered viruses or bacteria — or bio-toxin gas — to an area with a radius of 150 feet (45.7 m). This area will remain “fumigated” for 7 hours if a virus or bacteria was used (3 hours if bio-toxin gas), half that in high winds. Half that again if the virus or bacteria is exposed to sunlight (bio-toxin gasses do not suffer from sunlight exposure).

As long as a victim remains within this contaminated cloud (which is completely colorless and odorless), he is in danger of infection or poisoning. Victims must roll a saving throw vs disease or poison *every melee round* that they remain within this cloud. However, should they become infected or poisoned, they then can roll saving throws only as often as the disease’s virulence will let them. However, if they finally roll a successful saving throw and succeed in shaking off the disease, and if they are still in the contaminated cloud, they have to roll a saving throw *every melee round* or become infected again. This can be especially devastating in close-quarters or indoors fighting, where the enemy has nowhere to go, and is not able to get out of the area of effect of the Fumigator.

Most of the Biowarfare Viruses and Bacteria will remain active on any kind of surface it hits. So, even if a character is wearing power armor, and the armor comes into contact with the area-of-effect of the Fumigator, the biowarfare agent will *remain active on the surface of the armor* (not applicable for Bio-Toxins, only the Bacteria and Viruses). If the character takes the armor off anytime before the biowarfare agent becomes inactive, he has a 35% chance of contracting the disease through contact with the infected surface of his armor — and so does anyone else who comes into contact with this infected surface.

Typically, Biowarfare viruses remain active on a surface like this for one hour per point of **Virulence** the specific disease has. Biowarfare bacteria remain active for two hours per point of **Virulence**. See individual entries for the **Virulence** of each disease.

The only safe way to destroy a Fumigator is to incinerate it, which will kill the microorganisms inside it (or incinerate the poison). Just blowing it up with something concussive is a *bad* idea, since this will only scatter the Fumigator’s entire payload at once, which will keep the fumigated area infectious for the next 2D4x10 minutes.

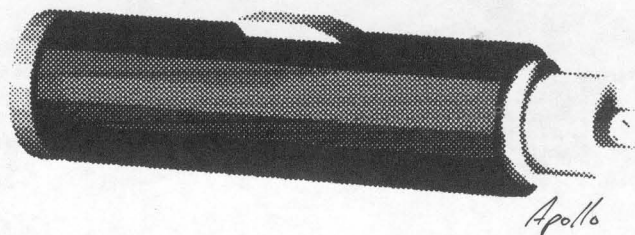
Weight: 10 lbs (4.5 kg).

Damage: As per Biowarfare Virus, Bacteria, or Toxin used.

Rate of Fire: May only be used once.

Effective Range: 150 foot radius (45.7 m).

Payload: One usage.



CS “Mister”

This is a common personal sidearm for the official personnel of the CS Biowarfare Division. It is basically a small aerosol tube, only slightly larger than a long roll of breath mints, that shoots out an aerated stream of a liquefied biowarfare substance at an attacker.

The Mister is mostly used to deploy the faster-acting biological toxins that the CS manufactures. Its range is too short for it to be effective in a hit-and-run attack situation (you pretty much have to get right in the enemy’s face to use it), so most of the Viruses and Bacteria become impractical in a combat situation.

However, since it is a completely silent weapon, it can be used to spray viruses or bacteria on a sleeping enemy, assuming the player characters are stealthy enough to sneak up on the target without waking it up (and assuming they wouldn’t want to just stick a Rail Gun in the sleeping enemy’s mouth, rather than just give it a bad disease). Another application for it is to use it on a captured enemy (especially if they are not very bright or of animal intelligence), infecting it with something very contagious, like Smallpox, and then letting it go, so it returns to its community and hopefully infects others with the disease.

When using a biological toxin, the effectiveness of this weapon depends solely on whether or not the target has their face exposed. Some toxins are able to seep through the skin of a target and poison them, but this takes far too long to be useful in a combat situation. The only part of the body that yields immediate results when hit with a biological toxin is the face. Also, toxins do not remain active on the surface of armors the way bacteria and viruses do, so using it against a character in armor is a useless gesture.

Using viruses or bacteria, the Mister has, at best, a 90% effectiveness against unprotected targets, and almost zero effectiveness against enemies that do not need to breathe, or who do not have any skin exposed. Although, shooting a stream from the Mister at (or into) the open wound of an enemy is remarkably effective, whether the enemy breathes or not. The only viruses that are commonly used with the Mister delivery system are Smallpox and VEE, because they have short enough Incubation Periods that, if a soldier should spray them on an enemy, he could expect to see results in 1-3 minutes, rather than the hours that the other Biowarfare substances take.

As with the Puffer weapon, Biowarfare Viruses and Bacteria fired from the Mister will remain active on any kind of surface it hits. So, even if a character is wearing power armor, if a Mist stream containing viruses hits the armor, these viruses will remain active on the surface of the armor. If the character takes the armor off anytime before the biowarfare agent becomes inactive, he has a 35% chance of contracting the disease through contact with the infected surface of his power armor — and so

does anyone else who comes into contact with this infected surface.

Typically, Biowarfare viruses remain active on a surface like this for one hour per point of **Virulence** the specific disease has. Biowarfare bacteria remain active for two hours per point of **Virulence**. See individual entries for the **Virulence** of each disease.

Weight: 0.5 lb (0.23 kg).

Damage: As per Biological Warfare Virus, Bacteria or Toxin used.

Rate of Fire: The Mister must be reloaded after every shot. Firing takes one melee action, and reloading takes another.

Effective Range: 9 feet (2.7 m).

Payload: One shot. Must be reloaded after each firing. Virus, bacteria, and toxin samples are usually carried in a light, canvas sack. These sample cartridges are made of durable, shock-absorbing metal, and are not as delicate as the bulbs used for the Infector or Puffer weapons. They do not break easily, and are even considered safe enough to carry in one's pocket without worry. However, if one *does* break anywhere within three feet (0.9 m) of exposed skin or eight feet (2.4 m) of an open wound, there is a 20% chance that the person may be infected by the biological weapon.

CS Personal Decon & Detox Fieldkit

The standard Coalition D & D Kit (Decontamination and Detoxification) comes equipped with everything an operative in the field would need if he were to be accidentally or purposefully infected with an organism of biological warfare, or poisoned by a natural toxin (i.e. one that is produced by an animal). To keep things simple: one ampule=one dose. This kit includes:

2 sterile hypodermic syringes, with sixteen disposable needles.

10 pairs of sterile latex surgical gloves.

3 sterile cloth facemasks to cover mouth and nose.

168 grams of antibiotics (twice the amount needed to cure the average person of any bacterial weapon).

2 tubes of antibiotic ointment. 40% effective against infected skin rashes.

2 ampules of VIG serum (*Vaccina immune globulin* — a fairly effective antidote for Smallpox-based weapons, that has 85% effectiveness if administered within 7 hours of initial exposure, and 100% effectiveness if administered up to half an hour *before* exposure).

2 ampules of Rifampin, which is a semi-effective (75% effectiveness) antidote for all Brucellosis-based infections.

2 ampules of TC-83, the vaccine for Venezuelan Equine Encephalitis-based weapons (VEE), which has 100% effectiveness if administered within five minutes of exposure, -10% effectiveness for each successive interval of five minutes (0% effectiveness if administered any longer than 50 minutes after infection).

3 tablets of doxycycline and 3 tablets of ciprofloxacin, which here are used as anti-anthrax agents. If taken before exposure, effectiveness is 99%. If taken after exposure, effectiveness drops to 60%.

8 ampules of Ribavirin, a general, all-purpose anti-viral agent that has 55% effectiveness against *any* viral weapon if administered within two hours of infection.

10 ampules of Mega-Antivenin, which neutralizes most natural, animal-produced venoms, including (but not limited to) the toxins of various snakes, scorpions, and spiders indigenous to Rifts Earth. This serum is also effective in 72% of alien and supernatural creature-produced venoms.

2 ampules of *heptavalent botulinum antitoxin*, which is an antidote for most Botulinum-based toxins, and is effective in 100% of cases.

6 tablets of superactivated charcoal and 6 tablets of magnesium citrate, to be crushed and swallowed for intensive gastric decontamination — if a toxin or bacterially contaminated food has been ingested. Effective in 70% of cases.

24 large tablets of Calcium Hypochlorite, which can be dissolved in water to form a disinfecting and decontaminating solution. This solution is used to thoroughly wash the body (especially open wounds and areas of thin, semi-porous skin like the mouth, tongue, inside of the nose, corners of the eyes, under the fingernails, genitals, and rectum) to eliminate biological warfare organisms that may be clinging to the skin. A heavy-concentration solution — using four tablets instead of one — is used to decontaminate clothing and other objects that may have come into contact with infectious substances. It would take fourteen tablets worth of solution to adequately disinfect something the size of, say, a suit of power armor.

4 disposable heat flares. Small sticks, each with enough energy to boil one gallon of water for 30 minutes, which is to be used for sterilization purposes.

Weight: 13 lbs (6 kg).

Safesuit

This is the standard sealed-systems, anti-infection suit worn by scientists and technicians in the field, in the "hot zones" (areas where the most lethal and contagious diseases are thought to be active) and in the high-containment laboratories, where the biological weapons are actually cultivated, spliced, and manipulated.

It consists of a thick, insulated padding covered by a triple-redundancy airtight material, with an integral helmet that has a wide Mega-Damage glass visor that does not limit peripheral vision at all. The suit carries its own atmosphere, a ten-hour supply of oxygen. The gloves of the suit are thin (although the material is no less tough than on the rest of the suit), allowing the wearer to manipulate tiny objects with no penalty to his manual dexterity.

The material that the suit is made of is covered in a reflective substance similar to what covers the Glitter Boy armor, that is specifically designed to reflect the penetrating laser beam of the CS Infector weapon, which the suit is impervious to. This is to prevent any accidental infections while handling the weapon. It also reflects 60% of all other laser blasts, although, given its incredibly low M.D.C., this suit is NOT meant for combat. It is also 100% radiation-proof.

The complicated and intricate network of seals, closures, and valves make this suit rather time-consuming to get in and out of. With assistance, it takes a minimum of a half hour to put on or

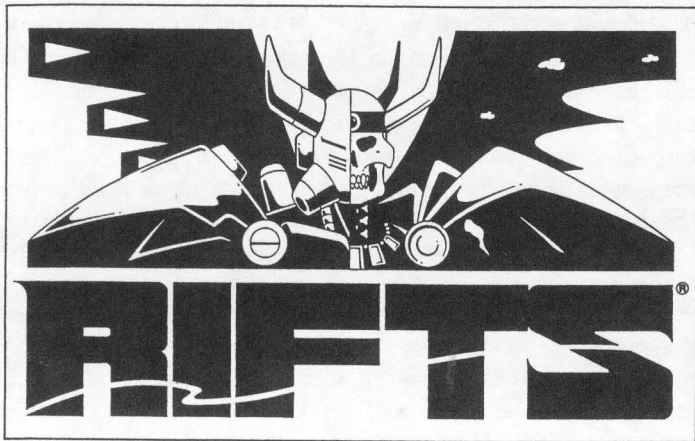
take off, and may be worn over other suits of *very* light armor (including the new Coalition CA-3 Light Dead Boy Armor), but not over power armor.

M.D.C.: 9

Weight: 8 lbs (3.6 kg).

Excellent Mobility: -5% on the performance of Prowl and other physical skills such as Gymnastics.

The Hammer of the Forge



By James M. G. Cannon

Chapter Eighteen Repo Man

"Never make a deal with a Naruni." — Noro proverb.

"Never make a deal with a Naruni, unless your jaws are around his throat and you've a pistol jammed in his stomach."

— Wolfen proverb.

The bridge of the S'hree Vek starship *Vigilance* was cluttered with bodies and refuse, its dimensions and angles warped by a magical assault. Jagged shards of red metal, the remains of the shattered roof, lay scattered about the cabin. The corpses of three Conaigher, multi-limbed and red-haired simian aliens, sprawled at the foot of the command console. The console itself was scorched, decorated with broken glass and puddles of a viscous fluid called virium. The remains of the ship's aquatic captain rotted atop the console, still smoking.

A moment ago, a deadly battle had raged across the bridge. But that was over now, and the survivors were left to take stock.

Siv Yurilak, Noro psychic and pilot, stood in black leathers and body armor with two drawn grav pistols in his hands. Beside him, Arwen Griffin's body glowed with a violet light that gave her normally green skin and blue hair a darker shade. It was Arwen who had single-handedly torn open the roof of the craft, allowing her and Siv to drop in during the final moments of the battle.

Doctor Abbot leaned heavily upon his cane. A being composed almost entirely of shadow, Abbot's only distinguishing features were the twin orange lights of his eyes. He wore a battered trenchcoat and a snapbrim fedora, and just minutes ago the only other being like himself that he had met in over six centuries of existence, had died. At Abbot's side, Kassiopaea Acherean, Atlantean Undead Slayer, placed one of her brightly tattooed arms around his shoulders to help support him. She brushed a lock of dark hair out of her blue eyes and checked on the fifth member of their little circle.

Joriel was a Celestine, a bio-engineered humanoid with huge, feathered maroon wings erupting from his back, built by the S'hree Vek to act as a superhuman enforcer. Over the past few weeks he had watched as his ship was subverted by the Shadowen, Hazmat, and its crew was devoured by the shadowy necromancer. Kassy could not begin to imagine the horrors Joriel had witnessed, but the look on his face and the slump of his shoulders suggested to her that the experiences had broken him.

It was Joriel who had laid the killing blow upon Hazmat. Abbot had beaten his kinsman in a magical duel, and then brutally hammered the prone Shadowen with his cane. Kassy pulled Abbot away from Hazmat, stopping Abbot short of becoming a murderer. But Joriel had lurched forward and buried his energy sword in Hazmat's form, killing him instantly.

Now the four allies stared at the Celestine, wondering what would happen next.

"Are you sure you're okay?" Kassy finally asked Abbot.

Abbot nodded, his orange eyes dim. Straightening, he gently disengaged himself from Kassy's hold. "I will be fine, my dear," he said in soft British tones.

"Yurilak," Kassy called. "Holster your guns."

Siv looked at her a moment, then at each of his pistols in turn. With a sheepish grin he complied.

"Arwen, same goes for you," Kassy continued. The young monk blinked once, and then the violet glow faded. Arwen smoothed her robes and folded her hands before her.

"Siv, I want a comprehensive scan of the ship. Let me know how many more are aboard. I know there are at least three more Conaigher somewhere out there."

Siv's large black eyes rolled back in their sockets as he sent his psionic senses out to survey the ship. He had honed his natural abilities with the aim towards making himself one of the best pilots in the Three Galaxies; he was perhaps one of the most



powerful clairvoyants the planet Noro-Gar had ever produced. Kassy knew he was quite capable of surveying the entirety of the craft in an eye blink. While he did so, Kassy dropped to one knee beside Joriel, glass crunching beneath her. Joriel's red eyes regarded her coolly as she approached. His expression did not change. He had the eyes of a man who now saw a gaping black hole where his future had been.

"What do you want?" he growled at her.

"That would be my question as well," Kassy responded. "What's next, Joriel?"

"There are seven individuals left on this ship," Siv interjected. "Present company excluded, of course."

"Of course," Abbot agreed. "Kassy, perhaps we should be going."

"In a minute," she snapped at him. She instantly regretted her tone, and shot Abbot an apologetic look. He nodded, though she could tell he didn't understand. Not that she really understood what she was doing, either. Joriel had helped them defeat Hazmat, true, but he had not acted out of altruism. It had been the last act of a dying man, a desperate grab for any chance at revenge. As a manufactured being, a genetically designed robot, Joriel was programmed to serve the S'hree Vek. He was also probably programmed to go down with the ship. For some reason, Kassy couldn't stand by and let that happen.

