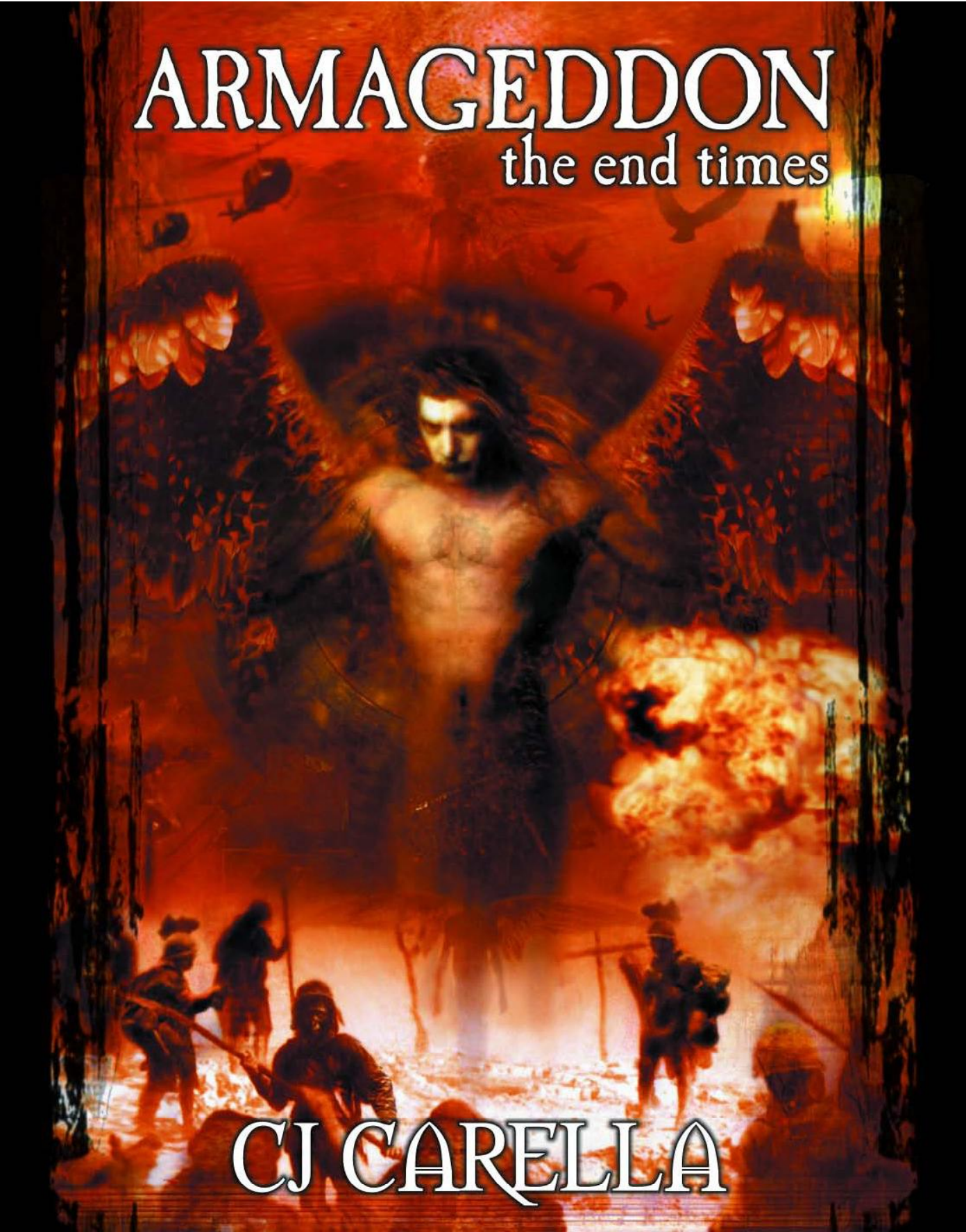
ARMAGEDDON

the end times



CJ CARELLA

The End of Days!

For decades, warning signs have told of a coming Reckoning. Its exact nature was unknown. Some predicted a new dawn for humankind—a golden age. Others issued dire warnings. In truth, it was worse . . . far worse.

The near future has arrived and the tidings are grim. An ancient force is reborn and the ultimate conflict to determine the destiny of humankind is underway. Fought by forces mundane, celestial, demonic, and otherworldly, the war has ravaged cities, plundered lands, and brought doom to millions.

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- A fantastic setting filled with angels, demons, gods, supernatural servants . . . and the humans struggling to survive and even triumph
- Detailed character creation rules ranging in power level from normal humans to gods incarnate
- The ultimate exposition of the **Unisystem**, a universal game mechanic fully compatible with *CJ Carella's WitchCraft, All Flesh Must Be Eaten, Terra Primate* and other fine games
- A brief overview of the types of weapons used in the ultimate war, from knives to the Holy Fist tank
- Background information on the most powerful of the wartime bodies: The Alliance, Heavenly Host, Infernal Legion, Lodge of the Undying, Pantheons, and Watchers
- A variety of metaphysical arts including Magic, the Sight, Necromancy, Divine Inspiration, and Spirit Patrons
- Specifics on the capacities, powers, and limitations of numerous non-human entities, from angels to immortals to Primal beings
- Terrible knowledge of the Adversary's host, including Adepts, parabiologicals, and undead
- Guidance for running stories in a world of war, myth, and horror

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CJ CARELLA'S

ARMAGEDDON

the end times

A Game of War, Myth, and Horror

ARMAGEDDON

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Reader discretion is advised.

Comments and questions can be directed via the Internet at www.edenstudios.net/armageddon, via e-mail at eden@edenstudios.net, or via letter with a self-addressed stamped envelope.

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A Word to the Wise

The *Armageddon RPG* is a work of fiction, meant to entertain. It is not an occult manual, or a religious work. None of the concepts, ideas, and elements of this game are meant to be accepted as "real." If you think that this or any other roleplaying game has any bearing on reality beyond that which a novel or a movie might have, you probably should seek professional help.

Some of the themes and ideas of Armageddon are better suited for mature audiences. Parents should decide if this book is appropriate for their children.

—Carlos J. Martijena-Carella

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CHAPTER ONE: A TASTE OF DOOMSDAY

And I saw, and behold, a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

—Revelations 6:2

Brothers lift hands against one another; the ties of kinship are torn; full of hate is the world and of shameless adultery; ax-time, this is, and sword-time, shields are cloven; storm-time this is, and wolf-time; the end of the Earth.

—the Prose Edda

Chapter One

The red-haired woman was following him. Greg was sure of it now.

He'd noticed her when he was leaving the subway, coming home after doing some research in the library—some books couldn't be downloaded from the 'net. He needed to keep his Grade Point Average up and he was busting his ass to do so. The draft hadn't been reinstated yet, but it was just a matter of time.

Every day, the news posted casualty lists. The war wasn't going well, and this time it wasn't a peacekeeping mission in some country only a Jeopardy contestant could find on a map. Two days ago, an armored assault had gotten within spitting distance of San Antonio before the Texas National Guard had contained it. The casualty list had been particularly long that evening.

Greg had been worrying about the imminent draft when he saw her, standing on the platform, apparently waiting to board the car he was leaving. The woman in the bulky overcoat stood out from among the crowd of early commuters. She was model-tall, but not skinny; even under the coat she seemed athletic and strong. Her face was model-beautiful. She could have easily made a living through her looks—if he'd seen her face on a billboard or commercial or web site he would have remembered. Strangely enough, she had made eye contact with him and smiled. Out-of-towner, she had to be. Anybody who lived here for more than a few weeks soon learned better, or got into trouble.

He'd started the three-block walk towards his dingy apartment, past the spray-painted buildings, which he'd gotten used to. Then past the burning hulk of a building that had been hit by a cruise missile New York's air defenses had knocked out of the sky. The missile hadn't hit the military targets it had been seeking; instead, the warhead had fallen on top of the building and turned it into a funeral pyre for twenty-nine people. Greg had been there, trying to comfort the survivors, helping to organize a bucket brigade. He hadn't done much good. He'd pulled out a screaming man, and had gotten burned himself, although not as badly as he'd first thought. That had been as close to the war as he wanted to get. At least he was good enough in math that he'd been able to switch majors from history—worse than useless for a nation at war—to computer engineering, which might guarantee him a civilian job, or at least a rear-echelon military post. Or so he hoped.