"Joriel," she began once more. "Come with us. You have a chance here. Make a clean break. Start over. Find yourself some peace."

Joriel stared at her for a long moment. "Go away," he said at last. "Before I have you thrown in the pens."

Kassy sighed. "Think for a moment," she said. "What's your next move? Report to the S'hree Vek embassy on Center? They'll melt you down to slag. Come with us. We're your only chance."

Joriel frowned, but a glimmer of anger appeared in his eyes. His wings shifted slightly, and he opened his right hand. For a moment, Kassy thought he might ignite his blazer, the psionic energy blade with which all Celestines were equipped. Instead, Joriel placed his palm flat against the floor and levered himself to his feet. Kassy rose with him.

"Last time," Joriel said. He looked over all four of them. "Get off my ship."

Kassy crossed her blue and white tattooed arms and gritted her teeth. He was infuriating. But he wasn't going to budge, she realized. "Good luck," she told him. She turned to her companions.

"A noble effort," Abbot told her.

"Arwen," Kassy said, "can you make us an exit?"

The young monk grinned suddenly, and barely seeming to move, she flowed into an intricate kata, as delicate and entrancing as a dance step. Instantly the violet glow suffused her form.

"Wait, you can't just —" Joriel began to say, but not quickly enough. Arwen moved gracefully and swiftly towards the wall, almost seeming to glide through the air. Her hand fell like a

hammer against the bulkhead, and it exploded outward with a terrific crash. The entire bridge shuddered and groaned; the lights flickered and went out, finally succumbing to the terrible toll placed upon them in the past ten minutes.

"— do that," Joriel finished lamely in the empty silence that followed.

"There's a ten meter drop to the tarmac," Arwen told them, leaning out the gaping hole. Still awash in violet light, she glanced back at her friends. "Is that a problem for anyone?"

"Not at all," Kassy said. "Go ahead."

With a grin, Arwen dropped from sight. Siv swept a gloved hand across the bald dome of his head and regarded Kassy with an inscrutable expression. Then he, too, stepped into the hole and dropped to the hanger floor. Kassy knew that Siv would cushion his fall with some carefully applied Telekinesis. Abbot was next, conjuring a platform of shadowstuff to lower himself safely.

"Joriel," Kassy said, backing up towards the shattered wall. "Give yourself time to think. We're not leaving Center any time soon. If you change your mind —"

"I won't," he interrupted.

"— if you change your mind," she repeated, ignoring him, "you'll be able to find us." Then she turned, and was gone.

* * *

The pastoral world of Ninemous had recently been the victim of a Dominator attack. The galactic predator was defeated by a coalition of Cosmo-Knights, but the planet did not escape unscathed. Before his attack, the Dominator had introduced an anti-tech virus to the planetary network, which crippled its ring of defensive satellites and also managed to shut down much of the technology planetside. The Dominator himself had landed in the capital city and attempted to cart off as many slaves as possible. He was stopped, but the heart of the city was destroyed in the course of the battle.

The city, laid out in a spiral pattern like a nautiloid or ammonite, had once had a great central tower at its heart. That tower was destroyed with one casual swipe of the Dominator's arm. Most of the city had evacuated itself by the time Caleb Vulcan and his Cosmo-Knight allies had arrived on the scene, but there remained much devastation.

Two days had passed since the battle, and the Cosmo-Knights remained on Ninemous. Ariel, the silver armored Titan, Kolkvet, the green armored Monro, and Jasper, the golden armored gunslinger, were aboard the Dominator's craft. The size of a small moon, the Dominator's ship was a bed of ancient and lost technology, packed with powerful weapons, imprisoned sentients, and forgotten lore of the universe. The Cosmo-Knights aboard it were systematically dismantling the craft, while also searching for a means to erase the anti-tech virus.

Planetside, Caleb Vulcan and the remaining Knights volunteered their services to the clean-up effort. Their Forge-born strength, endurance, and cosmic awareness proved invaluable. Caleb, Vyking, and the centauroid Knight Cervantes could — the three of them working together, or most often single-handedly — move massive building fragments that weighed

tons, and since they only needed to rest an hour or two out of every twenty-four, they could work around the clock. More, Vyking and Cervantes in particular had a talent for locating hollow spaces that might hide survivors. In this manner, Caleb and his allies had managed to rescue dozens of Ninemans who were trapped or pinned beneath rubble. Unfortunately, they also found hundreds who had not escaped death.

Each corpse they found cut like a knife into Caleb's heart. The Ninemans were a slender, slightly built people, their bodies covered with a short layer of fur and gifted with large eyes and a prehensile tail. They were quick, smart, and compassionate, and they chattered at one another in their native tongue, though many could converse in Trade Three. Something about them reminded Caleb of raccoons or weasels, grown as tall and smart as a human being.

Caleb could not help but feel that, had he been a little faster or a little stronger, he might have been able to reach Ninemous in enough time to keep the Dominator from... from what exactly? It had taken six Cosmo-Knights together to stop the giant alien, and Caleb had faced the Dominator on his own for several desperate minutes with little effect. Still, the feeling that he should have done more refused to go away.

Making Caleb feel even worse was the joy and adulation that the Ninemans laid upon the Cosmo-Knights. The furry humanoids showered them with praise and admiration, sharing gifts and kind words and prayers of thanks with equal fervor. Vyking seemed to bask under all the attention, assuming the position of leader with grace and ease. Cervantes, towering over his fellow Knights and the natives on his four legs, took the adulation in stride, as if he expected the Ninemans to act as they did. Caleb, in contrast, shrank from the attention. He threw himself into his work instead.

In two days the three Cosmo-Knights and squads of Nineman rescue workers had managed to quell the fires scattered throughout the city, and cleared away the rubble in the northern quadrant of the battle zone. Much work remained, however.

Caleb and Vyking were levering a fragment of the Dominator's grav sled into the air when Caleb was first visited by the apparition. Cervantes had retired to take a rest period, to meditate and recharge for an hour, and the Ninemans stood nearby, ready to help Vyking and Caleb but physically unable to do so. Both Knights had divested themselves of their armor, and Caleb had further stripped down to just his jeans and boots. His red hair, growing irritatingly long, was tied back into a ponytail to keep it out of his eyes. He was covered head to toe in dust and grime, and so too was his fellow Knight. Vyking, out of his armor, proved to be a ruggedly handsome human with dark hair and a neatly trimmed beard, only a little older than Caleb himself. Vyking wore only a pair of shorts with multiple pockets and a pair of sandals. He had shredded his shirt days before to make impromptu bandages, and had yet to replace it.

Caleb hovered in the air above the twisted metal frame of the grav sled fragment. While he searched for a sufficient handhold, Vyking wormed his way beneath it. Bracing the grav sled with his shoulders, Vyking slowly rose. The massive mass of metal shifted above him, and Caleb quickly grabbed hold to steady it. Caleb tightened his grip as Vyking lifted off the ground, and the grav sled lifted with him, the metal struts groaning.

"You okay, Vyking?" Caleb called.

"I'm fine," the other Knight responded. "This thing going to hold together?"

"I don't see why it wouldn't," Caleb started to say, but trailed off. The air before him began to shimmer and glow. He heard a collective gasp from the Ninemans, and then the sound of them scrambling over rubble, chittering in their native tongue. Two of them — Alcibiades and Mushiu — ran toward the grav sled as if to help.

"What's going on?" Vyking demanded, unable to see the cause of the commotion.

"I don't know," Caleb admitted.

"An attack!" Alcibiades' excited, high-pitched voice called.

The grav sled shifted under Caleb as Vyking prepared to set it down and leap into action. Caleb hastily reassured him and the furry humanoids. "I don't think so," he said, loud enough for Vyking to hear. The shimmer in the air was beginning to take on definition, gaining color and substance. Striations of black and red passed before Caleb's eyes, and geometric shapes took form. He began to see something that resembled a face at the peak of the shimmering field, and as he made that realization, he heard it speak. Or try to, at least; many of the words were obscured as the shimmering field flickered, as though it were a radio station drowned out by static.

"Cal... Vulcan... bring... warn... you must be... Quaj... has the... watch. Utter...aster. Must... us. All... lost unless —"

And then it disappeared, as quickly as it arrived.

"What just happened?" Vyking demanded. His voice sounded strained.

"I'm not sure," Caleb said softly, then repeated himself more loudly. Yet amidst the strange speech, he had recognized his own name, and suspected the mention of another that made his blood run cold. He thought the voice mentioned Quajinn Huo, the Draconid wizard who had killed Caleb's mentor, Lothar of Motherhome, among a thousand other crimes perpetrated across the Three Galaxies. If the vision did concern Huo, Caleb was at a loss. He could not leave Ninemous just yet, and even if he did, he needed first to stop at Phase World and collect his friends.

He would puzzle the problem out later.

"Let's get this thing moved," Caleb told Vyking. The other Knight grunted, but the grav sled began to rise once more. Caleb guided it as best he could.

* * *

Kassy alighted on the tarmac with a thump. She felt the shock of her landing travel up her legs, but the ensorcelled tattoos climbing up her arms and shoulders made her flesh as strong as mega-steel. A ten meter drop was child's play for her.

The spacious hanger held the *Vigilance* and a great deal of open space, enough room for another scout craft. The hanger's exterior airlock was open, allowing the cold air of the Phase World winter to blow into the chamber. Kassy suppressed a shiver, reminding herself that Undead Slayers did not feel the effects of cold.

"Gliz," Siv swore in his native tongue, "but it's colder than a space rat's rump in here."

"Space rat?" Arwen repeated, bemused by Siv's colorful language. Her violet glow had once again faded.

"Ugglies," Siv explained. "Little octopus things that breed on ships. Always underfoot, and they bring disease and worse with them."

"And they are notoriously cold?" Arwen pressed.

Siv grinned. "Notoriously."

Kassy let them banter while she checked on Abbot. He did not look well. His orange eyes were dim, while his shadowy features had apparently brightened. He leaned heavily on his cane.

"Abbot, are you alright?"

He dissuaded her with a waved hand. "I am fine, Kassy," he said. "The battle took a great deal out of me, however. I need rest and meditation."

"Let's get you back to the ship, then," she told him. He nodded wearily. "Arwen, give Abbot a hand, would you?" she suggested.

The young monk quickly moved to assist Doctor Abbot, but as she did so, the interior airlock, the massive slab of mega-steel that allowed access to Center proper, began to scissor open. Kassy exchanged a concerned look with Abbot, but she did not become truly alarmed until Siv yanked his pistols from their holsters.

"Something is wrong," he said grimly, all trace of his previous humor gone.

Arwen instinctively sheathed herself in her violet aura, spinning to face the doors. Abbot shifted uneasily, but Kassy touched the star within a circle on her wrist and called up a suit of blue and white armor.

Just as the magical protection wrapped around her, the doors finished opening and a swarm of black and gold Naruni Repo-Bots surged into the room. In a flash, Kassy counted thirty-two of them, two full platoons. Kassy shivered, and it had nothing to do with the cold.

Naruni Repo-Bots were not strictly robots at all. More precisely, they were cyborgs. Their mechanical heads housed humanoid brains, the minds of warriors, spies, assassins, and other hardened individuals. The Naruni were notoriously strict about payments, and if they could not get the credits they were owed, the Naruni would happily take whatever else you had in their place. As the leading weapons manufacturer in the Three Galaxies, the Naruni Corporation had legions of soldiers in their debt. One missed payment could land a sentient on the Repo-Bot service line, donating their brain matter and military expertise to the corporation. It was also well known that the Naruni reserved their top of the line weaponry and armor for their own use; the Naruni had ensured that a single Repo-Bot could hold its own against a Cosmo-Knight.

Thirty-two of them now rushed towards Kassy and her friends, and the only coherent thought she could shape was, "Why?"

Their metal feet echoed throughout the chamber as they hammered against the floor. Thirty-two particle beam weapons pointed at the four adventurers.

Kassy quickly assessed the situation. Abbot was spent. Arwen and Siv were fresh and ready for combat, but Siv's grav pistols would be as useless against the Repo-Bots as his psionics. Arwen could shatter starship plates with her fists, and Kassy knew she was a capable martial artist, but Kassy doubted that the monk could hold her own against a numerically superior

foe. As for herself, Kassy recognized that her own power reserves were flagging. She might be able to handle one or two of the cyborgs. The rest would kill her quickly.

"Fall back!" Kassy shouted. She grabbed Abbot's elbow and dragged him backward. Their only hope was to escape out the exterior doorway, but they had to make it across the tarmac in one piece to do so. "Siv, take Abbot! Arwen, you're with me."

Siv gave her a blank look, then took Abbot and began to race across the hanger floor. Arwen grinned hugely and set herself in a fighting stance, anticipating the attackers. Kassy swallowed a curse, called up a broadsword of shimmering energy, and waited for the hammer to drop.

The Repo-Bots were eerily silent, save for the clanking of their armor, the whining of servomotors, and the hammering crash of their march. Particle beams slashed through the air. Kassy felt several beams sizzle against her armor. She flinched, feeling the armor begin to give way under the first barrage. Arwen, in contrast, was unfazed. The particles beams dissipated as they struck her violet aura. Kassy, wisely, ducked behind the monk.

"What are these things?" Arwen hissed at her.

"Naruni Repo-Bots," Kassy supplied. "We're not going to survive this unless we run, so be ready to bolt as soon as Abbot and Siv are safe."

"Kassy!"



The Undead Slayer whirled at the sound of Siv's voice, and the note of total panic within it. Siv and Abbot had nearly reached the edge of the exterior airlock, but they had slammed to a halt. A massive, reptilian claw curled around the lip of the

airlock, and a sinuous, reptilian neck reared up in the doorway. A network of horns ringed the long, toothy head, and angry red eyes blazed.

There would be no escape in that direction, Kassy realized. An enraged Great Horned Dragon was no less dangerous than a platoon of Repo-Bots. Still, if they were to die, Kassy wasn't going to die alone.

The Repo-Bots reached Arwen and Kassy's position, but Arwen met them with a frightening chuckle. Arwen's fists and feet flashed like quicksilver, and where they connected, black and gold mega-steel folded like tissue paper. Kassy didn't have time to be aghast. Instead she placed two fingers against three tattoos on her left arm, and called up her blue and white tiger, her polar bear, and her azure-winged Gryphon. She sent the bear and the tiger to support Arwen and the Gryphon to back up Siv and Abbot, and then had to start swinging her broadsword as a Repo-Bot managed to get around Arwen.

Her sword sheared off an arm, but the Repo-Bot had blades of its own, and they cut deeply into her armor. "Shivok!" Kassy howled, and bisected the Repo-Bot's head with a hammering blow.

Siv fired his pistols wildly at the dragon. He and Abbot suddenly disappeared, enveloped in a cone of flame as the dragon sprayed them with its deadliest weapon. When the barrage faded, Siv and Abbot were unscathed, protected by a shadowy screen of magical energy. Abbot had strength enough for that, at least, but it would not last.

A particle beam clipped Kassy behind the ear and she went down hard, slamming into the tarmac. Her sword spun out of her hands and dissipated. She could smell the singed flesh of her neck, and knew her hair was on fire. She beat the flames out with her palm.

With a growl, she surged to her feet. Kassy called up her bow, and shot glowing blue-white arrows into the mass of Repo-Bots. At point blank range, she could hardly miss. But the cyborgs were too heavily armored for the arrows to affect them much.

The tang of ozone filled the air, and Kassy heard the loud thrum of powerful generators. Before she had a chance to wonder what was happening, sizzling emerald bolts of heavy lasers flashed by overhead and slammed into the mass of Repo-Bots. Kassy stumbled backward at the explosion, and even Arwen had the good sense to leap away. The energy beams cut a savage swathe through the Repo-Bot line, melting a dozen of them to slag in as many seconds.

The *Vigilance* had entered the fray.