Greg was absorbed in his thoughts, but he never completely ignored his surroundings. You don't survive long in New York otherwise. As he turned a corner, he checked behind him. And there she was, the red-haired woman. She was half a block behind him, walking at a steady pace. Greg started worrying.

For a moment, his instincts failed him. He was so concerned with the stranger behind him that he failed to notice the car parked on the opposite side of the street. It wasn't until the engine started and the car started moving that he noticed them. By then, all he could do was to scream in terror when he saw that the car was full of men with guns, all pointed at him.

Out of the corner of his eye, he saw the woman who'd been following him running forward, her hand outstretched. She was glowing.

Then the guns spat flame and the whole world went dark.

****

Something cold and damp was pressed against his face.

Greg woke up. The woman was leaning over him, rubbing a wet handkerchief over his face.

He blinked, looked around. They were in his apartment. He was lying on the faded living room couch. There was no sign of Elmo, his cat.

"What . . . what happened?" he croaked. He felt exhausted, drained.

"They mowed you down on the street. Then I killed them, and carried you here," the woman replied. Her voice was nice, but businesslike, like a TV's anchorwoman, or a politician.

"Killed them? Shot me?" Greg struggled to his feet. That's when he realized that his shirt was full of bloody holes. "Shot me," he gasped, and fell back on the couch, his hands reaching for the wounds that had to be there. But he felt no pain, no blood on his hands.

The woman smiled. "Don't worry. You're fine." She picked a plate off the living room table. It clinked as she showed it to him. There were some ten bullets and fragments of bullets on the plate. "Pulled those out of you. They really wanted you dead, child."

Greg looked at the bullets—ugly chunks of metal, all deformed and twisted, like half-melted lead mushrooms. "Shot me," he whispered. Then

he looked at the woman. "Did you heal me? How?" A pretty wild thought struck him. "Are you some kind of magician? A witch?"

Magic was real. So the news had been saying since Greg was a child. He'd never seen a magician or witch in action, but, like everyone else, he knew someone who knew someone who had gotten some sorcerer's feathers ruffled, and had been cursed or burned or worse as a result. He'd only half-believed, though—until now.

But the woman was shaking her head, still smiling. "No, not a witch, although I know a few, and they might have been able to save someone with multiple gunshot wounds. One of the bullets hit you in the head, though."

Greg reached towards his forehead, and felt caked blood—and something thicker he hurriedly rubbed off his fingers—almost right between his eyes. "How come I'm not dead?"

"Mostly, you healed yourself, Gregory Fairchild," the woman replied. "I helped somewhat, but if you couldn't heal yourself, you would have died in the seconds it took me to kill those men."

"How could you kill those men?" He remembered them well enough. There had been four of them, and they all had pistols or shotguns. The woman simply gestured towards his window.

"See for yourself," she said simply.

Greg did. He had almost made it to his apartment when he'd been shot. From his window, he could see out the street. And he could see the car—the burning hulk of the car—lying on its side. There were a number of cop cars and fire engines at the scene. This neighborhood wasn't a Safety Zone, so a shoot-out like this had to attract attention. So she had killed them.

"What—you pack a flamethrower in your purse or something?"

She shook her head. "No, but I have a few tricks up my sleeve."

"So you are a witch."

"I already told you I'm not. Are you calling me a liar?"

Greg decided that annoying a woman who had disposed of a carload of armed men was not a smart idea. Unfortunately, his mouth had other ideas. "So what are you then?"

The woman stood up. There was a flash of light, and she was gone.

In her place stood a taller, glowing figure. She was, if anything, more beautiful than the other, but larger, looking like an exquisitely sculpted statue. She wore a short tunic, with slits on the back for the huge feathered wings that grew there. Her eyes shone with a golden hue.

"I guess you can say I'm an angel. You can call me Daele."

With gulp, Greg staggered to the nearest chair and sat down just before he collapsed

The angel changed back. "Now that I've got your attention, I think we should talk."

****

At first, Greg did most of the talking.

"Before I begin, I'd like to see how much you know about the world," she told him. "That way, all I have to do is fill in the gaps as you go, and finish up afterwards."

Greg nodded. She wanted to know how much he kept up with world affairs. Even now, some people did not know what was going on, caring more about sports scores than the harsh realities of war. They might not have a clue until enemy tanks were rolling down the streets of Manhattan. Greg had been a history major, though, and he had the added incentive that current affairs might determine his fate, in or out a uniform.

"Okay, let's see," he started, clearing his thoughts. "I guess it happened in 2009, when everybody in Munich died."

"2008, actually, but as good a beginning as any," she said. "Go on."

"So, everybody in Munich wakes up dead one morning, except there is this one guy, standing on some tower, waving at the news choppers." Greg remembered the old footage, which still played on television, eight years later. The man, perhaps in his thirties, loomed over the carnage like some ancient god come to life. "He called himself the Apostle, and he created this cult around himself, the Church of Revelations."

"The cult existed before the Apostle first appeared," Daele corrected. "It made its first public appearance in 2000. And it was active, long, long before then."

"If you say so. Anyway, the Apostle overthrew the German government in '09 or '10,

Chapter One

I believe." Greg remembered his father watching the news in utter disbelief, the fear naked on his face when Greg asked him what was happening.

"It was very ugly. He killed people by the carload. And then his army invaded France, almost like World War II all over again. Which of course, made no sense. France, Russia, almost everybody had nukes. Territorial conquest had become obsolete sixty-five years before. But they invaded anyway, and when the French tried to use their nukes, they found they didn't work. No explosive fission or fusion reaction has worked since the Church of Revelations started the war. Nuclear power plants still function, but nuclear bombs don't. It makes no sense. Do you know why that happened?"

Daele seemed a bit taken aback by the question. "We have some . . . theories. But no, we don't know why that happened." She smiled ruefully. "To be honest, we had always assumed that nuclear weapons would play a major role during this conflict."

That didn't sit well with Greg. If the angels did not know what was going on, who did? "So, with no nukes to slow him down, and with an army that had appeared overnight, complete with hordes of monsters and weird magic, the Church of Revelations conquered Europe, kicked the asses of the Americans that arrived to help, and then started spreading to other continents. Asia, South America, all over. They bombed Jerusalem and that Holy Rock the Muslims have in Saudi Arabia, and they killed the Pope. Although you angels tried to stop them." And failed, he did not add.

"As I will explain shortly, 'they' angels are not 'we' angels. There is more than one group of angels—we prefer the term Seraphim, by the way—in the world. The ones that got killed did so stupidly. They waited until the humans had been utterly defeated, and then they jumped in to get slaughtered as well." Her face grew angry, and, Greg, thought, also sad. "Those brave fools. So many dead, and for nothing."

Greg decided to continue. "So, the Army of Revelations continued to roll through countries. They even reached Mexico, and were stopped at the U.S. border. So now we get bombed once in a while, by stealth bombers or cruise missiles, and some say it's the end of the world and that the Dark Apostle is Satan or the Antichrist."

Greg remembered who he was talking to. "Is he?"

"In a way, he is. If you are referring to the Great Adversary, who has been mentioned in dozens of sacred writings around the world, yes, that is him. If you are thinking of Lucifer, no, it's not him. Lucifer exists, and he and his Fallen angels are quite capable of great mischief, but in some ways he's the least of our problems."

She took a deep breath before continuing. "You've covered the basics. I'll try to fill in the rest.

"The Church of Revelations worships an entity they call Leviathan, the Ancient Great One. They think it is God, or a god, or at least a force that will reward them with power for their services. They are wrong.

"Leviathan is a being from Beyond. It is not from our reality. You and I have a closer kinship with some silicon-based life form that might live on a planet in Alpha Centauri than Leviathan has with anything that lives in this Universe. The basic building blocks of reality are made of a substance or energy pattern, which occultists call Essence or Ether. Leviathan's universe is made of a different energy, like anti-matter is to matter.

The two don't mix well. When beings like Leviathan manifest on Earth, the world starts to become twisted. Water turns to blood. Children are born with strange deformities. Monsters walk the land.

"You have seen the Marks, yes? The Believers who worship this monster bear them on their hands and foreheads. They are more than symbols. They are the beginning of the Taint, a connection between Leviathan and its worshippers—and through them, between Leviathan and Earth. Eventually, that Taint will transform and destroy those who bear it.

"Leviathan has yet to manifest on Earth. If—or when—it does, reality as we know it will cease to exist. We will become whatever its twisted vision demands. We will lose the most precious gift of all, free will."

"So what is stopping it?" Greg blurted out. "God? The angels?"

"Actually, you are. Humans, that is—and you are mostly human, after all. As long as one living human refuses to accept Leviathan in his heart, there is hope.

Well, that explained some things—like the forced conversion of all the conquered populations. But it sure as hell didn't explain the other thing she had said. "What do you mean, I'm mostly human?"

"Well, you are mostly human, but one of your parents was an angel. You are Nephilim."

"You mean the guy who—? He was an angel?" Greg had heard the tale; his parents had told him the truth when he was fifteen. His mother had been pregnant with him when she had married his father. Dad had known about it, had adopted Greg, and raised him as his own. Ma had never spoken about the other guy, who had abandoned her before she knew she was pregnant. Until now, Greg had never had any interest in learning anything about his natural father.

"Yes, he was an angel of the Heavenly Host," she admitted, "who became enamored of a woman, and committed what their kind consider a great sin. He abandoned her in shame, and probably confessed and was punished. Which brings me to something I had mentioned earlier. Not all angels are the same. There are three major groups of us. The identities of the larger two should be simple to guess."

"Sure. Heaven and Hell," Greg said absently. "The good angels and the bad angels."

"Correct. Although the goodness of the 'good' angels can sometimes be overestimated, as can the evil of the 'bad' ones. The third group is formed of angels who came to Earth long ago, to better understand Humankind. We call ourselves Watchers. We also beget children from among humans, but unlike your father, we do not abandon them. And we look for any missing orphans. Especially now, when we need all the help we can get to fight off Leviathan."

Greg was only half-listening. The facts he had heard were just beginning to sink in.

"So I can fly and glow in the dark when I want to?" he asked. Better to deal with the details, and not think about the rest.

Daele shook her head. "No. Your human nature is stronger in some ways. Which is good. Humans were made in the likeness of the Creator, you know, while we Seraphim will never be more than servants. Some angels hate that fact—Lucifer was one of them, but he has plenty of company, both among the Heavenly Host and the Infernal Legion.

"The Nephilim have a number of special abilities. For one, you are almost impossible to kill. The men who shot you were prepared to cut you to pieces, douse your body with gasoline, and then burn it to ashes. The gunshots were just meant to slow you down while they did all that. By the time I dragged you to the apartment, you had recovered from half a dozen wounds that, on a mortal, would have caused an instant kill."

Greg looked at the bullets on the plate. "Neat," he said tonelessly. "So why were they trying to kill me?"

"The Watchers are not the only ones looking for Nephilim," she explained. "The agents of the Church also operate in America, and whenever they find one of you, they try to eliminate you before you can be discovered. And not just Nephilim, either. There are many other beings out there who threaten Leviathan. The Old Gods of myth also exist, and they have their own semi-divine children living among humans. Also, some humans have magical powers, or the Second Sight. Others are true Saints—linked to the Creator in ways we angels cannot imagine. This is a War that involves everyone, and there is no escaping one's place in the war."

With a sinking sensation, Greg understood. He had been drafted after all. Except he would be fighting a side of the War few knew about.

Chapter One

Introduction

War, disaster and epic struggles are the source of many powerful tales. Conflict and overcoming adversity are basic elements of life, and we sometimes want to see those elements magnified in our tales.

Armageddon is one of those tales, a game where warriors meet to decide the fate of humankind. It is a time of heroic deeds, but also a time of doubt and fear, where every belief and certainty is challenged.

Angels and demons walk the Earth, but their apocalyptic struggle has been somehow pre-empted by another, more fundamental conflict. Ancient foes must bury their grudges and join forces, and even work together with humans—the sinful, apparently weak and powerless humans who are the key to victory. As the world is wracked by war, humans and supernatural beings must fight for their very existence.

Armageddon can be played many different ways. It can be a game of action, with players assuming the roles of soldiers in the trenches of 21st century warfare, mystical conflict, or guerrilla wars against a superior foe. It can be a game of modern myth, with heroic demigods or incarnated angels joining in the struggle. It can be a setting for horror stories, where a seductive, overwhelming evil steadily takes over the world and corrupting the souls of everyone it touches. Players can take on the roles of normal men and women making a stand for the fate of humankind. Alternatively, they can become magicians and heroic mortals, or god-like beings confronting a darker, and greater, power.

Armageddon and *WitchCraft*

Armageddon is a possible future for the world of *WitchCraft*. Here, the Reckoning has finally arrived, in a shape that has surprised most of the Gifted. There are some important differences in tone and content, however.

WitchCraft is like an occult version of film-noire, with hidden conspiracies, veiled threats, and shadowy monsters that walk like men. *Armageddon* is like a metaphysical war movie, with larger-than-life heroes, and an overt, terrible enemy. *WitchCraft* is Anne Rice meets Stephen King meets Umberto Eco. *Armageddon* is Clive Barker meets Tom Clancy meets *Star Wars*.

Chroniclers running a *WitchCraft* campaign can use some of the information or characters of *Armageddon* in their games, but they need not consider this book to be "the" future of *WitchCraft*. Each Chronicler runs her own game, and if the idea of a world war a few years from now is not her vision of the Reckoning, then by all means she should do something else.

Owning a copy of *WitchCraft* is not necessary to play *Armageddon*, and vice versa. Each game is a stand-alone product. Fans of *WitchCraft*, however, will find old friends here—the Covenants of the Gifted in a twenty-first century setting, beset by enemies and trying to make a stand for the sake of the world. Similarly, those who purchase this book may find useful material in the other. Finally, Eden Studios greatly appreciates those who buy both books (and all the supplements).

A Taste of Doomsday

Summary of Chapters

Chapter One: A Taste of Doomsday contains these introductory remarks.

Chapter Two: Setting covers the basics of the *Armageddon* universe. A handy timeline is provided for quick reference.

Chapter Three: Roles details character creation for the players. Strong, interesting characters are the most important part of an interactive storytelling experience. Concepts, Types, Associations, Attributes, Qualities and Drawbacks, Skills, Metaphysics and Possessions are addressed in turn. The sections on Associations are brief and focused on character generation. More in-depth discussions of the individual Associations are contained in **Chapter Six: Associations**. The chapter finishes with a series of ready-to-run Archetypes.

Chapter Four: Rules describes all the game mechanics needed to play *Armageddon*. A choice of dice, cards, or non-random mechanics are presented. From Tests and Tasks to combat, from damage to vehicles—the core of the **Unisystem** is laid bare.

Chapter Five: Tools gives a brief overview of the weapons and equipment common to the world of *Armageddon*.

Chapter Six: Associations discusses the organizations that Cast Members may find themselves part of, allied with, intriguing against, or hunted by. The Alliance, Heavenly Host, Infernal Legion, Lodge of the Undying, Pantheons, and Watchers are detailed.

Chapter Seven: Metaphysics reveals a number of mystical Arts that may be learned or possessed by characters in *Armageddon*. The particulars of Essence, Magic, the Sight, Necromancy, Divine Inspiration, and Spirit Patrons are presented.

Chapter Eight: Inhumans focuses on the capacities, powers, and limitations of a variety on non-human entities, from angels to immortals to Primal beings.

Chapter Nine: Adversary gives the Chronicler the horrible details on the Leviathan's host, including Adepts, parabiologicals, and undead.