Apparently, though they had trashed the command center, the manual fire controls were still functional. Kassy thanked Zeus fervently that Joriel had decided to help. She grinned fiercely as the cannons on the other side of the ship opened up on the dragon. The great beast roared in fury, surged through the airlock and attacked the *Vigilance*.

"Arwen!" Kassy yelled. "We're leaving!" She didn't wait to see if the monk had acknowledged her order. She lit off across the hanger in the direction of Siv and Abbot, who had both dropped to the ground as the dragon flew over them. Kassy whistled to her Gryphon, and the winged beast landed lightly beside the Noro and the Shadowen.

Behind them, the Repo-Bots tried to rally. The heavy cannons of the S'hree Vek scout ship fired again, and the remaining cyborgs scattered. Metal screamed as the dragon shredded the ship's hull with his talons, and the port cannons were torn from their housings. In moments, the dragon would turn on the adventurers again.

Kassy tried not to think about that. She and Siv levered Abbot onto the Gryphon, and then Kassy forced Siv and Arwen to climb aboard. The Gryphon grumbled under the weight, but Kassy knew she would be fine. "Get them to safety," she ordered. The Gryphon's wings beat and the great beast rose into the air.

Siv's black eyes bugged in his face. "Them?!" he shouted as the Gryphon headed out into the Phase World night. "What about you?"

"I'm going back for Joriel!" she yelled back, but couldn't be sure she was heard. It didn't matter anyway. Kassy turned on her heel and raced towards the *Vigilance*.

* * *

Caleb remained on Ninemous for another five days. By then, Ariel and her team had managed to disable the anti-tech virus, and the Ninemans were able to at last bring their formidable technology to bear on the problem. Caleb bid his farewells to Alcibiades, Mushiu, and the other Nineman friends he had made, and thanked Cervantes, Jasper, and Kolkvet for their help, promising to return the favor whenever they were in need. Ariel and Vyking, however, insisted on accompanying Caleb to Phase World, particularly after he explained the situation.

As it turned out, Doctor Abbot and Lothar of Motherhome had visited Ariel's homeworld, a planet called Titan, long before she was born, and had helped save the population from a rabid Star Hive. A chance to return the favor, to help Doctor Abbot, was not to be passed up as far as Ariel was concerned. Vyking, on the other hand, simply sensed an adventure in the making and wanted to tag along.

Caleb could not begrudge them. Their help would be more than welcome; Caleb just hoped that they wouldn't be too late. Already he had tarried over a week, and he was anxious to find out how his friends were doing. He had been filled with a terrible feeling of dread since the apparition, and would have bolted for Phase World as soon as it came to him if not for his overriding sense of duty. It heartened him that he would not have to take the long trip to Phase World alone.

So the three of them blasted out of Ninemous on a cool summer evening, a triplicate of dazzling red, blue, and silver lights. They reached the Svartleheim Rift in only a few hours, though Ariel and Vyking had to slow down to let Caleb keep up. Then it was time to "hurry up and wait," as the line of ships to pass through the Rift crawled along at a snail's pace. The last time Caleb had been at Svartleheim, he was aboard a starship; he had hoped that three Cosmo-Knights might be able to sneak through ahead of the cruisers. No such luck.

The three of them — Caleb in his crimson centurion armor, Ariel in her silver hoplite suit, and Vyking in his blue plate mail with horned helm — floated in space, waiting for their turn.

Caleb taught Vyking and Ariel a few choice Earth curses, which Ariel in particular found amusing. Ariel began teaching Caleb the fine art of cursing in Dragonese, which involved far more syllables than Caleb was used to using. By the time he had mastered the first one, Vyking informed them that they were next through the Rift. "That was quick," Caleb said, grinning under his helmet.

"That's what you think," Vyking grumbled.

Traveling through the Rift was different than flying through space, even when Caleb was transformed into energy and moving at faster than light speeds. For one, the Knights needed to be corporeal to go through the Rift. They also did none of the work. They flew into the glowing gate, and then the Rift grabbed each of them, and the next thing Caleb knew, he was hurtling down a spinning, whirling, flashing tunnel of light. Within the space of an eye blink, they were thrown out the other side.

Caleb spun lazily through space, slightly stunned. Vyking grabbed his ankle and dragged him to a halt. "You okay?" the blue Knight asked.

"Whoah," Caleb replied. "Can we go again?"

Vyking released him. "Idiot," he said, not unkindly.

Caleb righted himself and had a look around. This side of the Svartleheim Rift emptied out into the ring of space gates that serviced Phase World. Hundreds of ships blinked into existence as they entered the system, or disappeared for the further reaches of the Three Galaxies. A blue and red globe hung in the distance, crisscrossed by a delicate tracery of ley lines and ringed by hundreds of tiny satellites. A steady flow of starships cut back and forth across the aether to and from the planet. This was only his second visit to Phase World, and still the view took his breath away. Or would have, if he were breathing.

"Let's go," Ariel told them, in that strange, airless means of communication that Cosmo-Knights used in space. "We don't want to be here when the next ship comes through the Rift."

"Good point," Vyking admitted. "You up to it, Vulcan?"

In response, Caleb rocketed away, blasting at full speed for Phase World. He couldn't wait to tell Kassy about his adventure on Ninemous, and was dying to ask Abbot about the apparition. As well, he hoped that Abbot's meeting with the other shadowbeing had gone well. If they had managed to find him in the riotous bustle of Phase World at all. Caleb remembered being quite confused by the size and breadth of Center on his last visit, and expected a repeat of his performance this time.

Caleb led the way to the planet's surface and the mile-high city of Center. Ariel marveled at the size of the metropolis, finally admitting that she had never before been to Phase World. Caleb was surprised, having assumed that everyone else in the Three Galaxies knew more than he did.

"How do you plan to find these friends of yours?" Vyking asked, putting an end to the frivolity and reminding them of business.

"Good question," Caleb admitted. "But I do have a plan."

Tor and Egis were on duty at the same customs station where Caleb had last seen them, but they didn't appear to remember him at all. When he reminded the Promethean guards that he was a friend of the late Lothar of Motherhome, a glimmer of recognition finally showed in Tor's dark eyes.

"Ah yes," he rumbled, "I remember now. Did you have any luck against Quajinn Huo?"

Caleb's features tightened. "No," he said. "In fact, Huo killed Lothar. But we foiled Huo's scheme, managed to save Delian-4, and sent his allies to prison. We're still after Huo, but we need to pick up some friends first. Which is where you two come in."

Egis balked, but Tor gave him a black look, and eventually Egis bent over his monitor. Apparently their relationship had flip-flopped in the interim. When Caleb last saw them, Egis had been the one in charge. Given the specs on Caleb's ship, Egis located the Comet easily. He made a curious sound when he scrolled down the screen.

Vyking, more experienced at reading inscrutable Prometheans, said, "What have you found, Egis?"

"The, um, Comet has been impounded."

"What?" Caleb demanded. "By whom?"

Egis looked up at him. "The Naruni Corporation, apparently."

"Shivok," Ariel swore. "What would the Naruni want with your ship? What did you do to get them mad at you?"

Caleb shrugged. "I'm still not exactly sure what a Naruni is," he said. "What about my friends?"

"I'm afraid there's no information on that," Egis told him. Was it Caleb's imagination, or did Egis seem pleased?

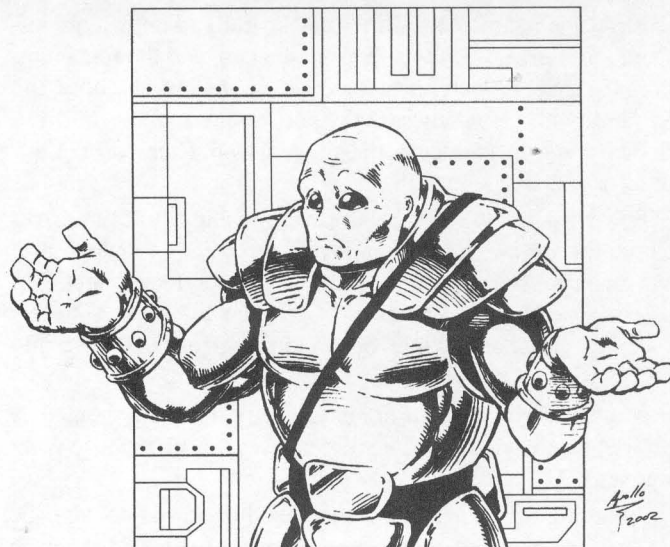
"Don't be so smug," Vyking snapped at the Promethean. "Who signed that impound order?" Egis gave him a blank look. With a muttered curse, Vyking reached across the console and started hitting buttons. He ignored the Promethean's indignant squawk. "Saburo," Vyking said at last. He glanced at Caleb. "That name mean anything to you?"

Caleb shook his head. However, the young Cosmo-Knight noticed that Tor's blue-gray hands had tightened hard around the haft of his halberd. "But it means something to you, doesn't it?" he said in Tor's direction.

"Indeed," Tor said. "And you will not like it."

"Let us be the judge of that," Ariel growled.

The Promethean looked up at her, rolled his shoulders in an awkward shrug, and said, "Saburo is a horned dragon in the employ of Thraxus. Thraxus, you will note, is on the board of directors at the Naruni Corporation."



"Who is Thraxus?" Caleb asked.

"Bad news," Vyking told him. "Extremely bad news. He's widely known as the richest man in the Three Galaxies. He's as old as Center, has allies scattered across the Megaverse, and nearly unlimited resources. He is the wrong man to have angry with you, Vulcan."

Caleb's only response was, "Huh."

All five humanoids stared at one another for a long moment. Ariel finally broke the silence. "I am definitely sticking around," she said. "I have a feeling that as long as I know you, Caleb, life will never be dull."

"Thanks," he said. "I think. Anyway, Thraxus is welcome to the ship. What about my friends?"

"Nothing here," Vyking said, hitting buttons on Egis' screen. "But the Naruni haven't moved the Comet."

"Then we'll start there," Caleb said.

Vyking grinned. "I must admit, Vulcan, Ariel is probably right. This should be interesting at the very least, and extremely dangerous at best."

Caleb looked from Vyking to Ariel. "Well, it's our job, isn't it?"



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**Palladium Books Inc.
Rifter Dept.**

**12455 Universal Drive
Taylor, MI 48180**

Chaos EarthTM: Part Two

By Kevin Siembieda

Armageddon Christmas Day Blues

Lieutenant General Lindsey Sawyer looked out the window of the 73rd floor and watched the city of Atlanta burning below her.

It's Christmas in Hell. she thought to herself. *This must be what Christmas is like in Hell.*

Funny, three days ago, life was good. The world was beautiful, and she was planning the holidays with her family. Then . . . this. . .

Looking at the blue lines of energy dancing above the fire, the weird sky, the blue lightning without rain, General Sawyer couldn't help thinking it was like something out of a special effects movie. It was definitely surreal. *Unreal. Hellish. Like something out of a movie.*

She hated herself for thinking it. That's all everyone was saying. She heard it a million times in the last three days, "It's like something out of a movie."

But it was. As stupid and trite as it sounded, it *was* like something out of one those 'end of the world' science fiction flicks she used to love as a kid. Somehow the real thing wasn't so much fun.

New York, Philly, D.C., hell, the entire eastern seaboard was gone. L.A., Oakland, Portland, they were gone, too. Half the country was in flames. The other half was just . . . gone. And half her family with it.

"General! Did you hear me? It . . . it's worse than anything we ever imagined!" That was Colonel Jared Nelson. She had forgotten he and his three assistants had come into the room with the latest report.

"New York?" She asked out of routine.

"Gone."

"Survivors?"

"None."

"None, at all?"

"It's impossible to know for sure, but as far as we can tell, none."

"Washington?"

"Confirmed, gone."

"Virginia?"

"The entire eastern seaboard is gone, General. From the Gulf Coast to Greenland it's . . . all . . . gone."

"Same story on the West Coast?"

"Same story for all coastal communities. Gulf States, too."

"What about our allies?"

"Canada's parliament is mostly intact, so is their branch of NEMA, but they're scrambling to respond to the devastation on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. Mexico is a shambles. Quakes destroyed the heart of that country. If NEMA remains intact in any capacity, they have their hands full. Last communiqué from Mexico was a request for immediate aid. Since then . . . I'm told it's been a garbled mess. Nothing clear. Nothing official."

"NORAD?" General Sawyer asked. "Any word?"

"Gone . . . it . . . nothing confirmed, but my sources say it's gone. Super-volcano."

"A what?" She didn't know why she even asked. At this point, General Sawyer really didn't care, and it certainly didn't matter anymore.

"The Yellowstone super-volcano. When it blew, it took out the entire park, part of the Rockies, and they think it took out NORAD with it."

"And the President."

"And the President, too, yes, Ma'am."

"Who are your 'sources?'"

"Um, nothing official, but . . . um, you know, the grapevine."

"But there's been no word in . . . what now?"

"Almost 48 hours. No, Ma'am."

"We lost the damn President, now?" It was a rhetorical question.

"It would, um, appear so. Yes, Ma'am."

Christmas in Hell. That's what it was, the General thought to herself.

"We can't handle this, Ma'am. We've . . . we've . . . never been trained for anything like this! Not like this!! The whole world's gone crazy. Satellite photos show it's like this everywhere. Everywhere! My god, China . . . we can't even guess what's going on there! And, and . . ."



Great. Colonel Nelson was hysterical. She wanted to turn around and slap him across his face. Hard. Only that would be like something out of a movie too. Why was everything like a movie cliché?

"Detroit, Windsor, St. Louis and a dozen others," continued Colonel Nelson in a shrill voice, "all report demons! Demons, General! Honest to god demons coming outta . . . I don't know? Holes in the sky!! Demons!"

Of course there were demons, she thought, still looking out the window as Atlanta burned all around her. What do you expect? Demons live in Hell, you idiot! Don't you understand, the world is gone and we're all living in Hell? At least, that's what popped into her head, but Sawyer bit her tongue, thought for a minute and turned around. Colonel Nelson was still blithering on.

"And . . ."

"That's enough, Colonel Nelson."

"But there's more . . . it's . . . it's . . ."

"I said that's enough!"

Colonel Nelson looked up from his hand-held mini-computer, his eyes practically spinning. His hands trembling.

"Is this Armageddon, Ma'am?" Asked one of the assistants.

"Yes," replied Lt. General Sawyer. "Yes, it is."

"Are we going to die?"

Yes, is what she thought.

"I don't know," is what she said.

"Is this the end of the world? I mean . . . for everyone?"

It sure as hell looks like it. Was the response that popped into her mind.

"Maybe. Yes. I don't know."

"Isn't there anything we can do?"

General Sawyer turned to gaze out the window again. Even up on the 73rd floor she could hear the sirens, the sounds of gunfire and screams below.

"Haven't you been listening?" snorted Colonel Nelson. "Half the world is gone! We've lost contact with the High Command. The President's probably dead. There's nothing but panic and rioting everywhere! Half our troops are AWOL! It's over! It's all over!!"

"That is quite enough!" shrieked General Sawyer, punctuating her words by pounding her fists on the glass window. "What's the status of Chicago, Milwaukee, Minneapolis? The Midwest's still holding its own, isn't it?"

"Well . . . yes . . . but it's only a matter of time before . . ."

"But nothing. We go where we can do the most good. We take the Chromium Power Suits and Eagles on the 'choppers, join the Midwest forces, and establish a fighting core. Our base of operations, Ladies and Gentlemen, is the Heartland of the country. Once that's secure, we work our way out and around the perimeter to rescue civilians."

"That's crazy! What's the point?" shouted Colonel Nelson.

"Pardon me, soldier?"

"Um, with all due respect, General . . ."

"The point, soldier," snarled a defiant General Sawyer, cutting off the Colonel's comment, "is we have a job to do. Lives to save. People are counting on us. Atlanta is toast, we go where we can do the most good. Where we can make a difference. It's as simple as that."

"A difference? In that? How?"

The General had to force down the desire to kick Colonel Nelson's teeth in, this time.

"We're NEMA! Just being out there, in those glittering Chromium Suits is doing plenty. Just seeing that 'we' haven't given up will give people hope, Colonel. Right now, that may be just about all we can do."

"You're crazy. It's pointless, there's nothing" Before the Colonel could finish his sentence, General Sawyer had unholstered her sidearm and slapped the pistol in Col. Nelson's hand.

"If you're so sure this is the end, then do it now. I mean it, Colonel. Put the weapon in your mouth and end it here and now, so we don't have to hear you're damn, sniveling garbage anymore."

"Maybe this is Armageddon," she continued. "I don't know. None of us do. It isn't my place to figure it out. Maybe we'll all be dead in an hour. Maybe you're right. Maybe it's hopeless, but if I'm going out, I'm going out doing something. Not standing around like some whipped puppy wetting herself. Come with me or don't. Crawl in the corner and wait for a choir of angels, pull that trigger, or come with me . . . us, but shut the hell up and do something in your last hours! Me, I've got people to save and maybe some 'honest to god demons' to waste. If this isn't the end of the world, then we better get our cans in gear and do something about this! If we're going to die, let's die like soldiers."

"Um . . . yes . . . of course," stammered Colonel Nelson as he handed the pistol back. "Sorry, Ma'am." His assistants just smiled.

The Lieutenant General had hoped forcing Colonel Nelson to look down the barrel of a gun would shock him out of his panic and focus him back to the job. Nelson was a good soldier in a bad situation. You never know how you'll react when facing an impossible situation. They were all more than a little strung out. Staring out of a window and pondering Hell on Christmas day wasn't exactly rational leadership. But it was time to snap out of it and do something. The way she saw it, there really were only two choices. Give up now or try to do something. Gathering her NEMA troops and going to where they could do the most good was the only logical choice. They were in over their heads, here in Atlanta. Way over. It didn't seem right turning their backs on their Georgia post but to stay meant certain death, and that didn't benefit anybody. Going to the Midwest, *Chicago*, she thought, and pooling their resources where some civilization still struggled to keep it together *was* the thing to do. They needed a starting point . . . a base of operations, and this wasn't it. If NEMA could help establish order in the Chicago area, they could build a solid base to conduct D-3R operations to help the rest of the country.

It was as good a plan as any. Thought General Sawyer.

Now, let's see what happens in Hell when you choose to fight back.

The setting: Hell on Earth

It is only a few days since the Great Cataclysm occurred, the ley lines erupted to life and dimensional portals – Rifts in space and time – have appeared across the globe.

An estimated 60-75% of the world population is believed to have been lost. Storms, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions of biblical proportions continue to pound the planet. The exact extent of the damage and loss of life is impossible to calculate with any measure of certainty. Communications in many parts of the planet are gone completely, and where satellite feeds and lines of communications remain online, the flood of incoming data is too much to wade through. There is just too much coming in too fast to assimilate.

Pandemonium. Bedlam. Chaos. Armageddon. Madness. Pick a word. Any apply.

What's left of human civilization is a shambles. Pockets of survivors are everywhere. Entire cities remain intact, but are lost to panic or under siege by forces they don't understand or aren't equipped to handle. To complicate matters, most of the world governments and militaries are gone. Those that have survived are overwhelmed to the point of impotence. Panic prevails.

The USA

In the United States of America, the US government is gone. The President, who had survived the initial conflagration, was swept away to what appeared to be a safe haven at NORAD. But NORAD is missing in action – blasted to atoms or buried by a trillion tons of rock when the super-volcano erupted.

Local governments, regional law enforcement, and factions of the US military all struggle to respond to the crisis in their jurisdiction, effectively splintering the States into thousands of *isolated* communities left to their own devices.

NEMA, the Northern Eagle Military Alliance, is probably America's best hope, however, the organization, like everyone else, is caught by surprise. The magnitude of devastation and conflict is beyond their means to deal with, even if they were at full strength. National and local leaders have gone MIA. Without them, many of the military and law enforcement personnel have deserted. The prevailing sense is that this is the *end of the world*, causing many to desert their posts to hide, flee or join loved ones.

NEMA is the least affected by desertion. For one, it is a multi-national organization with very strong operational and procedural guidelines. For another, its agents and operatives are all volunteers dedicated to the defense and protection of North America. They are the elite of the continent's heroes trained for Disaster Response, Rescue and Recovery (D-3R) of every magnitude, including military response and global "end of the world" scenarios. Consequently, even cut off without a High Command to direct them or definitive orders to guide them, NEMA forces hold together extremely well and take immediate action.

Sadly, many perished in the initial cataclysm, and others who rushed to the front lines have been lost in subsequent disasters or battling monsters from the Rifts. The rest of NEMA is divided and scattered across the continent. Those assigned to a particular nation (i.e. USA, Canada, and Mexico) tend to stay at

their assigned national designations, although mixed forces are found working together along the borders. Unlike Lieutenant General Sawyer, many NEMA forces try to make a stand alongside remnants of the military and local fire/rescue and police departments. The lucky ones manage to create a beachhead stronghold in a tide of chaos, the others are the first to die.

Remember, the **Northern Eagle Military Alliance (NEMA)** is an elite police/paramilitary agency composed of special law officers and paramilitary personnel from the USA, Canada, and Mexico charged with the defense of North America as a whole. Though agents are assigned to a specific nation, they have jurisdiction in all three of the allied nations and can come and go from one country to the next with impunity.

NEMA's mission is to keep North America safe from crime, terrorism, espionage, and subversion intended to undermine the sovereignty, security and prosperity of the allied nations. NEMA incorporates an equal number of operatives from each of the allied nations to deal with all sorts of crimes and trouble across national borders. It's a sort of tri-national FBI, CIA and NSA all rolled into one. In fact, NEMA had proven so successful that it virtually replaced the FBI and works with both federal and local authorities in all matters that involve two or more nations, or a threat to the security of any one of the allied nations. As an elite police and military force, NEMA has access to the most advanced crime fighting, investigative, rescue and military "resources" in the country, including power armor, special weapons and vehicles and prototype equipment.

In Chaos Earth, our initial focus is the *United States and North America*. In a world gone mad, that means NEMA is rushing to the forefront of the homeland defense, rescue and recovery. Consequently, most *player characters* are likely to be **NEMA operatives** or law officers, soldiers, scientists and civilian *volunteers* working with NEMA.

Fortunately, NEMA has in place protocols for handling disasters including global holocaust, at least in theory. As a result, the agenda for these heroes is basic and straightforward, though a nearly impossible task to accomplish.

1. Base of operations. Secure and establish a (reasonably) defensible stronghold as a base of operations. Preferably, a major city or military compound.

2. Command. Establish a clear and strong chain of command within the regional NEMA forces. During times of disaster it is critical to have a clear line of authority and established rules of conduct and law. Likewise, it is vital that NEMA operatives remain united and loyal to the cause, the NEMA organization and each other.

3. D-3R. Upon securement of the base camp and establishment of a clear channel of command, engage in D-3R – Disaster Response, Rescue and Recovery – starting from the center and working one's way out.

Response: Prioritize and tackle the immediate problems first.

a) Establish and secure a base camp and staging area. Never compromise the base of operations.

b) Establish field hospitals and relief camps, even if it is the most basic of shelters.

c) Take command of the situation. Be visible, be strong and be decisive. Provide direction, order and support. Survivors will be looking to *NEMA* for leadership and strength.

d) Establish lines of communication.

e) Create lanes for travel, conveyance, escape and evacuation.

f) Assess the situation and respond to, and neutralize, threats. Includes containing and fighting fires, shutting down natural gas lines, etc., as well as engaging hostile forces.

g) Engage in rescue operations.

Rescue: Just like it sounds, to go forth and engage in rescue and relief.

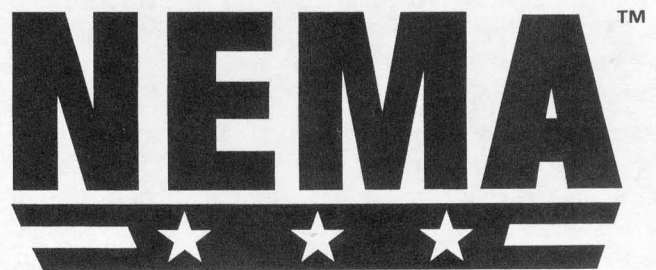
Stage One: Assess the situation and respond accordingly. First, save those who have the best chance of being saved, i.e. mobile survivors and the walking wounded. Lead and transport to a secured area and provide medical attention and comfort.

Stage Two: Come back for those in "dire circumstances" – i.e. dig out those pinned and buried under debris or otherwise trapped in life-threatening situations.

Stage Three: Provide food, shelter, and basic amenities.

Recovery: Their work does not end with pulling people from the rubble and slapping on a bandage, but all aspects of rescue and recovery. That means continuing to put out fires, reestablishing basic services like providing adequate shelter, food and drinking water, arranging for sewage/waste disposal, continued medical treatment, recovery and disposal of the dead (interment or cremation), salvage operations and the stockpiling of supplies, and providing security and defense, including combat operations against invaders, bandits and, in this case, monsters. Recovery in a widespread holocaust does not end here, but includes rebuilding and reestablishing government, law, order and civilization.

4. Find and restore law, order and leadership, even if it is a local or military authority. NEMA is to avoid taking the role of civilian leader, even if it is in charge of defense and security. It is NEMA's role to defend, protect, and rescue civilians under the auspices of the regional/local government until the federal government can be restored. NEMA is never to usurp governmental authority, although it may act to "restore" it by any means necessary and act on its behalf as its agent and protector.



NEMA on the move

Using these basic guidelines, NEMA's purpose and agenda are clear cut and the troops respond accordingly. Some stand their ground and try to deal with localized disasters. For example, USA and Canadian NEMA troops are quick to respond to conflicts at Detroit and Windsor, working in tandem to save lives and battle the monstrous invaders. Many NEMA operatives perish before abandoning the cause to regroup, probably in Toronto and the capital city of Ottawa. (Montreal and Quebec will also see considerable NEMA activity in eastern Canada.)

In the United States of America, the *Midwest* is quickly becoming recognized as the defendable "core" and NEMA operatives are beginning to gravitate toward some of the largest cities. *Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois, Missouri, Arkansas,* and parts of *Texas* and *Michigan* are comparatively unscathed by the worst of the destruction. Tucked away inland, they survive the devastations of the coastal States, half of which are washed into the sea and the rest torn apart by storms. Likewise, the *Midwestern* States fare much better than the western part of the country, which is rocked by earthquakes and spewing volcanoes that haven't shook the planet like this since before the age of the dinosaurs, and which are burying the plains and mountain States alive. The ash filled heavens choke the engines of aircraft and ground vehicles, making rescue in the west impossible and travel by foot the only avenue of escape. However, escape on foot is unrealistic unless one can trudge through the blizzard of blinding, hot ash and debris already 20-30 feet (6.1 to 9.1 m) deep in a 300 mile (480 km) radius around the Colorado epicenter. Most people in the west have already succumbed to the suffocating flakes. The airborne ash reaches much farther than that, however, as the rest of the United States, Canada and Northern Mexico are blanketed by several feet (1-2 m) of ash, the sun is blotted from the sky and temperatures drop by 5-10 degrees Fahrenheit. Meanwhile, high winds create dust storms and shape new hills, and rain creates rivers of mud that swallow entire cities and towns. The eruption of the super-volcano is actually felt worldwide and has a lasting impact. The scores of other volcanoes erupting around the globe only contribute to make a bad situation worse, affecting weather patterns, temperatures and life on Earth in a dozen different ways.

Responding to the Unknown

NEMA operatives, soldiers, police officers, and volunteers go into the chaos to help others. Following the protocols previously set forth, these heroes work to rescue those in need and battle any recognizable and unknown enemies. This is rescue and warfare in an alien urban environment. The familiar is transformed. The sun is gone, the sky has turned grey and a blanket of white ash (in some places, mixed with snow) covers everything. The streets are cast in an eerie gloom, and buildings now harbor supernatural monsters and alien invaders as well as looters, rioters, and bandits.

Imagine your own hometown cut off from the rest of the world without warning. Communications beyond city or county limits are lost. Now cover your hometown in a foot (0.3 m) of snow, with more falling every hour, nonstop for days. The landscape is transformed into something like a winter scene, only there is the stench of sulfur and death in the air. The white flakes are *ash* that chokes and burns the eyes and lungs and clogs the engines of vehicles and machinery. It is heavy and difficult to walk through. It blocks out the sun, turns the sky grey and creates a daytime that is at best *twilight*.

Rumors circulate that the President is dead, the government has collapsed and that most of the United States has been obliterated. You feel terribly alone and frightened. A certain amount of rioting, panic and turmoil erupts here and there, and evildoers and opportunists rise up to take advantage of the situation. They are not unexpected events, for man's inhumanity to man seems to be natural under such circumstances. It is the stories about

monsters, demons and alien invaders that create a sense of the unreal. In only a few days they become more than wild stories, as friends and neighbors report glimpses of strange creatures lurking among the ruins or hiding in abandoned buildings. Some have "close encounters of the third kind." How or why such beings can exist defies both modern science and rational thought. There is, after all, no such thing as ghosts and demons, or aliens from distant planets, or magic, or vampires, or zombies or ancient gods or dimensional doorways. These things are all impossible! Aren't they the stuff of fairy-tales and Hollywood movies? How does one deal with that which he cannot accept as real? Things that defy everything he or she has ever known or believed? It is a deep, debilitating shock. Worse, these "things that cannot be real" are invading your hometown.

Now picture yourself as a *protector and rescuer* who goes out to save lives and help people, whether they are lost, trapped under rubble or menaced by something terrible. Only the situation is more complicated than that. Visibility is terrible, a hundred yards/meters at best. Most satellite communications are garbled, and radio communications are disrupted and range reduced by freak storms, the falling ash, inexplicable electromagnetic disturbances, the weird lines of energy and strange dimensional disturbances. This makes radio contact unreliable beyond half the normal range. In addition to the normal sleezebags that slither out from under a rock during times of crisis, there are strange alien and monstrous creatures – most of which seem hostile. Thus, around every corner, inside every building, atop every roof or in the sewers below your feet, something inhuman and murderous lurks. Creatures that defy rational explanation and who may wield "magic" or strange super-abilities. And this is in your "hometown" where you know the lay of the land and feel safe, it's even worse entering some *unknown* city or environment.

This is what the rescue, police, and military face with the NEMA forces leading the way. They've been dropped into the worst possible global disaster scenario and must also deal with alien invaders, magic and monsters. They are in over their heads. It's all new, and they are trying to get up to speed with how to address these "impossible" menaces and threats. Thus, they go into the ash and snow filled streets to check every building and rescue those in need in a hostile environment filled with danger at every turn. Imagine it, because that's who you are playing.



Chaos EarthTM

Occupational Character Classes

Any common O.C.C. like a modern day soldier, policeman, doctor, etc., can be built using existing Palladium games and skills. Books like **Heroes UnlimitedTM**, **Ninjas & SuperspiesTM** and **Systems FailureTM** may be useful to this end. **Beyond the SupernaturalTM** too, although parapsychology is a fledgling science viewed with suspicion even in the Golden Age of Humankind. Game Masters who might want to bring BTS characters into the mix can do so using spell casters as members of secret societies, cults and such, however, *magic* is considered fantasy and make-believe in this era. Thus, Earth's scientists and men of learning are ill-prepared for magic when it appears. None understand how it works and there are no sorcerers. The mystic arts come later.