Chapter Ten: Chronicler provides some guidance for running Stories set in the world of *Armageddon*.

Appendix contains a glossary and index.

How to Use *Armageddon*

As with most roleplaying game books, *Armageddon* is essentially two books in one. Some parts are intended for the players and others are meant for the Chronicler.

The first five chapters are filled with material for players. From introductory notes to background material to character creation to rules to equipment, Chroniclers should allow their players full access to these chapters.

The sixth and seventh chapters, covering Associations and Metaphysics, may be opened to players, or kept secret as the Chronicler wishes.

The eighth chapter addresses the inhumans, from angels to spirits to Primals to Immortals. Portions of these sections should be revealed to those players taking on the appropriate role, but no one should know all the secrets of these supernatural powers.

The ninth and tenth chapters should be kept from the players, at least initially, so that the Chronicler's Stories remain fresh and exciting.

Conventions

This book uses different graphic features to identify the type of information presented. This text is standard text, and it is used for general explanations.

This text signals fictional pieces. They provide a glimpse into the world of Armageddon *and the struggles that are part and parcel of the setting.*

Certain text is set off in this manner. This is sidebar text and it contains additional, but tangential information, or supplemental charts and tables.

Other text is set apart in this way. It details the game statistics of monsters, Supporting Cast or Adversaries. These write-ups may be used in Stories as the Chronicler sees fit.

Chapter One

Dice Notations

D10, D8, D6 and D4 mean a ten-sided die, an eight-sided die, a six-sided die, and a four-sided die, respectively.

Multipliers are expressed after the dice notation. For example, D10 x 4 means roll a ten-sided die and multiply that total result by four. The formula generates a number between four and forty.

A number in parentheses after, or in the middle of, the notation is the average roll. This number is provided for those that want to avoid dice rolling and just get the result. So the notation D6 x 4(12) means that players who want to skip rolling just use the value 12.

Some notations cannot provide a set value because their result depends on a variable factor. For example, D8(4) x Strength is used because the Strength value to be plugged into that notation will vary depending on who is acting.

Gender

Every roleplaying game struggles with the decision about third person pronouns and possessives. While the male reference (he, him, his) is customarily used for both male and female, there is no question that it is not entirely inclusive. On the other hand, the "he or she" structure is clumsy and unattractive. In an effort to "split the difference," this book uses male designations for even chapters, and female designations for odd chapters.

Measurements

This book primarily uses U.S. measurements (feet, yards, miles, pounds, etc.). Metric system equivalents appear in parentheses. In the interests of ease of use, the conversions are rounded relatively arbitrarily. For example, miles are multiplied by 1.5 to get kilometers (instead of 1.609), meters are equal to yards (instead of 1.094 yards), pounds are halved to get kilograms (instead of multiplied by 0.4536), and so on. If a Chronicler feels that she needs more precision, she should convert the U.S. measurements provided by using more exact formulas.

About the Author

C.J. Carella has wandered through such exotic locales as Peru, Venezuela, Michigan, Florida, and Connecticut. During his travels, he has yet to experience any genuine supernatural events, mythological creatures, or unspeakable horrors—or, if he did, he ain't sharing them with anybody.

In his decade and change career, C.J. has written some twenty RPG books for such companies as Steve Jackson Games, Palladium Books, Myrmidon Press, and now Eden Studios, as well as numerous articles for The Familiar, Pyramid, Roleplayer, and White Wolf. *Armageddon* was originally written for Myrmidon Press, and has been revised and reissued by Eden Studios.

When not writing, C.J. spends his free time on computer games, novels, and comic books—research material, he says. He currently lives in New Haven, Connecticut, with a feline familiar.

Roleplaying

This book contains a roleplaying game, its setting, and its rules. So what is a roleplaying game?

Simply put, it is a combination of board game, strategy game, and improvisational theater. It is a more mature version of the games of "let's pretend" that we all played as children. The rules are meant to avoid the old disputes about exactly what happened ("I shot you! You're dead!" "Am not!"). To enforce the rules and provide a coherent setting, one of the participants assumes the role of Chronicler (known as Game Master, Referee, or Zombie Master in other contexts). The rest of the players assume the role of one character (or Cast Member) each. The player controls the actions of their characters, limited only by the rules, the character's abilities, and the player's imagination.

Roleplaying games have been around for more than two decades. They run the gamut from mindless combat scenarios to nearly ruleless, story-driven acting exercises. The Unisystem, the game rules of *Armageddon*, concentrates on the following elements. We consider these to be the main characteristics of a good roleplaying game.

Acting: Participants in a roleplaying game are acting out the part of a Cast Member, a fictional character (or, in the case of the Chronicler, several characters). The character may be as similar or different from the player as desired. Some players prefer to take on the roles of heroic versions of themselves, while others want to "be in the shoes" of completely different people. Many elements of improvisational theater can be found in roleplaying. The player has to come up with her character's "lines" off the cuff.

Storytelling: During a game, the Chronicler and the players create a story, shaped by the actions of the Cast Members and the conflicts and situations provided by the Chronicler. A Story is experienced at the same time it is written. Because there are a number of authors of this tale, however, no one creator knows exactly how it will all end. Each Cast Member's actions impact on the result, as do the conflicts and drama injected into the story by the Chronicler.

Uncertainty: The uncertainty of not knowing the end of the story is enhanced in many games by the use of dice, cards, or other randomizing elements. This gives roleplaying an aspect similar to sporting events and to games of chance: what will the outcome be? This provides an excitement similar to the feeling that many experience when watching a football game or a boxing match. The skills of the participants play a big role in what the results will be, but the final outcome remains uncertain until it is over. Some gamers prefer to reduce randomness; they let the needs of the story dictate the outcome. The **Unisystem** is designed to please both those who like the chance element, and those who wish to minimize or eliminate it outright.

Imagination and Creativity: Instead of passive forms of entertainment, like watching television or reading a book, roleplaying exercises the players' imagination and creativity. Each shares the responsibility of producing a good and entertaining experience. Each brings humor, drama, and suspense to the game. In roleplaying, the goal is not to win, but simply to have fun and help others have fun.

In sum, by playing a roleplaying game, the Chronicler and the Cast Members weave a Story together. The character's adventures, triumphs, and tragedies are part of a larger tapestry. In effect, the gaming group is writing, acting and witnessing a novel or play, experiencing a double thrill that combines in each the role of creator and spectator.

The *Armageddon RPG*

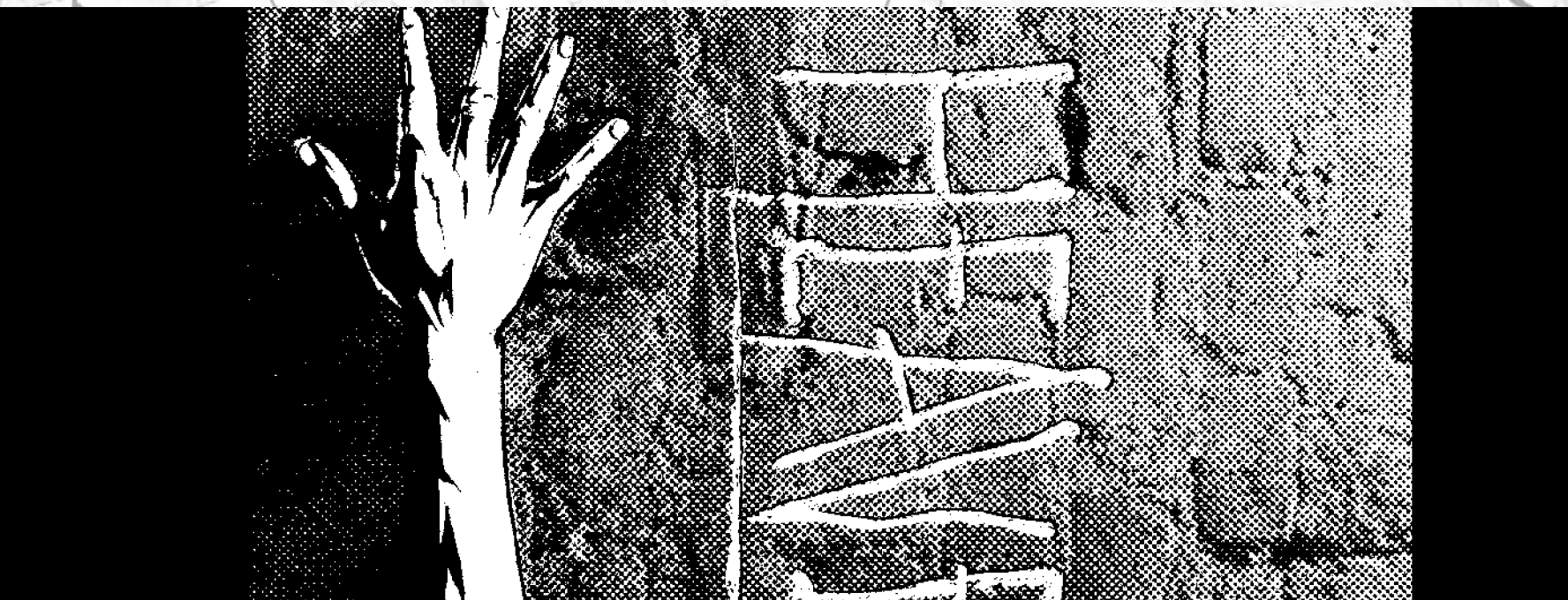
All roleplaying games have at their hearts a "What If . . . ?" question. In *Armageddon*, the question is:

What if you lived in a near future where an apocalyptic conflict is being fought to determine the future of humankind? What would you do if you were a being of myth and legend, with powers far beyond those of mere mortals? What would happen if your mere existence was considered a threat by even more powerful forces involved in the war?

By taking the role of characters trapped in the midst of that conflict, be they normal humans or immortal beings of power, players have a chance to find out.

Armageddon combines elements of war (a global conflict affecting every continent), horror (the adversary is a supernatural, inhuman force) and myth (angels and the gods of legend walk the Earth once again). The remainder of this book explains how to create characters and stories in the world of *Armageddon*.

CHAPTER TWO: SETTING



Chapter Two

The North Atlantic was damn cold this time of year, and the harsh waves had nearly smashed them against the rocky beach. Only Helena's efforts allowed them to reach the shore safely.

Henry's team, two men and a woman, took off their wetsuits quickly, sneaking glances in every direction. All their training notwithstanding, they were in enemy territory and it was not a pleasant experience. Only Henry had been in real combat, and back then he had commanded a Challenger 2 tank. Riding a sixty-ton iron horse and trading shots at two thousand yards was a far cry from crawling on a muddy beach late at night, armed only with small arms, and, of course, the glorified "flashlight" he was carrying on his back. It would not do to forget that, considering it was more important to the mission than any of their lives.

After burying their equipment, they set off, single file. Normally, an operation such as this required at least a dozen men to have any chance of success. Not even the chaps at SAS had the special qualities of the trio climbing the steep hill, however.

Henry had thought he was a normal, if rather talented tank driver, until one of the Church's damnable Holy Fist panzers had put a sabot round right through the front armor of his Challenger. He had emerged from the conflagration a burned husk, barely alive. A few days later, he had walked out of the hospital, as good as new. Henry had been removed from his beloved tank service, and put among the James Bond impersonators. It hardly seemed fair, but he had accepted the king's shilling, and it was not for the likes of him to wonder why.

The commandos reached the target area, a small hillock overlooking the naval installation. Seamus, the quiet Irishman in the team, set up the device Henry had been carrying on his back. The laser beam was an aiming device designed to guide a volley of cruise missiles. The target was a facility for the construction of submarines and missile boats for the Churchmen. Henry felt some pity for the hapless Frenchmen who worked there, most of whom were no more Believers than Henry was a Muslim, but war is a rough business.

"All ready," Seamus said. He sent the signal.

"Men are coming," Helena whispered.

"Bloody Hell," Henry whispered harshly. "I'll deal with them." He looked down. A platoon of Churchmen approached. The moon was not out, but even in the weak starlight he could make out the uniforms. Soul Police, little more than armed thugs, but still over twenty of them, spread out in five-man squads. They would reach Seamus' position before the cruise missiles reached the target.

Henry would deal with them. It had been a bit of a shock, really, when the Special Directorate man had explained things to him. It appeared that his Mum had had carnal knowledge with someone other than his father, and that he was the result of that unhallowed union. Stranger still, whoever that chap was (his mother, dead all of three years ago, could not be asked), he had not been a normal bloke. His genes had made Henry into somebody able to survive a tank explosion, to master all the weapons the Special Directorate men had seen fit to train him in, and to feel confident climbing down a hill to confront twenty armed men.

The boffins in Research called it by some fancy name—"Psychic Manifestation of Jungian Archetypes" or something like that. Whatever it was, when he called upon it, he changed.

When he changed the world became a place of sharp colors and shapes. Henry could see every man in the squad, note their weapons, the way they carried them. In a second, he knew who was a veteran, who was a swaggering bully, who was a scared child.

His assault carbine spat death downrange, a long burst that killed everyone in the closest squad. Return fire from the others struck him, but he barely felt the impacts. A round hit his carbine, ruining it.

Henry charged the second squad bare-handed. Two more bullets hit him in the chest with little effect. His outstretched hand reached the face of the closest man in the squad. The Churchman's scream of pain dissolved into a dying squeal. A kick crushed the skull of another.

More shots hit him. The third squad opened up, ignoring their companions in the way. Henry fell to one knee, grabbed the assault rifle of one of the dead men, then rose and fired.

Then it all became quiet.

And as the missiles began falling, and explosions shook the inlet, Henry raised his hands toward the sky and laughed in delight.

His was the domain of War.

Setting

Introduction

Armageddon is set in the near future, a time of war and uncertainty, a world where magic and the supernatural have become a factor in the lives of every living person. Beings of tremendous power walk the Earth once again—the Old Gods of mythology exist side-by-side with angels, demons, and even stranger creatures. These beings have returned to the world to fight an enemy that threatens even their existence—as well as our entire universe. An evil from beyond reality has risen in the East, and has already seized over half of the planet. Led by their Apostle, the Believers of Leviathan want nothing less than the total submission of humankind. If they triumph, reality as we know it will cease to exist, transformed into a reflection of the twisted mind of Leviathan, the Outsider who was cast out by the Creator at the beginning of time.

The war wages on every plane of reality. The forces of the free world, led by the United Nations, oppose the war machine of the Army of Revelations (AoR). The most advanced weapon systems of the 21st century, backed by bravery and fanaticism, clash on battlefields in Asia, Africa, and the Americas. Most of Europe has already fallen, but a newly formed underground continues to resist the Apostle and his minions.

In the Otherworlds, the war rages, as well. The Death Realms, the Fey Kingdoms, and the Abodes of the Gods are not exempt from invasion by the Leviathan's followers. Traitors, both human and supernatural, lend their resources to the monstrous armies of the Apostle, tilting the balance in his favor.

The prize of this conflict is not land and wealth, but human souls. In the fallen territories, the Soul Police oversee the forced conversion of conquered peoples. Only when a sufficient number of living humans worship Leviathan can this being manifest itself in our reality, and bring an end to all time. If Leviathan succeeds, the known world ceases to exist, replaced by its own warped creations. And, slowly but surely, the number of converts grow. The call of Leviathan is seductive, offering power and the fulfillment of one's darkest desires. Prayers to Leviathan are always answered, and many wishes are granted—at a price. The taint of Leviathan eventually destroys the believers' sanity, body, and soul, until they are no longer human.

In this setting, players can assume the role of a myriad of different characters. They can be powerful celestials come to Earth to battle the ultimate enemy, or heroic humans defending their homeland from invasion. They can be ancient beings or powerful sorcerers, or seemingly normal men and women whose latent powers have been awakened by traumatic events. Their goals may be lofty or selfish; they may wish to redeem humankind, to settle old scores, or simply to be left alone.