A note about the Occupational Character Classes: Please remember that this is a work in progress. I'm creating chunks of the **Chaos EarthTM RPG** for each issue of **The Rifter®** as I go along. That means that I *may* change and tweak the characters, their abilities and descriptions as I go along. Consequently, some of these characters *may* be a little different in the final game book, or a lot different (though I doubt the latter), and I may add or change weapons, equipment and special abilities – I don't know. However, what you see in the following pages should be pretty close, and in many cases, exactly what will appear in the finished product. You just get to play 'em now. Those of you who play **Rifts®** can use the skills that appear in the **Rifts® RPG** and **Coalition War CampaignTM** or the **Rifts® Game Master Guide**. I have refrained from presenting much artwork because the exact "look" is still being developed. Enjoy.

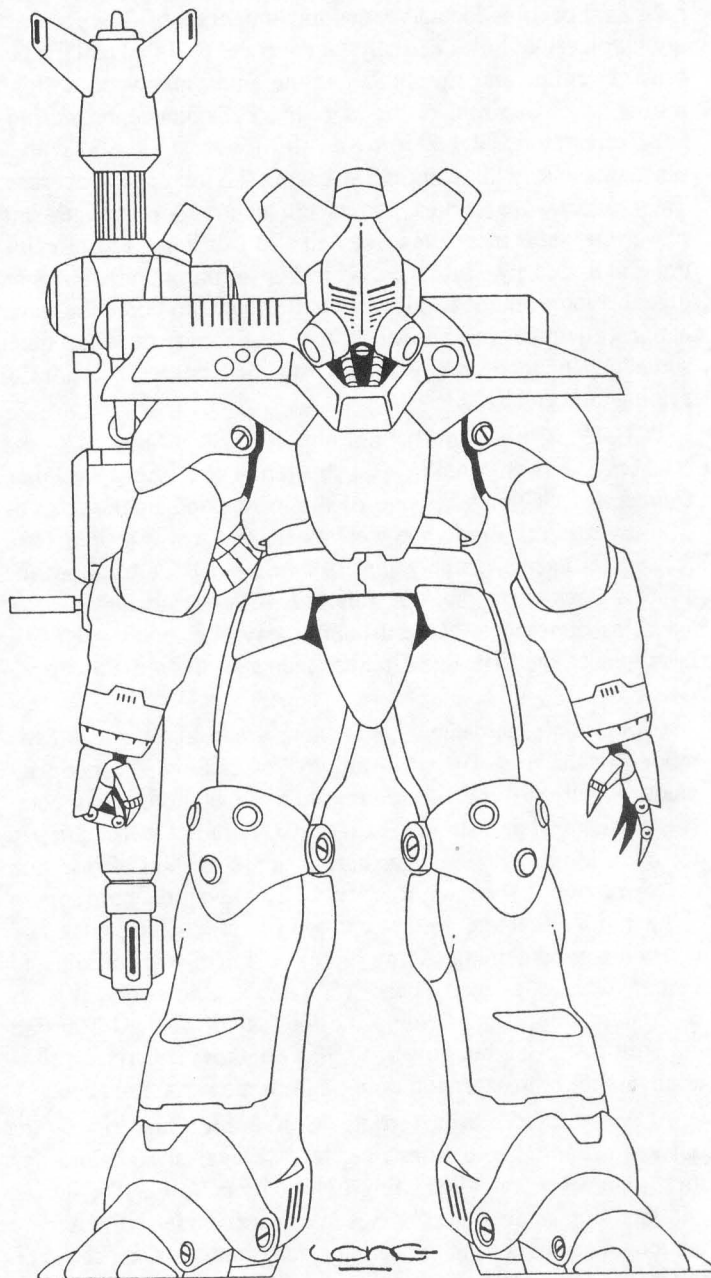
NEMA Response Teams

The following are key military and rescue O.C.C.s within the Northern Eagle Military Alliance (NEMA). They are trained for disaster relief, riot control and urban conflict. Oh, a bunch of adventure ideas follow the O.C.C.s.

Chromium Guardsmen

Chaos Earth version of the Glitter Boy Pilot

The laser resistant Chromium Power Suit was a breakthrough in numerous areas. The underlying concept behind all *power armor technology* is to make human troops walking tanks. The development of new lightweight super-strong alloys and materials (i.e. Mega-Damage materials) alongside breakthroughs in miniaturization, nano-technology and advanced robotics gave birth to the idea of creating manned robot combat vehicles and *environmental combat suits*, more commonly known as "power armor." The term "power armor" was coined because each of these suits effectively makes its wearer superhuman, giving the wearer robotic strength and speed, a wide range of optics and computer enhancements and a body that is impervious to conventional S.D.C. weapons.



Power armor is ideal for small mobile units, riot control and combat in an urban or enclosed environment. The robotic infrastructure allows the wearer to don and operate a construct that is considerably heavier and more well armored than a mere suit of environmental body armor. The robotic nature of the armor makes carrying the weight minimal and allows for heavy weapon systems often attached to or built into the thick armor shell. In some respects, the wearer does become a walking tank, and like a tank, tends to sacrifice some degree of agility and mobility for raw firepower, brute strength and physical protection. It is a sacrifice that satisfies the design parameters and fits the intent and purpose of the NEMA power armor, because they are generally intended to be used in riot control, urban sieges,

anti-terrorism operations, commando/SWAT style raids and surgical attacks – all of which NEMA power armor addresses very well.

The high-flying **Eagle Power Armor** (SAMAS) are perfect for quick response and land to air and air to ground operation, while **Chromium Guardsmen** are excellent for riot control, raids, and pacification and containment operations. Their glittering chrome-like hides actually work to the CG's advantage because in police and riot situations the authorities want a "high profile," 1) to intimidate the target(s), i.e. rioters/enemy/criminals/perpetrators, and 2) provide the innocent/victims with a sense of security knowing NEMA is on the job or to the rescue. Their appearance comes with such an aura of strength and power that their mere presence helps to instill a sense of calm, order and security in a crisis. NEMA's sterling reputation as an organization of heroes and warriors dedicated to defending their nations, helping the innocent and self-sacrifice make them something of modern day superheroes or "knights" literally in shining armor.

"CGs," "Chromiums" "Chrome-domes," Chromies," and "G-Men" are all common slang terms for the *Chromium Guardsmen*. "G-Men" is one of the most popular, though few who use it in this modern age are aware that it was a slang term for federal agents, namely the FBI, in the 1920's to about the 1950's. Back then, the "G" referred to "government" man or agent, as opposed to "Guardman" today. Considering NEMA has replaced the FBI, this moniker seems all the more appropriate.

Chromium Guardsmen, or G-Men, are soldiers specifically trained in the use of the Chromium Power Suits. Training includes small unit and full-scale infantry operations, field combat, riot control and surgical strikes. CGs are not well equipped for hit and run tactics unless there is some method of insertion and extraction (helicopter, truck, etc.). However, they are superb in operations that require sweeping an area, pushing back and corralling or containing enemy forces or rioters, and coordinated ground assaults, as well as armored patrols, guard duty, support of infantry troops and holding the line. Remember, G-Men are not built for speed, but power, so they are most effective in situations where brute strength, armor and firepower are required.

In the Chaos Earth setting, Chromium Guardsmen are quickly becoming the front line defense against so-called demons, monsters, and alien beings. Not only patrolling the streets and guarding "safe zones," cities and places under NEMA protection, but going out in the carnage on reconnaissance, monster hunts, salvage operations and rescue missions.

Chromium Guardsman O.C.C.

Attribute Requirements: P.P. 10 or higher. A high I.Q. and M.E. are helpful but not required. About 65% are males, 35% females.

O.C.C. Skills:

- Math: Basic (80% +2% per level of experience)
- Language: American and one of choice (+20%).
- Literacy (90% +1% per level of experience; native language)
- Law (+10%)
- Military Etiquette (+15%)
- Radio: Basic (+5%)
- Pilot: One of choice (+10% each).

Pilot: Robots & Power Armor

Robot Combat Elite

Read (& Operate) Sensory Equipment (+10%)

Weapon Systems (+10%)

First Aid (+5%)

Running

W.P. Automatic and Bolt-Action Rifles

W.P. Energy Pistol

W.P. Energy Rifle

W.P. Heavy Energy Weapons

W.P. Heavy Weapons (others)

Hand to Hand: Basic, which can be changed to Expert at the cost of one "O.C.C. Related Skill" or Martial Arts (or Assassins if evil) for the cost of two skill selections.

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select six other skills. Plus select one additional skill at levels three, six, nine, and twelve. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any (+5%).

Domestic: Any

Electrical: Basic only.

Espionage: Detect Ambush, Intelligence, Sniper and Wilderness Survival only.

Mechanical: Automotive and Basic Mechanics only.

Medical: Paramedic only (replaces First Aid).

Military: Any (+5%), except Trap Construction and Trap Detection.

Physical: Any, except Acrobatics.

Pilot: Any (+10%).

Pilot Related: Any (+5%).

Rogue: Streetwise only.

Science: Advanced Math (+5%) and Astronomy only.

Technical: Any.

W.P.: Any.

Wilderness: Any.

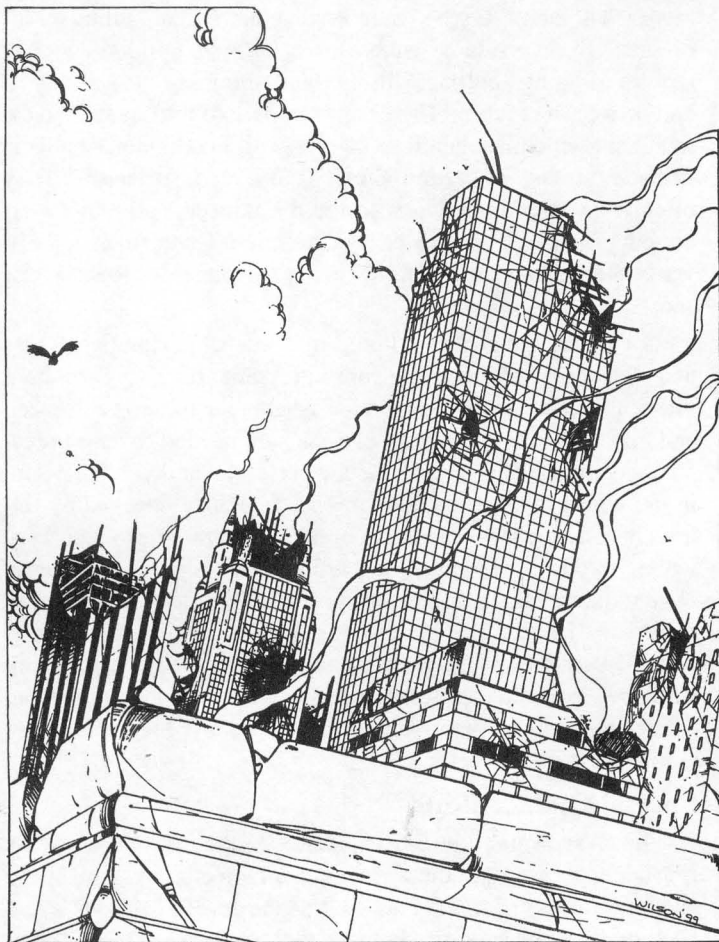
Secondary Skills: The character gets two secondary skills at levels one, four, eight, and twelve. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the advantage of the bonus listed in parenthesis. All start at the base skill level and normal restrictions apply.

Standard Equipment: Chromium Power Armor Suit (classic USA 10 or other style to be described later). Light M.D.C. body armor, energy rifle and energy sidearm of choice, 4 extra E-Clips for each, two explosive grenades, two smoke grenades, two flares, survival knife (1D6 S.D.C.), First Aid medical kit, pocket computer, flashlight, disposable cigarette lighter, utility belt, air filter & gas mask, walkie-talkie, uniform, dress uniform, combat boots, canteen, and an additional non-energy, S.D.C. weapon of choice.

Money: The NEMA G-Man gets a roof over his head, food, clothing, and all other basics provided free as part of his pay, as well as access to NEMA offices and military facilities. Monthly salary is 3,200 credits, plus combat pay. He starts off with one month's pay. Under the circumstance of Chaos Earth, the character only has access to basic equipment and services. Pay is one tenth normal (320 credits a month), and mainly as an incentive for morale.

Cybernetics: Typically has a gyro-compass and clock/calendar implant.

Game Note: To conserve space, I am not reprinting the stats for the "classic" USA-G10 Glitter Boy. See the *Rifts® RPG*, page 218, for the stats.



NEMA Field Engineer

The NEMA Field Engineer is a Jack-of-all-trades when it comes to building and fixing things, trained to handle situations in the field and under combat conditions. This means the character has basic combat training as well as mechanical engineering skills. This individual is a troubleshooter looking to prevent and avoid danger and help others. He or she can assess structural damage, figure out how to brace deteriorating walls and structures, pull victims out of debris without causing a collapse, make quick field repairs, perform jury-rigging, cobble together a patch that will hold long enough to make a rescue or escape, detect traps and crumbling structures, identify hazards and work miracles in the field, albeit often very short-term miracles, because the jury-rigging may not hold for more than a few minutes or a few hours at best.

To be a Field Engineer one must be resourceful, inventive and able to think on one's feet. Decisiveness is a must, because a quick decision is often necessary, and the choice might make the difference between life and death. In some ways, the character is a combination mechanical wizard and detective, only as a "detective" he studies physical and mechanical structures, searching them for weakness, flaws, aberrations, tampering, salvageable components, and reliability. This is the character who will notice a lock has been picked, a machine has been tampered with, and a weapon modified, as well as finding traps, mines, hazardous materials, structural weakness in buildings and finding a way to escape or circumvent the danger.

Field Engineer O.C.C.

Attribute Requirements: I.Q. 11 and P.P. 11 or higher. A high M.E. and/or P.S. is helpful, but not required. 70% are male, 30% female.

O.C.C. Skills:

Math: Basic (98%)
 Math: Advanced (+30%)
 Language: American (+10%)
 Literacy (90% +1% per level of experience; native language)
 Pilot: One vehicle of choice.
 Radio: Basic (+10%)
 Read (& Operate) Sensory Equipment (+20%)
 Basic Electronics (+15%)
 Computer Operation (+15%)
 Mechanical Engineer (+15%)
 Jury-Rig (+15%)
 Masonry (+10%)
 Carpentry (+5%)
 Salvage (+10%)
 Nuclear, Biological, & Chemical Warfare (+10%)
 Trap/Mine Detection (+20%)
 Military Etiquette (+5%)
 Climb (+5%)
 W.P. Automatic Pistol
 W.P. Energy Rifle
 Hand to Hand: Basic, which can be changed to Expert at the cost of one "O.C.C. Related Skill" or Martial Arts (or Assassin if evil) for the cost of two skill selections.

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select seven other skills. Plus select one additional skill at levels three, five, seven, nine, eleven and thirteen. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any.
 Domestic: Sewing, Brewing and Fishing only.
 Electrical: Any (+5%).
 Espionage: Escape Artist (+5%) only.
 Mechanical: Any (+10%).
 Medical: First Aid only.
 Military: Any (+5%, but +15% to all Demolition skills and Trap Construction).
 Physical: Any, except Acrobatics and Boxing.
 Pilot: Any.
 Pilot Related: Any (+5%).
 Rogue: Computer Hacking (+10%) and Pick Locks (+10%) only.
 Science: Any.
 Technical: Any (+5%).
 W.P.: Any, except Sharpshooting.
 Wilderness: Boat Building (+5%) and Underwater Navigation only.

Secondary Skills: The character gets two secondary skills at levels one, four, eight, and twelve. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the advantage of the bonus listed in parenthesis. All start at the base skill level and normal restrictions apply.