The Known

To the average person, the world of *Armageddon* is a place of fear and uncertainty. The world is at war. A fanatic cult known as the Church of Revelations (CoR) has inexplicably risen in several nations of the world, overturning governments and amassing huge armies that in turn invaded other countries. A madman who calls himself the Apostle (but who is referred to as the Dark Apostle by the free world's media) has appointed himself the leader of this movement, and is now the most powerful man in the world. In Europe, parts of Asia, the Middle East, and South America, the CoR reigns supreme. War rages just south of the U.S. border, as United Nations' forces, led by America, tries to stop the AoR.

The enemy has access to cutting-edge technologies; their aircraft and tanks are as good as—some fear better than—our own. This was drastically demonstrated when mysterious advanced bombers flew from halfway around the world and struck at targets deep within the American heartland. Worse, the Dark Apostle and his acolytes command enormous supernatural powers. It is said that the Apostle has brought down reconnaissance satellites with the force of his will, commanded monsters to appear and fight for him, and raised the dead. Some prominent Believers (as the members of the Church call themselves) have begun to change, to become inhuman things. Many dismiss these rumors as mere superstition.

Still, the facts are horrible enough. When the AoR took Rome and seized the Vatican, the Dark Apostle executed Pope John XXIV on live television. Disdaining the use of supernatural powers for this task, the Apostle fired a mundane, but horribly effective revolver. Meant to graphically display the hopelessness of the human situation, the vision of the Leviathan's

top man calmly firing a gun into the head of the spiritual leader of millions became a world-wide symbol of the enemy's evil.

Nuclear war should have been inevitable, but the atomic holocaust never happened. The free world tried to use tactical nuclear weapons against the relentless enemy. Every device mysteriously malfunctioned. The fissionable materials inside never detonated, and the missiles produced only conventional explosions, killing hundreds but not creating widespread death and destruction all had been fearing for over half a century. Nobody has come up with an explanation for this. Perhaps it is the Creator's will. Maybe it is just magic.

Along with the war, the world is beset by supernatural events. Stories that once belonged to the wildest supermarket tabloids are now seriously reported on in the *New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*. Sorcerers have demonstrated their powers in front of millions of witnesses, and in some places practice their powers openly. Ghosts haunt bombed-out buildings, their wailing clearly heard during the wee hours of the night. Vampire-like creatures have been captured and studied by the government. And angels have come down to Earth in great numbers. As the holy city of Rome fell, a host of angelic beings appeared to make a futile last stand. Millions watched in utter disbelief, as winged beings of light flew through the skies and battled jet fighters over the streets of Rome—and were overwhelmed by superior numbers and advanced technology.

To many people, the situation is clear. The End Times are at hand—the Apocalypse, Ragnarok, the final battle between Good and Evil. The Dark Apostle is identified with the Antichrist, the False Prophet, and the Beast of the Book of Revelations. The fact that his followers sport a mark on their hands or foreheads has been recognized as the biblical "Mark of the Beast." Religious fervor has become a source of strength, but has brought about internal strife and discord as well. To some people and groups, the free world is too sinful and tolerant to triumph against the CoR. These zealots would like to create their own theocracy to resist the Adversary, and will go to any lengths to do so.

Still, people carry on. Despite the shortages and fear, the deaths and terror, many try to lead normal lives. Some even attempt to ignore what is going on, refusing to believe in the supernatural, or to face the religious implications of recent events unless affected directly. Even during the end of all time, people try to forget the news by watching inane sitcoms or surfing the Web—at least when they are available.

The Hidden

Although supernatural creatures and events have recently become a part of everyone's lives, they have always existed. Since ancient times, humans have learned to harness tremendous spiritual powers through force of will and tradition. Magic, the Second Sight, and similar powers are real, but often misunderstood and feared. Immortal beings have walked among us, sometimes worshipped openly, often hidden from the world. Some of these entities had human attributes but superhuman power; others were utterly alien creatures with unfathomable purposes. These beings battled each other, plotted to gain more power or avenge past wrongs, and recruited humans to assist them in their struggles.

In the past, many moments of crisis have arisen. They are known among some occult circles as Reckonings. A Reckoning is a period of chaos both mundane and supernatural, a testing time affecting most of the world in almost every sphere: political, social and spiritual. They are times of war and upheaval, often marked by plagues and natural disasters. Most occultists claim that a Reckoning was responsible for the extinction of dinosaurs on this planet, and, more recently, the obliteration of the mythical Atlantean civilization in what is thought of as pre-historic times. Although not universally accepted, many occultists have identified periods of Reckoning during the fall of the Roman Empire, the Black Plagues, and the Thirty Years War. Others see these eras as mere "ripples" of a far greater Reckoning still to come.

Some claim the most recent Reckoning took place in the 20th Century. Its overt, mundane manifestations included two World Wars, the Russian Revolution, and the Influenza Plague. During that same period, supernatural battles of cosmic significance were fought by courageous humans to stop dark forces from gaining footholds in our world. In all, over a hundred

million people died in a thirty-five year period. Despite this horror, there remained a determined group of occultists who claimed that the "real" Reckoning had not yet arrived.

In the aftermath of the most recent time of troubles, it appeared that the world would finally know peace. The Cold War and the threat of total destruction kept global conflict at bay. Within a generation, signs of future troubles became apparent, however. Towards the end of the century—and the millennium—occultists could sense a new time was at hand. More people than ever before were being born with the Gift—the ability to work Magic, or the Second Sight. Supernatural predators, who for centuries remained few in number, appeared at an amazing rate, to the point where even the normally unaware mundanes began to realize something was terribly wrong. The signs were clear for those who could see them. A Reckoning was coming that few could dispute . . . and fewer still would survive.

Cosmology

In the world of *Armageddon*, the beliefs of every religion are disjointed pieces of a greater truth. Monotheism is right: there is one Creator, a being of immense power who shaped our reality. But Polytheism is also correct: a myriad of entities with god-like power exist, and for millennia demanded the worship of humans. Every myth and legend is an echo of ancestral memories and outlandish experiences that affected our ancestors. The Fey races dwelt in the primeval forests of the world until pushed away by encroaching humans. The ancient pantheons were made up of powerful but fickle creatures who often slew humans for sport. The Seraphim carried out the Creator's Will (or so they claimed), but some among their number rebelled and were expelled from the Heavens by the Creator, becoming the demons of Biblical lore. Sorcerers, saints, and prophets tapped the same primeval powers and reached the next step in human development. And beings from beyond our reality occasionally crossed over, leaving death and madness in their wake.

Disclaimer, Again

At the risk of repetition, please note that the cosmology of *Armageddon* is wholly fictional, containing ideas from a number of myths and metaphysical theories ranging from Norse sagas to Theosophism. It is not meant to debunk or deny any religion or real world belief. We are not trying to prove or disprove anything.

The Sephiroth

In the world of *Armageddon*, the physical realm of Earth is but one of many worlds. Mythical and legendary realms, thought to be mere fantasies or allegories, are real in this setting. Heaven and Hell, the Courts of Faerie, and the Abodes of the Gods compose the Otherworlds, different planes of existence with their own inhabitants, lands, and physical laws. The Otherworlds are known by occultists as Sephiroths, the Spheres of Reality.

The Quabbalists and the Norse described the Universe as a tree, with each world or sphere on a different branch of the tree. Earth (Malkuth or Midgard) at the bottom, and Heaven or Kether at the top. Each Sephiroth is in turn divided into several Realms, somewhat like different nations on the same continent, or different provinces or states in the same country. Like nations or provinces, each Realm has boundaries, laws and "government" (or lack thereof). In the Sephiroth of Geburah, for example, several Death Realms exist, from the Kingdom of Hades, ruled by the Graeco-Roman god of the Dead, to the Pit of Abaddon, Lucifer's Hellish domain and prison. Netzach, the Abode of the Gods, is divided into dozens of Realms, each controlled by a different pantheon. Even Binah has realms beyond the Elyssian Fields; it is said the Elemental Realms can be found in this dimension.

Some occultists (many of whom are also theoretical physicists on the side) have proposed the idea of the "Multiverse" or "Omniverse." They theorize an infinity or near infinity of worlds, all with their own "Tree of Life," all connected to a central point, which is the Sephiroth of Kether. Think of it as a million

million rods, all touching on one point, spreading out like spikes from a central ball, or like spokes on a wheel. Each universe has its own existence and its own set of ten Sephiroths, each with slightly different laws or circumstances. Some could be parallel Earths, while others could be utterly bizarre realities. It is possible that Leviathan and the other Mad Gods come from some of the most alien universes, or they might come from an opposite reality, an Anti-Kether located in an utterly different level of being.

According to Quabbalism, there are ten Sephiroth (eleven if one counts the Abyss, the space between spaces). Five of the most important Sephiroths are briefly described below. Future *Armageddon* and *Witchcraft* sourcebooks will provide more information about these and other Sephiroth. They will also provide plenty of ideas for venturing into the Otherworlds.

Binah: This is a realm of energy and raw Essence. Identified as the Realm of Understanding, several primal forms exist in this realm, including the Elemental Spirits. Chief among the Realms of Binah are the Elyssian Fields, ruled by the Seraphim. The swirling energies pervading this realm, both physical and psychic, make it difficult for mortals, even the Gifted, to survive there for long. Most Realms in Binah are places of extremes, of blinding light or eternal flames, of cold endless oceans or mad whirlwinds. A place of understanding it may be, but if so, it is an understanding that still eludes most humans.

Geburah: The Realms of the Dead can be found in this sphere, the Sephiroth of Severity. The Gods of Death hold courts here, connected to Netzach via a system of Gateways. Tormented souls, ghosts, and Phantasms often venture into the Twilight World, a shadowy reflection of Earth where One City, One Forest, and One Desert await the errant dead. Lucifer rules over Abaddon, where he punishes the souls of evil humans, either cleansing them of their sins or twisting them into increasingly more monstrous creatures. Above it all stands Death, the First and Last, an entity of unimaginable power feared by all beings, human and "immortal." Death's agents, the Grim Reapers, act as enforcers and border patrolmen, pursuing those who refuse to die or who invade the Death Realms. Geburah is for the most part a place of gray shadows, marked by a pall of fear and despair.

Kether: The most mysterious of the Sephiroth, Kether is a realm of wild creative energies. Here the Creator is said to dwell, although the Seraphim spent centuries and countless lives looking to no avail. The souls of humans who are ready to Move On are said to ascend to Kether, never to be seen again.

Netzach: The Abode of the Gods is a world of epic proportions, where elements of the "real world" are taken and expanded. Mountain peaks soar higher than Everest. Monstrous trees, gigantic animals, and fabulous creatures populate the forests. Every natural feature, from a tiny stream to a great desert, vibrate with the power of myth. Many of the legendary pantheons can be found here. Mount Olympus and Asgard exist in this Sephiroth, as well as legendary Aztlan and Celestial Court of Jade. Fiercely insular, the gods tolerate little commerce or interaction with other Realms, except through limited visits and the occasional contest or war. Mortal visitors find themselves in a dangerous world where wolves grow to the size of horses and the least of the natives possesses the strength of three men.

Yesod: The Sphere of the Moon is home to the Sylvan and Fey races, creatures descended from the Naturas born during creation. The Norse called it Alfheim, the land of the Elves. Once, Fey races such as the Sidhe, the Satyrs, and the Dryads lived on Earth, but humans and the Old Gods, and later humans and the Seraphim, eventually pushed them out of their old homesteads. Many Elder Races, long extinct on Earth, survive in some Realm in Yesod. Here, forests and jungles are not as titanic as those in Netzach, but are far more alive. Most trees can speak to passersby, or lead them to their doom. Animals are intelligent and human-like, equally capable of good and evil deeds. The Fey races themselves are a mischievous and whimsical lot, and many remember the crimes of humans with well-aged hatred. The two major Realms of Yesod are the Seleighe and Unseleighe Courts; both have their own ideas on how to deal with humans and their destruction of Nature. The coming of the war has made the Sidhe venture back to Earth in great numbers.

Human and Inhuman

A myriad of creatures, both mundane and supernatural, populate the worlds of *Armageddon*. Although humans appear to have the most potential of the currently known species, the others cannot be discounted. At this point, most inhumans wield far greater powers than those known or possessed by humans.

Humankind

Humans were fashioned in the Creator's image. Within each and every person, from the wealthiest and most powerful to the most wretched and helpless, lies the Divine Spark. The human race is the result of billions of years of evolution and false starts, and it still has a long way to go. Humans are not the only species on this path, nor are they the first or the last. Many a world now lies dead in the Universe, the result of mistakes that were not corrected in time. Occultists believe the mythical civilizations of Atlantis, Mu, and Ultima Thule rose and fell millennia before recorded history, and were cosmic "stumbles" on the road to development.

Through a cycle of death and rebirth, and by moving to higher planes of existence, humans eventually achieved unity with the Deity (what this means is as incomprehensible to us as airplanes are to ants). The so-called Celestials or Higher Beings, like angels and pagan gods, do not have this potential for evolution. In time, humans could match and even surpass them. Some humans, through the use of magical formulas, inborn psychic abilities, or the strength of their Faith, already have the power to bind or even destroy these Higher Beings. In theory, all human beings have the potential to develop these powers. One day, occultists believe, humans will develop into beings able to manipulate reality with the ease of a child molding clay—and, soon thereafter, with the finesse of a sculptor bringing shapes out of stone. When Science and Magic and Faith all become one, the least human will be more powerful than greatest archangel.

Of course, humankind is as far from this goal as a six-month old Albert Einstein was from developing the Theory of Relativity. But the process is just as straightforward and (it is hoped) just as inevitable. The most telling question is one of time. No one knows how long it will take. Humankind in the 21st century has

learned much about the physical realm, but had, until recently, disregarded the spiritual realm. One of the secret truths is that both pure materialism and utter spiritualism are incomplete, and by themselves are dead ends. The hard-nosed scientist who cannot believe in the existence of the soul is as blindly wrong as the mystic who rejects the physical world as evil or inferior. Both can perform tremendous feats, but are ultimately doomed to failure. In the developed and developing world, science and materialism seemed to be the only answers. Now, confronted with an enemy willing to use both technological and spiritual weapons, the world must change its outlook, or face defeat and destruction.

Men and women whose souls have advanced beyond the norm are known as the Gifted. The Gifted have learned, inherited, or accidentally acquired the ability to manipulate Essence, the living energy of Creation and the Soul. The Gifted can use their powers for good or ill; in their choices lie the salvation of damnation of the human race.

The Higher Beings know the potential and possible fate of humankind, and their reactions are varied, if somewhat predictable. Some cherish the human race, seeing in them the face of their Creator. Others, like bullies lashing out against those who are smarter than them, wish to make humankind stumble or even fall. Yet others, like domineering parents, want to rigidly control human development, lest they abuse their potential; the Heavenly Host has been guilty of this. There are opportunists who simply exploit us, while a few wish to destroy us before we become more powerful than they.

Humankind represents the ultimate prize of the Great War. This is not to say that humans are mere sheep to be protected or slaughtered at the whim of beings of power. Humans are central of the story and the conflict. Having been made in the Creator's image, they have the potential to become the most powerful force in reality. It is no accident that angels and demons, mythological gods and nature spirits, all have eventually become human-like in both shape and behavior—imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, after all.

Gods and Angels

The gods of mythology, and the angels and demons of religious belief, had a common origin, an origin dating back to the times of Creation. Gods and angels are the descendants of Sephyr, the Tools of the Creator, elemental beings who helped shaped our reality. The Sephyr evolved into two distinct orders of beings, the Seraphim and the Titans. The Seraphim were beings of spirit, the emissaries and servants of the Creator. The Titans were embodiments of different aspects of reality, such as War, the Elements, and Justice. They were the first to lose touch with the Creator and to come to Earth and set themselves up as deities.