Standard Equipment: Light to medium M.D.C. body armor, energy rifle and four E-Clips, S.D.C. pistol or submachine-gun and four clips for each, two smoke grenades, four flares, survival knife (1D6 S.D.C.), portable tool kit with basic tools, tape and equipment, micro-fusion laser torch (does 1D6 to 4D6 S.D.C. damage or up to 1D4 M.D.), soldering

iron, pocket computer, pocket disc recorder, large flashlight, pen flashlight, laser distancer, disposable cigarette lighter, utility belt, 20 feet (6 m) of rope/cord, 50 foot (15.2 m) ball of string and wire, canteen, notebooks and four markers, two pieces of chalk, can of fluorescent orange spray paint (for marking), protective goggles, air filter and gas mask, work gloves, six pairs of plastic surgical gloves, walkie-talkie, uniform, dress uniform, insulated combat boots, and an additional non-energy, S.D.C. weapon of choice.

Standard vehicle is a conventional jeep or small truck, motorcycle or hovercycle.

Money: All NEMA operatives get a roof over their head, food, clothing, and all other basics provided free as part of their service, as well as access to NEMA offices and military facilities. Monthly salary is 3,500 credits, plus hazard pay. The character starts off with one month's pay. Under the circumstance of Chaos Earth, access to equipment, medical supplies and services may be limited. Pay is one tenth normal (350 credits a month), mainly as an incentive for morale.

Cybernetics: Typically has a Gyro-Compass and clock/calendar implant.



NEMA Fire & Rescue

NEMA Fire & Rescue operatives try to be trained and equipped for every type of crisis, emergency and disaster. They are, in effect, combat medics, firefighters and emergency rescue rolled into one. They are trained to stay focused in crisis and combat situations, how to deal with fire and smoke, identify pitfalls and trouble, detect structural weakness, and to save lives. Fire and Rescue crews also work well in team situations. Firefighting is one aspect of the job, rescue and medical treat-

ment is another. "Rescue" may involve more than pulling an individual from a pile of rubble or a burning building. It may require digging, cutting, lifting, and climbing just to reach and/or free the victim. Then the "vic" is likely to need medical treatment which is when Rescue must call upon their paramedic skills and transport the individual(s) to a medical facility. They often work in conjunction with Field Engineers and may be escorted, protected and assisted by Chromium Guardsmen and Silver Eagles. Slang for Fire and Rescue personnel is "Roscoe" for short.

In the carnage and continuing madness of Chaos Earth, Fire and Rescue crews are in constant demand. They are hard pressed to handle the overwhelming number of people in need and all O.C.C.s and ordinary civilians are needed to help in rescue operations. This puts all rescue personnel and volunteers out in the wild chaos where they may shot be at or attacked by fellow humans, alien creatures, or supernatural horrors. Meanwhile, the Roscoes must be careful not to push themselves beyond the breaking point, for they are desperately important in this hour of need. The hardest part for Fire and Rescue operatives, especially in the early weeks of the Chaos, is choosing who they will attempt to rescue and who they must abandon. Life is precious to these selfless heroes, and if they could they would leave no one behind.

Special O.C.C. Skills

Fire Assessment and Response: Assessment enables the firefighter to estimate the approximate temperature, size, speed and direction(s) of the fire as well as the level of danger – i.e., back drafts, concealed fire in the walls, fire behind closed doors, vulnerable natural gas lines, smoke inhalation, toxic fumes, obvious structural degradation and the likelihood of collapse, and so forth. Has a reasonably good knowledge about expectorants, combustibles and common fire hazards.

"Response" is how to survive, escape and most importantly, how to *fight* fire. Includes methods and techniques in "firefighting" and how best to contain, control and extinguish fire, basic survival techniques, and training in the use of firefighting gear, equipment, and vehicles. **Base Skill:** 40%+5% per level of experience (20% +3% for laymen; i.e. O.C.C.s other than this one).

Fire Damage Assessment: The ability to assess the degree of damage, its cost in dollars, and the level of structural degradation, i.e., what is cosmetic and minor damage that can be cleaned up or easily repaired, and what is seriously compromised, weakened, and incapable of withstanding weight or any significant strain (i.e., is likely to collapse, snap, break, etc., if further stressed). This enables the firefighter to determine if the stairs or floor can bear his weight, whether support beams and weight bearing walls can continue to bear their loads or are on the verge of collapse, and even guesstimate how long the structure will last in minutes – give or take 1D4x10%. This means if the character assesses a wall will hold for another five minutes he *will* be off by 10% to 40%, meaning the wall might hold 10-40% longer or collapse 10-40% *sooner*. In this example, that could be 30 seconds to 120 seconds/two minutes one way or the other. The G.M. can arbitrarily decide longer or later, or roll percentile dice in which a random roll of 01-50% means *longer* and 51-00% means *sooner*. **Base Skill:** 20%/10% +4% per level of experience. The first number is the typical damage estimate.

The second is any in the field "guesstimate." Add a +6% skill bonus if the *Mechanical Engineering Skill* is also known and +2% for Carpentry and/or Military Fortification (+10% if all three skills are known; also see Fire Forensics). Not available to other O.C.C.s.

Fire Forensics – Optional: This skill is NOT automatically known to Fire and Rescue personnel, but can be selected for the cost of two. The in-depth knowledge of fire, how it starts, travels, lives and breathes. The character knows most techniques used in arson, methods to conceal arson, and with time, sufficient evidence and analysis can determine a fire's point of origin, the cause, how it traveled and whether or not it was started by natural causes, accident or intentionally. Adds a bonus of +20% to the Fire Damage Assessment skill (no other skill bonuses apply). **Requirements:** Mechanical Engineering, Chemistry and Advanced Mathematics skills are required to take this skill. **Base Skill:** 30%+5% per level of experience. Not available to other O.C.C.s.

Fire & Rescue Operative – "Roscoe"

Attribute Requirements: P.S. 14, P.P. 10, and P.E. 11 or higher. 60% are male, 40% female.

O.C.C. Skills:

Math: Basic (80% +2% per level of experience)
Language: American and one of choice (+20%).
Literacy (90% +1% per level of experience; native language)
Radio: Basic (+5%)
Read (& operate) Sensory Equipment (+10%).
Pilot: Truck and one of choice (+10% each).
Pilot: Robots & Power Armor: Fire and Rescue types only.
Salvage (+10%)
Paramedic (+15%)
Rope Works (+20%)
Climbing (+15%)
Spelunking (+10%)
Swim (+10%)
Running
W.P. Axe
W.P. Sword (Vibro-Blade)
W.P. Energy Rifle
Hand to Hand: Basic, which can be changed to Expert at the cost of two "O.C.C. Related Skills" or Martial Arts for the cost of three skill selections.

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select seven other skills. Plus select two additional skills at level three, and one at levels six, nine, and twelve. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any (+5%).

Domestic: Any (+10% to Cook, only).

Electrical: Basic (+5%) only (or Electrical Engineer +10% is only available if a Fire Forensics Specialist only, and counts as two skill selections).

Espionage: Detect Concealment only.

Mechanical: Automotive, Basic Mechanics, and Locksmith only.

Medical: Any (+5%).

Military: Demolitions (any), Trap/Mine Detection (+10%) and Military Fortification only.

Physical: Any, except Acrobatics and Wrestling.

Pilot: Any (+5%).

Pilot Related: Any, except Tanks.

Rogue: Cardsharp and Streetwise only.

Science: Advanced Math and Chemistry (any), only.

Technical: Any (+5%).

W.P.: Any, except Heavy Weapons, Heavy Energy Weapons and Sharpshooting.

Wilderness: Carpentry, Hunting, Land Navigation and Wilderness Survival only.

Secondary Skills: The character gets three secondary skills at levels one, seven and twelve. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the advantage of the bonus listed in parenthesis. All start at the base skill level and normal restrictions apply.

Standard Equipment: Standard NEMA Mega-Damage Firefighter's body armor and power armor or Light EMS body armor, M.D.C. energy rifle and S.D.C. sidearm of choice (typically a 9 mm automatic pistol), 4 extra clips for each, six flares, Vibro-Knife or Vibro-Saber, fire axe (2D6+1 S.D.C.; large), hand axe (1D6 S.D.C.), pocket knife (1D4 S.D.C.), small mallet (1D4 S.D.C.), six pitons/spikes, 50 feet (15.2 m) of lightweight rope and pulley system, micro-fusion laser torch (does 1D6 to 4D6 S.D.C. damage or up to 1D4 M.D.), large paramedic's medical kit (includes basic gear, 50 pairs of disposable surgical gloves, surgical kit, suture, bandages, antiseptic, painkillers and other medicine, defibrillator, intubation roll, etc.), primary response pack/first-aid kit (essential equipment in a small portable case), nano-robot medical systems, mini-bio-comp system, compu-drug dispenser, breathing equipment, stretcher, backboard, utility belt, canteen, air filter & gas mask, walkie-talkie, portable high-intensity lamp, pocket flashlight, pocket mirror, uniform, dress uniform, and a few personal items. May also have a portable laboratory and other or additional medical and rescue equipment in the vehicle.

Vehicles can include a simple hovercycle, motorcycle, car, conventional firefighting or rescue vehicles (EMS, Fire truck, automobile), or jet pack, as well as the Fire and Rescue power armor.

Special Equipment Available Upon Assignment: Fire truck and heavy-duty firefighting equipment, cutting/welding equipment, explosives and additional gear.

Money: All NEMA operatives get a roof over their head, food, clothing, and all other basics provided free as part of their service, as well as access to NEMA offices and military facilities. Monthly salary is 2,600 credits, plus hazard pay. The character starts off with one month's pay. Under the circumstance of Chaos Earth, access to equipment, medical supplies and services may be limited. Pay is one tenth normal (260 credits a month), mainly as an incentive for morale.

Cybernetics: None to start with, but implantation of cybernetics and bionics is not restricted and may be awarded for exemplary service and heroics.

NEMA Intel-Agent

Intel-Agents are Investigators and Intelligence Officers who might also be considered "spies" or "undercover agents." It is their job is to investigate, observe, track and uncover criminal, terrorist and enemy activity and operations. They then assess the situation and determine a response that could involve infiltration, further observation, or liquidation (i.e. a raid to capture, kill or destroy the offending individual, team or organization). These agents have anti-terrorism, military and combat training, but their main areas of expertise are in surveillance, investigation, research and intelligence analysis. Agents are trained to be objective and to seek out facts, identify perpetrators/enemies/spies and formulate strategies for response and counter-measures.

These espionage agents must think quick on their feet and be adaptive, resourceful and independent while, at the same time, be able to see the big picture and work as members of a team. In Chaos Earth, they are given the dirty jobs of tracking down looters, bandits and killers, as well as investigating and gathering intelligence on strange phenomena and the so-called "alien invaders," "demons" and "monsters." Intel-Agents will play an important role in the months to come figuring out exactly who and what they are dealing with when it comes to the supernatural and creatures from beyond the Rifts. Their powers of observation and analysis will help determine the modus operandi and weaknesses of the "new enemy." They will also be among the first to recognize and accept the existence of magic and supernatural monsters.

NEMA Intelligence Officer/Spy/Undercover Agent

Attribute Requirements: I.Q. 10, M.E. 11, M.A. 11 or higher. Roughly a 50/50 split between males and females.

O.C.C. Skills:

Math: Basic (80% +2% per level of experience)
Language: American and one of Choice (+20%)
Literacy (90% +1% per level of experience; native language)
Computer Operation (+15%)
Radio: Basic (+15%)
Electronic Countermeasures (+20%)
Read (& operate) Sensory Equipment (+10%)
Surveillance Systems (and Tailing) (+15%)
Video & TV (+20%)
Tracking (+10%)
Find Contraband (+20%)
Pilot: Two of choice (+5% each)
Basic Mechanics (+5%)
Basic Electronics (+5%)
Disguise (+15%)
Intelligence (+18%)
Interrogation (+10%)
Streetwise (+15%)
W.P. Knife or Blunt (pick one)
W.P. Energy Pistol or Energy Rifle (pick one)
W.P. of choice (any).

Hand to Hand: Expert or Martial Arts (or Assassin if an Anarchist or evil alignment), pick one.

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select two Espionage or Physical skills, and five other skills of choice (as limited below). Plus select Demon & Monster Lore and one additional skill at level

three, Magic Lore and one additional skill at level five, and one additional Lore and other skill at levels eight and twelve. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any (+10%).

Domestic: Any.

Electrical: None.

Espionage: Any (+10%).

Mechanical: Automotive and Basic Mechanics only.

Medical: First Aid only.

Military: Any (+10%).

Physical: Any.

Pilot: Any.

Pilot Related: None.

Rogue: Any (+5%).

Science: None.

Technical: Any.

W.P.: Any, except Sharpshooting.

Wilderness: Any.



Secondary Skills: The character gets two secondary skills at levels one, four, eight, and twelve. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the advantage of the bonus listed in parenthesis. All start at the base skill level and normal restrictions apply.

Standard Equipment: Light or Medium M.D.C. body armor, energy rifle or energy sidearm of choice and 4 extra E-Clips for each, S.D.C. sidearm of choice (revolver, pistol or submachine-gun), two explosive grenades, two smoke grenades, two flares, survival knife (1D6 S.D.C.), make-up/disguise kit, pocket computer, language translator, pocket flashlight, notebook and four markers, lock picking tools, mini-tool kit, small crowbar, six pairs of plastic surgical gloves, soft leather gloves, disposable cigarette lighter, utility belt, air filter & gas mask, walkie-talkie, long-range radio, small pair of binoculars, nightvision goggles, uniform, dress uniform, "civilian" wardrobe for undercover work, canteen, backpack, satchel, briefcase, sunglasses, and some other basic gear.

Available upon assignment: A vehicle appropriate for the mission, explosives, weapons, surveillance equipment (wire taps, bugs, etc.), additional video equipment, cameras, recorders, disguises and clothing, fake I.D., cash, nano-spy systems, and other special equipment.

Money: All NEMA operatives get a roof over their head, food, clothing, and all other basics provided free as part of their service, as well as access to NEMA offices and military facilities. Monthly salary is 5,000 credits, plus hazard pay. The character starts off with one month's pay. Under the circumstance of Chaos Earth, access to equipment, medical supplies and services may be limited. Pay is one tenth normal (500 credits a month), mainly as an incentive for morale.

Cybernetics: Typically has 1D4 basic "implants."

Para-Arcane

A Para-Arcane consultant is an expert in the paranormal, mythology, history and monsters. Most (95%) are "lay" people recruited by NEMA, the military or regional authorities to help explain and combat the magical and supernatural. Most are *scholars*, *historians* and *nerds* who have a keen knowledge about ancient gods, the occult and the arcane, as well as historical knowledge about myths, legends, demons, ghosts, monsters, ancient gods, and ancient beliefs. These quasi-experts play a key role in identifying mythological creatures, demons, monsters and their behavior, practices, and most importantly, their *weaknesses* and *vulnerabilities*. Such knowledge is crucial if NEMA is to have any hope of dealing with these creatures of magic and evil.

Only 1% of the Para-Arcane are clinically trained parapsychologists and psychic investigators, 5% are Native Americans, 24% scholars and historical scholars, 20% anthropologists, and most of the rest are "nerds" – scholarly laymen who have read and memorized tons of obscure data that is suddenly very useful. All serve as "technical advisors" enlisted to identify and counter the supernatural. Most are expected to be *field agents* who accompany the troops on reconnaissance, monster hunts, rescue and combat missions. Consequently, most Para-Arcane are given some very rudimentary training in Military Etiquette, basic combat and how to shoot a gun.

Considering the circumstances, some Para-Arcane are physically fit, courageous and gung-ho adventurers proud to put their knowledge to work and help in a time of need. Others are well intentioned but young and inexperienced, old and flabby, or weak and sickly. Some are true scholars and amateur scientists, others are well-meaning bunglers, eccentrics and goof balls. On the other hand there are the charlatans, opportunists and lunatic fringe trying to exploit the situation to their personal benefit, glory or agenda. The level of competence, first-hand experience and range of knowledge varies dramatically from individual to individual.

Special Para-Arcane O.C.C. skills

Ghosts. Para-Arcane know all the theories pertaining to ghosts, entities (all) and other "haunting" or spectral creatures like Banshees and Nightmares.

Monster Hunting. Knows the habits, foibles, weaknesses, vulnerabilities and ways to fight and kill most (historically) well known (and some little known) demons, monsters, undead, werebeasts, spirits and gods. Fascinated by the subject, the Para-Arcane is constantly studying the supernatural to learn more, and will commit to memory (and often a written journal) firsthand experiences and observations. Also see the Lore: Demons & Monsters skill.

Simpatico with magic. Has a basic understanding and appreciation (sometimes a fascination) for *magic*, and it is seldom feared. The Para-Arcane can also read spell scrolls, use simple magic weapons and devices, recognize enchantment and possession (30% +2% chance per level of experience), recognize common and historical magic symbols, and has some measure of understanding about magic ceremonies, their purpose and end result. Can perform an exorcism and magical rituals and ceremonies if given complete and clear instructions. Bonuses: +1 to save vs magic, +2 to save vs possession, +1 to save vs Horror Factor, and has a base P.P.E. of 5D6 +P.E. attribute number.

Para-Arcane O.C.C.

Attribute Requirements: I.Q. 11 or higher. A good M.E., P.S., and P.E. are helpful but not required. **Note:** 45% are women and, oddly enough, few Para-Arcane (only about 5%) have any degree of psychic ability, typically Minor or Major abilities when they are present. One or two are part of a typical NEMA squad.

O.C.C. Skills:

Math: Basic (88% +1% per level of experience)

Language: American and one of choice (+10%).

Literacy (90% +1% per level of experience; native language)

Military Etiquette (+5%)

Pilot: One of choice (+5%).

Computer Operation (+20%)

Research (+15%)

History (+20%)

Anthropology (+20%)

Mythology (+25%)

Lore: Demons & Monsters (+20%)

Lore: Two of choice (+15%).

Photography (+10%)

Climbing (+5%)

Running or Aerobic Athletics (pick one)

W.P. Automatic Pistol or Revolver

W.P. Energy Rifle

W.P. Ancient or S.D.C. weapon of choice.

Hand to Hand: Basic, which can be changed to Expert at the cost of two "O.C.C. Related Skills" or Martial Arts for the cost of three skill selections.

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select five other skills. Plus select two additional skills at levels four, eight, and twelve. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any.

Domestic: Any (+5%).

Electrical: Basic Electronics only.

Espionage: Intelligence, Escape Artist, Pick Locks and Disguise only.

Mechanical: Automotive and Basic Mechanics only.

Medical: First Aid only.

Military: None.

Physical: Any, except Acrobatics, Gymnastics and Boxing.

Pilot: Any, except military vehicles, robots and power armor.

Pilot Related: None.

Rogue: Computer Hacking, Palming and Streetwise only.

Science: Any (+5%).

Technical: Any (+10%).

W.P.: Any, except Heavy Weapons, Heavy Energy Weapons or Sharpshooting.

Wilderness: Land Navigation, Identify Plants, and Preserve Food only.

Secondary Skills: The character gets two secondary skills at levels one, four, eight, and twelve. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the advantage of the bonus listed in parenthesis. All start at the base skill level and normal restrictions apply.

Standard Equipment: A suit of Light M.D.C. body armor, M.D.C. energy rifle and S.D.C. sidearm of choice (typically a 9 mm automatic pistol), 4 extra clips for each, six flares, silver plated dagger (1D6 S.D.C.), hand axe made of stone or bone (1D6 S.D.C.), conventional pocket knife (1D4 S.D.C.), small mallet (1D4 S.D.C.), 6-8 wooden stakes, a clove of garlic, a branch of wolfbane, a shaker of salt, an 8-12 inch wooden cross, a small silver cross, a canteen of holy water, canteen of regular water, disposable cigarette lighter, pocket mirror, utility belt, backpack, satchel or duffle bag, sleeping bag, notebook and two markers, a box of white chalk, a couple pieces of charcoal, air filter & gas mask, walkie-talkie, portable computer, pocket flashlight, nightvision goggles, official NEMA uniform and I.D., dress uniform, and a few personal items.

Special Equipment Available Upon Assignment: Additional weapons and ammunition, special ammunition (i.e. silver bullets, bow and arrows, wood or stone weapons, iron weapons, etc.), video equipment, cameras, recorders, and other equipment. Vehicles can include a simple hovercycle, car, jeep, truck or other means of transportation or military insertion and extraction.

Money: All NEMA operatives get a roof over their head, food, clothing, and all other basics provided free as part of their service, as well as access to NEMA offices and military facilities. There was never a "Para-Arcane" consultant before Chaos Earth. Under the circumstance they get limited access to equipment, supplies and services. Pay is a meager 400 credits a month, mainly as an incentive for morale, but the

agent also enjoys the protection and camaraderie of the NEMA soldiers and other authorities which more than makes up for the pitiful salary. The character starts off with two month's pay.

Cybernetics: None to start with, but implantation of cybernetics and bionics is not restricted and may be awarded for exemplary service and heroics.

Silver Eagle Strike Force

Chaos Earth version of the SAMAS Pilot

The Silver Eagles are man-sized suits of flying power armor. Players of *Rifts*® may recognize them as stylistic variations of the SAMAS. They are exclusive to NEMA. All three models are virtually the same with slight variations in styling and different markings to designate each nation.

The Eagle – US Model

The Talon – Canada Model

The Condor – Mexico Model

The Silver Eagles are made from the same laser resistant, Mega-Damage, chromium material as the Chromium Guardsmen, though they have considerably less M.D.C. (250 points for the main body). It carries a large gun that can be any one of the following: 1. *Rail Gun* (1D4 M.D. per 40 round burst, 4000 foot/1219 m range, can fire 50 bursts), 2. *Mega-Damage Laser Assault Rifle* (2D6 M.D., 20 shot payload per clip or can be "cabled" to the power armor for an unlimited payload, 2000 foot/610 m range). 3. *S.D.C. .50 Caliber Heavy Machine-Gun* (6D6 S.D.C. per round, 2D4x10 S.D.C. damage per four round burst, 3000 foot/914 m range, can fire 120 bursts), 4. *Rapid-Fire Grenade Launcher* (2D4x10 S.D.C. damage, 1000 foot/305 m range, 40 grenade payload), 5. *Automatic Assault Rifle & Grenade Launcher* (5D6 S.D.C. damage per round or 1D6x10 from a short 3 round burst, 600 round ammo drum, and a 1250 foot/381 m range for the rifle, plus can fire rifle grenades that inflict 1D4x10 S.D.C. damage or 2D6 M.D. depending on the type of shell and has a range of 900 feet/274 m and a payload of six rounds – an additional 6-24 grenade rounds can be carried in a satchel). **Note:** The Chromium Guardsmen have similar weaponry available in addition or as an alternative to their famous Sonic Rail Gun (Boom Gun) – which by the way, is often too destructive in an urban environment that one hopes to preserve. With the prompting of the Para-Arcane, silver coated rounds are being manufactured.

The Silver Eagle Strike Force is designed for quick response and air to land and land to air combat and rescue. They handle exceptionally well and are ideal for urban combat, weaving between buildings and taking on ground and roof top enemies as well as able to (reasonably) navigate inside most buildings.

Silver Eagle Strike Force O.C.C.

Attribute Requirements: P.S. 14, P.P. 12, P.E. 12 or higher.

O.C.C. Skills:

Math: Basic (80% +2% per level of experience)

Language: American and one of choice (+20%).

Literacy (90% +1% per level of experience; native language)

Radio: Basic (+5%)

Pilot: One of choice (+10% each).

Pilot: Robots & Power Armor

Robot Combat Elite

Read (& Operate) Sensory Equipment (+10%)

Weapon Systems (+10%)

Military Etiquette (+10%)

First Aid (+5%)

Land Navigation (+14%)

Wilderness Survival (+5%)

Climbing (+10%)

W.P. One of Choice (often knife or sword).

W.P. Automatic and Semi-Automatic Rifles

W.P. Energy Pistol

W.P. Energy Rifle

W.P. Heavy Energy Weapons

W.P. Heavy Weapons (S.D.C.)

Hand to Hand: Expert, which can be changed to Martial Arts (or Assassin if evil) at the cost of one "O.C.C. Related Skill".

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select five other skills. Plus select two additional skills at level three, and one at levels six, nine, and twelve. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any (+5%).

Domestic: Any.

Electrical: Basic only.

Espionage: Detect Ambush, Intelligence, Sniper and Wilderness Survival only.

Mechanical: Automotive and Basic Mechanics only.

Medical: Paramedic (+5%) only.

Military: Any (+5%), except Trap Construction and Trap Detection.

Physical, Any; except Acrobatics.

Pilot: Any (+10%).

Pilot Related: Any (+5%).

Rogue: Cardsharp and Streetwise only.

Science: Advanced Math (+5%) and Astronomy only.

Technical: Any.

W.P.: Any.

Wilderness: Any.

Secondary Skills: The character gets two secondary skills at levels one, four, eight, and twelve. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the advantage of the bonus listed in parenthesis. All start at the base skill level and normal restrictions apply.

Standard Equipment: Chromium Eagle Power Armor Suit (classic SAMAS), suit of Light M.D.C. body armor, energy rifle and energy sidearm of choice, 4 extra E-Clips for each, two explosive grenades, two smoke grenades, four flares, Vibro-Blade (1D6 M.D.), survival knife (1D6 S.D.C.), First Aid medical kit, pocket computer, flashlight, disposable cigarette lighter, utility belt, air filter & gas mask, walkie-talkie, uniform, dress uniform, combat boots, canteen, and an additional non-energy, S.D.C. weapon of choice.

Money: All NEMA operatives get a roof over their head, food, clothing, and all other basics provided free as part of their service, as well as access to NEMA offices and military facilities. Monthly salary is 3,800 credits, plus hazard pay. The character starts off with one month's pay. Under the circumstance of Chaos Earth, access to equipment, medical supplies and services may be limited. Pay is one tenth normal (380 credits a month), mainly as an incentive for morale.

Cybernetics: Typically has a Gyro-Compass and clock/calendar implant.

Game Note: To conserve space, I am not reprinting the stats for the "classic" SAMAS. See the *Rifts*® RPG, page 193, for the stats.



Paranoid Vigilantes & Militia

NPC villains and antagonists

Paranoid vigilantes and militia members are groups of fanatics (as small as one or two dozen or half the town; hundreds) who who have become militant in the defense of their families and community. They may be an organized church or civic group, neighborhood watch, social club, band of friends or like-minded citizens or a militia who have taken the law into their own hands. They search for monsters, aliens, and dangers in and around their community and destroy them. Driven to the brink of madness by terror and paranoia, they see conspiracy and evil even where it does not exist. As a result, strangers, the mentally ill, handicapped, psychics and even those with Para-Arcane knowledge or unconventional views/ideals are seen as their enemy. Anyone branded as a spy, traitor, witch, demon worshiper, practitioner of magic, or being cursed or just "not right" is targeted for harassment, likely to be blamed for any misfortunes, illness, death, magic or strange occurrences, tracked down, beaten, interrogated and executed (typically by hanging, gunshot or beating). Many an innocent individual pays for crimes he or she did not commit. Some for crimes that only exist in the imagination of the accusers. Meanwhile, "traitors," "the cursed" and those deemed to be "not right" are often *innocent people* who are mentally ill, are researching magic or demons to get a better understanding of what's happening in the world to combat the supernatural, or possess psionic powers or strange abilities they have yet to come to understand, or strangers who simply hold a different view or dared to question or defy the angry mob.

Blameless aliens/dimensional beings inadvertently swept into Chaos Earth through a dimensional Rift or magic gone awry are automatically regarded as invaders, evil monsters or demons and presumed to be responsible for the global catastrophe and current condition of the world, let alone any immediate local trouble. They are typically killed on sight, and often beaten or tortured first.

The problem for NEMA is calming fears and keeping order. Most of these militias and mobs are self-styled vigilantes who defy the law, ignore NEMA and harass and kill innocent people (human and nonhuman). Whenever NEMA encounters a mob attacking, hurting or about to execute a fellow human, they must be careful, because the accused *may* be an evil madman, murdering thief/looter, killer, cultist, witch, sorcerer, or even a shape-changing monster. Determining an individual's innocence or guilt can be extremely difficult under these circumstances, and the heroes may find themselves at odds and fighting (with an effort not to kill anybody) the very people they are sworn to protect. To rescue an innocent person from a mob means fighting the mob and/or dealing with a "hostage" situation.

Clashes between NEMA and paranoid or crazed citizens have caused some isolated groups and communities to regard NEMA as an intruding government or outsiders who are only a step above the "enemy." Such people dislike and distrust NEMA, keep secrets from and refuse to cooperate with the organization, and only call upon them in the most dire of circumstances. In fact, some will raid and loot NEMA outposts and supply depots, and fallen soldiers to get Mega-Damage weapons, armor and supplies. This "them and us" division makes the mob/vigilante groups and communities isolated and a danger to themselves as well as others. As the chaos and uncertainty continues and intensifies, there are more and more of these panic-stricken factions. The worst are falling to barbarism and are as murderous and cruel as the monsters and traitors they claim to despise. Some have already degenerated to roving gangs stirring up trouble, creating paranoia wherever they go and prone to rioting and looting.

Vigilante and Militiamen may work and travel alone, or in groups large or small, usually with like-minded people.

Paranoid Vigilantes & Militia O.C.C.s

Important Note about Civilian Militias: The "paranoid" vigilantes and "militia" presented above are crazy with fear, paranoia. They are NOT meant to label ALL militia groups and independent heroes and adventurers, but are rather one dangerous faction that plays a large, dangerous and growing role in Chaos Earth. Other "militias" are good, honest folk who try to be good, just and fair. Many of these militias are organized by community leaders and law enforcement to help protect their citizens where NEMA and the military are not available. And even where NEMA and a government, police force and/or military presence is strong, volunteer militias are frequently organized to "help" and "support" them.

Basically the stats for these good guy, Civilian Militias are the same as the Paranoid Vigilante/Militia. The main difference is the characters' alignment, goals and conduct. These heroes fight to restore law, order and peace, and to protect the innocent. They try to uphold the law and goodness, not take upon themselves the role of all-knowing judge, jury and executioner.

1-4 militia men may be part of a NEMA squad.

Alignment of NPC Villains & Antagonists: Anarchist (40%) or evil, any.

Alignment of Player Characters: 10% Principled, 20% Scrupulous, 35% Unprincipled, 30% Anarchist, and 5% Aberrant or other.

Requirements: A willingness to fight and at least a P.S., P.P. and P.E. of 8 or higher. A good I.Q., M.E. and Spd. are helpful but not required. Typically, 60-70% are male, 30-40% female. Age can range from 16 to 80 years old.

O.C.C. Skills:

Math: Basic (70% +2% per level of experience)

Language: Native language (considering the setting that's probably American) at 90%.

Literacy (84% +2% per level of experience; native language)

Radio: Basic (+10%)

Pilot: Two of choice (+10% each), excluding robots and power armor.

Military Etiquette (+5%)

Land Navigation (+14%)

Wilderness Survival (+10%)

W.P. Automatic and Semi-Automatic Rifles

W.P. Energy Rifle

W.P. One Ancient Weapon of choice.

W.P. Two Modern Weapons of choice.

Hand to Hand: Basic, which can be changed to Expert at the cost of one "O.C.C. Related Skill" or Martial Arts (or Assassin if evil) for the cost of two skill selections.

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select eight other skills. Plus select two additional skills at level three, and one at levels six, nine, and twelve. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any (+5%).

Domestic: Any

Electrical: Basic only.

Espionage: Detect Ambush, Intelligence, Tracking, Sniper and Wilderness Survival only.

Mechanical: Automotive and Basic Mechanics only.

Medical: First Aid (+5%) only.

Military: Any (+10%), except Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Warfare.

Physical: Any; except Acrobatics; +5% where applicable.

Pilot: Any (+5%), except robots, power armor and ships.

Pilot Related: Any (+5%).

Rogue: Cardsharp and Streetwise only.

Science: Advanced Math (+5%) and Astronomy only.

Technical: Any.

W.P.: Any, except Sharpshooting and Torpedo.

Wilderness: Any (+5%).

Secondary Skills: The character gets two secondary skills at levels one, four, eight, and twelve. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the advantage of the bonus listed in parenthesis. All start at the base skill level and normal restrictions apply.

Standard Equipment: A suit of Light or Medium M.D.C. body armor, energy rifle and one weapon for each W.P., 4 extra E-Clips for each, two explosive grenades, two smoke grenades, four flares, Vibro-Blade (1D6 M.D.), survival knife (1D6 S.D.C.), First Aid medical kit, pocket computer, flashlight, disposable cigarette lighter, utility belt, air filter & gas mask, walkie-talkie, uniform, fatigues, combat boots, canteen, wooden cross, wooden club or knife (1D6 S.D.C.), and additional military gear. Vehicle is typically a 4-wheel drive vehicle for the group. Any individual may have a jeep, pickup truck, motorcycle, hover car, or hovercycle but only at the G.M.'s discretion.

Money: Paranoid characters start with 1D6x100 credits and whatever they can scrounge, trade for or take from the enemy (Anarchist and evil characters may steal from NEMA and others). They are on their own which is why they gravitate to create large groups with a military style infrastructure and support network (sympathizers, like-minded civilians, alliances with other militia groups, etc.).

All NEMA operatives get a roof over their head, food, clothing, and all other basics provided free as part of their service, as well as access to NEMA offices and military facilities. There was never a "militia" before Chaos Earth. Under the circumstance volunteers who work for NEMA get fair but limited access to equipment, ammunition, supplies and services. Pay is a meager 300 credits a month, mainly as an incentive for morale, but the agent also enjoys the protection and camaraderie of the NEMA soldiers and other authorities which more than makes up for the pitiful salary. The character starts off with two month's pay.

Cybernetics: Typically none to start.

Witch-Hunter O.C.C.

These bands are old fire and brimstone fanatics who are not unlike the old Spanish Inquisition whose Inquisitors see the handiwork of demons, evil, magic and the supernatural everywhere. Many are well intentioned misanthropes and paranoids, others among them enjoy the power of life and death they have as traveling judge, jury and executioners. Trouble is, these self-styled inquisitors have learned enough about magic and monsters to sniff out real supernatural menaces about a quarter of the time, lending them some measure of credibility to continue with their charade of justice and salvation.

If the G.M. allows it, the Witch-Hunter can be a player character. They are fundamentally Para-Arcane with a much more militant and self-righteous orientation. Most see themselves as crusaders on a quest to destroy all that is evil, alien and supernatural. Consequently, Witch-Hunters expect to jump into the heart of the matter and get their hands bloodied *fighting and destroying* the supernatural and demonic, not just "helping" as advisors and consultants in the field.

Witch-Hunters may work and travel alone, in pairs, or in small groups of other Witch-Hunters (3-6 members) or join (often as leaders) a larger group of like-minded people such as Paranoid Vigilantes and Militias.

Special Witch-Hunter O.C.C. skills

Monster Hunting. Knows the habits, foibles, weaknesses, vulnerabilities and ways to fight and kill most (historically) well known (and some little known) witches, demons, monsters, undead, werebeasts, spirits and gods. Fascinated by the subject, the Witch-Hunter is constantly studying the supernatural to learn more, and will commit to memory (and often a written journal) firsthand experiences and observations. Also see the Lore: Demons & Monsters skill.

Arcane knowledge. Has a good understanding of *magic and the supernatural*, but fears, loathes and rejects it, giving the Witch-Hunter greater resistance to it. The character recognizes components and symbols used in magic, signs of evil, and magic rituals/ceremonies, as well as spell scrolls, simple magic

weapons and devices, and enchantment and possession (36% +2% chance per level of experience). **Bonuses:** +1 to save vs magic, +3 to save vs possession, +4 to save vs Horror Factor, and has a base P.P.E. of 3D6 +P.E. attribute number.

Witch-Hunter O.C.C.

Alignment of NPC Villains & Antagonists: Anarchist (40%) or evil, any.

Alignment of Player Characters: 10% Principled, 25% Scrupulous, 30% Unprincipled, 30% Anarchist, and 5% Aberrant or other.

Attribute Requirements: I.Q. 11 and P.E. 11 or higher. A high M.E. and P.S. are helpful but not required. **Note:** 45% are women and, oddly enough, few Witch-Hunter (only about 5%) have any degree of psychic ability, typically Minor or Major abilities when they are present.

O.C.C. Skills:

Math: Basic (88% +1% per level of experience)

Language: American and one of choice (+10%).

Literacy (84% +1% per level of experience; native language)

Pilot: Two of choice (+5%), may include Horsemanship.

Computer Operation (+10%)

Research (+20%)

History (+15%)

Anthropology (+15%)

Mythology (+20%)

Lore: Demons & Monsters (+25%)

Lore: Two of choice (+10%).

Land Navigation (+10%)

Tracking (+10%)

Climbing (+5%)

Body Building or General Athletics (pick one)

W.P. Two Ancient of choice (Sword, Blunt and Archery are most common) W.P. Automatic Pistol or Revolver

W.P. Automatic or Bolt-Action Rifle

W.P. One of choice, excluding Heavy Weapons and Heavy Energy Weapons.

Hand to Hand: Expert, which can be changed to Martial Arts (or Assassin if Anarchist or evil) for the cost of two "O.C.C. Related Skills."

O.C.C. Related Skills: Select five other skills and one Physical skill at level one, and two additional skills at levels four, eight, and twelve. All new skills start at level one proficiency.

Communications: Any

Domestic: Any

Electrical: Basic Electronics only.

Espionage: Any (+5%).

Mechanical: Automotive and Basic Mechanics only.

Medical: First Aid only.

Military: None.

Physical: Any; except Acrobatics, Gymnastics and Boxing.

Pilot: Any, except military vehicles, robots and power armor.

Pilot Related: None.

Rogue: Computer Hacking, Palming and Streetwise only.

Science: Any (+5%).

Technical: Any (+10%).

W.P.: Any, except Heavy Weapons, Heavy Energy Weapons or Sharpshooting.

Wilderness: Land Navigation, Identify Plants, and Preserve Food only.

Secondary Skills: The character gets two secondary skills at levels one, four, eight, and twelve. These are additional areas of knowledge that do not get the advantage of the bonus listed in parenthesis. All start at the base skill level and normal restrictions apply.

Standard Equipment: A suit of Medium M.D.C. body armor, M.D.C. energy rifle and one weapon for each corresponding W.P., 4 extra clips for each, six flares, silver plated dagger (1D6 S.D.C.) or sword (2D6 S.D.C.), conventional hand axe (1D6 S.D.C.), conventional pocket knife (1D4 S.D.C.), small mallet (1D4 S.D.C.), 6-8 wooden stakes, 1D6 cloves of garlic, a branch of wolfbane, a shaker of salt, an 8-12 inch wooden cross, a small silver cross, a canteen of holy water, canteen of regular water, disposable cigarette lighter, pocket mirror, utility belt, backpack, satchel or duffle bag, sleeping bag, notebook and two markers, a box of white chalk, a couple pieces of charcoal, air filter & gas mask, walkie-talkie, portable computer, pocket flashlight, nightvision goggles, small wardrobe, and a few personal items. Vehicle is typically a jeep or other 4-wheel drive vehicle, or motorcycle, hover car, or hovercycle.

Money: NPCs, villains and lone wolfs start with 2D4x100 credits and whatever they can scrounge, trade for or take from the enemy (Anarchist and evil characters may steal from NEMA and others). They are on their own which is why they may establish a small underground or brotherhood organization of fellow Witch-Hunters and typically befriend and associate with militia groups and support networks of sympathizers and like-minded civilians. Most Paranoid Vigilantes and Paranoid Militias consider Witch-Hunters to be welcomed and exalted allies and traveling judges and heroes.

All NEMA operatives get a roof over their head, food, clothing, and all other basics provided free as part of their service, as well as access to NEMA offices and military facilities. They never had "Witch Hunters" before Chaos Earth. Under the circumstances volunteers who work for NEMA get fair but limited access to equipment, ammunition, supplies and services. Pay is a meager 400 credits a month, mainly as an incentive for morale, but the agent also enjoys the protection and camaraderie of the NEMA soldiers and other authorities which more than makes up for the pitiful salary. The character starts off with two month's pay.

Cybernetics: Typically start with none.

Other O.C.C.s

Gene-Tex, Mutoids, and other O.C.C.s are yet to be presented, but tend to be illegal or part of Black Ops.

Magic & Psychic O.C.C.s

Mystical and psionic characters will be explored later, probably next issue, so stay tuned.

Chaos Earth NEMA Assignments & Adventures

The following are just a handful of typical crisis situations NEMA operatives must face every day.

Reconnaissance Patrol, Short-Range: This is typically a perimeter patrol around NEMA held territory. May include neighboring towns and communities.

Reconnaissance Patrol, Long-Range: Typically a quiet excursion into regions not under NEMA control for the purpose of gathering intelligence (information). May stop to intercede and help, defend or rescue individuals along the way, but only if such action does NOT jeopardize the patrol.

Seek and Destroy Mission: NEMA operatives are charged with locating and destroying some enemy force. The target could be armed gunmen engaging in banditry, murder or other crimes, to demons and monsters.

Hot Pursuit! One type of hot pursuit is relentlessly chasing down a known fugitive (including vampires, demons and monsters), another is the unexpected chase. In the latter case, the squad happens upon an individual, group or monster who takes off the moment he/they/it spots the heroes. The NEMA squad gives chase to investigate what they were up to and why they are running (in the case of monsters and aliens the reason may be obvious). The group may want to split up with one giving chase and the other faction investigating the area where the fleeing individual(s) was first spotted. It may be the scene of a crime, hideout or skullduggery.

Standard Rescue Call: Somebody in need requires rescue and likely medical treatment. NEMA responds. Can be almost anything, including a trap.

Refugee Round-Up: Urban and rural patrols in which innocent people who are in shock, dazed, injured or lost are located, gathered into a group and escorted back to a NEMA held safe zone. Problem: Sometimes a large group (hundreds) of refugees will attract trouble or attack. During the early weeks of the Great Cataclysm, NEMA is on patrol and engaged in round-up operations around the clock!

Rescue Operation Patrol: A squad patrol out specifically to find people trapped in the debris, lost or in need of help. The squad will address immediate concerns, i.e. rescuing the innocent from captors, freeing people trapped by debris, providing medical treatment and then escorting them back to someplace safe, ideally a NEMA held safe zone. During the early weeks of the Great Cataclysm, NEMA is on patrol and engaged in rescue and recovery operations around the clock!

Rescue Under Fire: This is when the NEMA squad falls under attack from rioters, bandits, maniacs, monsters, aliens or supernatural forces while engaged in a rescue operation. Not only must the squad fight to defend itself, but must also work to protect and defend the innocents in need of rescue (say trapped in a pit, pinned under debris, injured, etc.).

Monster Hunt: A predatory monster is sighted and NEMA comes to investigate. Lone predators, mated pairs and small

groups (3-6) prefer to establish their lairs in isolated, unpopulated areas with basements, sewers, abandoned buildings, and viaducts being among their favorite habitats. Small to large groups of monsters and those commanded by a powerful leader tend to be more aggressive and may challenge or attack humans and even NEMA defenders in populated areas. They may also have their lair in a populated area, though most prefer a secluded and remote place to hide. Whichever the case, it is time for NEMA agents to go monster hunting.

Monster Raiders: The squad is attacked by or must respond to a gang (large or small) of alien beings, monsters or supernatural creatures causing destruction and mayhem.

Alien Invasion Force: A small army of alien beings (mortals or supernatural) swarming over an area or threatening the civilian human population or a NEMA safe zone. Troops respond to counter the enemy.

Disturbance Investigation: No perpetrator has been identified and no serious crime may have been committed, but something is going on that warrants NEMA investigation. It could be a shadowy figure or group of figures skulking round, strange noises or lights in an abandoned building or part of town or the woods, a grim or stomach turning discovery, etc. What it is may be anything from a lost or feral hermit or mentally challenged refugee to aliens trying to hide, evildoers, cultists, witches, monsters and the supernatural.

Murder Investigation: People have been showing up dead in a 20 block radius. Someone or something is responsible. Most victims show evidence of a struggle and suffer minor cuts and abrasions, but rarely anything that looks life threatening. Yet they are dead, as if their *life was drained* from them. Who or what is responsible needs to be found and dealt with.

Murder Investigation: Another victim of an apparent ritual sacrifice. Could be the work of one or more demons, witches, sorcerer of some kind or god only knows what. Death cults have been popping up ever since the planet went crazy and the Rifts appeared. Some welcoming and worshiping death, others trying to rediscover the ancient ways of magic and the occult. All are dangerous. This looks like the handiwork for some sort of "group" – 4-13 individuals for nefarious purposes yet to be discovered.

Murder Investigation: Vampires! No question about it. The telltale bite marks, blood loss . . . yeah, it's vampires alright. Could be one or two, could be a nest of them (4D6). Call out the Para-Arcane, it's NEMA's job to locate and exterminate them.

Vigilante group is about to burn an accused witch. The woman is a young mother who protests her innocence even after hours of brutal interrogation and beatings. Her three children,

their fate yet to be determined, wail and cry not far from the stage where their mother is soon to be burned at the stake! Enter NEMA.

A known vigilante leader or group has accused somebody of consorting with or hiding witches, demons, monsters or some other evildoers. The credibility of this "tip" is questionable but NEMA must investigate. Does the vigilante group take matters into their own hands regardless of what NEMA determines? Can NEMA stop them before the accused is killed? Are the vigilantes correct or mistaken?

Witch hunt! A gang of vigilantes or a militia has come to a normally lawful and orderly community looking for witches and monsters. They claim to be able to sniff out trouble and the supernatural and are here to save the people from themselves.

A note about aliens. Not all aliens or dimensional beings are evil or menacing, however, they, like the people of Earth, are lost and terrified. Consequently, they may act in a threatening or suspicious manner (sneak around, hide, etc.) and steal to get what they need. Likewise, not all alien animals are predatory monsters, some may be sweet and cuddly, good eating, or cause trouble because of their size, eating habits, or nature. It is up to NEMA to decide who is a threat and how to respond to any given situation. As the Chaos continues, it is becoming apparent that Earthlings are no longer alone and that "aliens" have arrived. The question is, what to do with them? If they are not evil invaders, how should NEMA respond? And if they are innocent lost souls, what should be done with them and where to put them?

Most ordinary people do NOT have access to Mega-Damage weapons, armor, vehicles or military ordnance unless they have dug them out of the ruins or stolen or looted them from armories, police stations and military bases. This has happened in *some* places so there are bands of criminals, militias, free agents and individuals who have M.D. items. Most have S.D.C. weapons, armor and conventional equipment which gives NEMA a decided advantage over the average Joe and putting down riots. However, supernatural beings and high-tech aliens enjoy the same Mega-Damage advantage, making most people extremely vulnerable and NEMA their only true line of defense.

A typical NEMA Response Team:

2-4 Fire & Rescue Personnel

1-2 Field Engineers

1-2 Para-Arcane Consultants (may be a Witch-Hunter instead)

1-2 Intel-Agents

1-3 Chromium Guardsmen

1-2 Silver Eagles

1-4 Militia Volunteers



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