The Seraphim unleashed the Flood on humankind when one of their kingdoms trafficked with the entity known as Leviathan. At some point before this event, they lost their connection with the Creator. For some two hundred centuries or more, the Seraphim have operated without direct orders. They also warred among themselves; the losers of this internal conflict were banished to the Realms of Death, where they formed the Infernal Legion. The winners, the Heavenly Host, tried vainly to communicate with the Creator, and after a long Diaspora returned to Earth to do what they thought was right.

Armageddon Timeline

1980—Birth of the Magic Generation. A disproportionate number of people are born in the following years with magical or psychic abilities. On December 25, a newborn is found abandoned outside a church in Munich, Germany. The baby is adopted by two married doctors and baptized Johann Goering.

1985—A bizarre murder-suicide ends the lives of Johann Goering's parents.

1990-2000—Strange occurrences, always a staple of yellow journalism, are increasingly reported in more main stream media. Bizarre murders, unusual cults, and the like increase in frequency and intensity.

1998—Johann Goering joins the Armed Forces.

2000—The New Millennium arrives. Psychics and occultists begin seeing dark omens and signs of an upcoming conflict. The Church of Revelations (CoR) starts to secretly convert

The rise of monotheism was not mere happenstance. Even as human missionaries gained converts throughout Europe, the Heavenly Hosts besieged and overwhelmed the pagan pantheons. The Seraphim forced the Titans to stay out of the affairs of the mundane, and most of them became the Old Gods, remembered only in folk tales and ancient myths. Centuries later, some Titans returned to the world, but in utter secrecy, afraid of attracting the wrath of the Seraphim.

Immortals

Not all the ageless beings living unnoticed among humankind descend from powerful supernatural entities. A subspecies of humans, said to be descended from the fabulous civilization known as Atlantis, has existed for millennia. Their numbers have always been small, although they have grown steadily in the past century. Hard to kill, these True Immortals stop aging upon reaching the prime of life.

What they do with this gift varies widely. Some tried to usurp the gods, and were eventually hunted down by Titans or Seraphim. Most operate in utter secrecy, after experiencing the hatred and fear of mundanes. A few participated in the ancient conspiracies influencing the affairs of humankind, pulling the strings of politicians and world leaders, and fighting other bands of plotters with the same intentions, but different agendas.

Enemies of angels and demons, mistrustful (and sometimes contemptuous) towards "mere mortals," and often embroiled in ancient vendettas, the Immortals are the wild cards of *Armageddon*. Some of their organizations have the potential to be of immense help in the struggle against the forces of darkness; others have been lured into serving the Adversary.

The Mad Gods

The Sephyr are not the only Greater Beings in existence. The most alien and dangerous of the Others are beings known as the Outsiders or the Mad Gods. Not native to our universe, they come from bizarre, twisted levels of reality as incomprehensible to angels as they are to humans. Their mere presence warps reality, much like a black hole warps light. They are cancerous tumors in the cosmic body, and only the most insane and corrupted creatures in our reality tolerate or welcome their presence.

The nature of the Mad Gods is legion, as alien to each other as they are to us, and they often war amongst themselves. They attract into their service society's rejects and misfits, those who have grown to hate their existence, and who wish to remake the world in their own warped image. Even the most hateful demon hesitates before dealing with beings such as this. Among their own kind, the Greater Beings forbid trafficking with these powers, the one rule enforced to the letter by all: pagan pantheons, elemental dragons, and angelic hosts.

Many Mad Gods beset our world. There is Nath-Shagraa, the Blood God, once worshipped by dark Aztec cults. Or the Kraken, a being from an aquatic reality whose manifestations gave rise to many legends of sea monsters prowling the deep waters. First and foremost among them, however, is the being known as Leviathan, the First Invader. According to sacred writings, the Creator cast it out of our reality, the corrupt civilization of Ultima Thule worshipped it, the horrors crafted by Nazi Germany stirred into hateful wakefulness, and now it is the force behind the nightmares that are the CoR and the Dark Apostle.

members. Primary targets are the wealthy, up-and-coming political figures, and members of the police and military. Members call themselves the Believers or True Believers.

2000-2005—The year 2000 comes and goes without any major incident (hysteria about Y2K, Millennial Fever, and terrorist threats notwithstanding).

The New Age follows. Reports of unexplained phenomena reach unprecedented heights. Psychic powers and magic demonstrations occur on live television programs, defying attempts at explanation through conventional science. A mass murderer is revealed to be a vampiric blood-drinking creature; similar beings are discovered soon after. As the scientific community struggles to explain these events, many people come to accept the supernatural as real. Religious extremists start persecuting purported "sorcerers" and supernatural creatures.

Chapter Two

Taint

Armageddon tells the story of the corruption of all that is. A taint held in check by the structure and powers of the many worlds has been loosed. For ages, the taint hovered at the periphery of the cosmos, knowledge of it barred lest it get too strong. At various times, it approached the known world, but never has it come so close to crossing over. During these End Times, the taint is manifest in the CoR and the Leviathan.

The Church of Revelations

The main antagonist in *Armageddon* is the Church of Revelations (CoR). This organization combines the fanaticism of the most extreme cults with the ruthless efficiency of the Nazis. It holds enormous supernatural power, wields the most advanced technologies, and spreads a seductive, corrupting doctrine garnering it millions of followers.

The CoR worships Leviathan, whom it calls the True God, unjustly banished and now returned to reclaim His Kingdom. The trappings of the Church ape Christian, Islamic, and Buddhist models, but its doctrine is one of rigid intolerance and corrupt seduction. Through service in the Church, one's fondest, darkest wishes become true. The Church encourages the fulfillment of one's desires, with no care for the feelings or rights of others—provided one's service to the Church does not waver, and the strict hierarchy is not violated or disrespected. Unquestioning loyalty is demanded, and almost always granted by the followers.

The goal of the CoR is to spread the cult of Leviathan until every living man, woman, and child willingly converts. All those who refuse to submit are killed. With this process complete, Leviathan will once again manifest in this world, remaking it in its image. From Earth, it will reach toward the rest of the Universe, devouring and absorbing all Reality. With humankind as its willing slave, it might well succeed.

Believers

Becoming a Believer (as the followers of the Church call themselves) goes beyond the normal conversion process common to most religions. The Believer undergoes a warped mystical experience. A cold voice whispers into his mind, offering power, wealth, prestige—whatever he lusts for. This seductive voice always holds a disquieting, dark overtone, however. The would-be convert knows, deep in his heart, that to accept the gift would be wrong in a fundamental, unequivocal way. The rich, sweet taste of the fruit is never quite enough to mask it's darkly rotten core. Unfortunately, that is not always (not even quite often) enough to deter them from accepting Leviathan's gifts. Those who convert find their desires soon fulfilled, invariably through tragic twists of "fate"—the man wishing for a promotion gets it when his superior dies in a car crash; the college student lusting after a girl gets his chance when she accidentally ingests a dose of a powerful aphrodisiac that warps her judgment.

Once the person accepts the first gift, the corruption process begins. He soon acquires the Mark of Leviathan: a circle with two spikes, oddly similar to the international symbol for hurricanes, appears on the convert's hand or forehead. Among those with the potential for Gifted powers, this Mark helps awaken their latent abilities, and channel them into the service of Leviathan. Even the mundane gain a greater sense of the supernatural than before.

The CoR grows to over 200,000 members, most dedicated Believers. Secret factories in former East Germany, and the other core nations (Argentina, Turkey and Vietnam) begin producing advanced weapons and vehicles, while pilots and soldiers are trained in underground camps. All members are fanatically loyal. In what some call see a evidence of dark power, no informants or infiltrators manage to penetrate the organization's veil of secrecy during this time.

2003—A mob torches the corporate headquarters of the Psychic Pals Network, killing six people.

2004-2006—The Matthews Riots occur. Videotapes uncovering a racist network of "death squads" composed of off-duty police and military officers, coupled with increased welfare cuts, trigger massive race riots in a dozen U.S. cities, from Los Angeles and Chicago to New York City.

Once a Believer, it is very difficult to turn away from the Leviathan's service. Contact with the Mad God, disturbing and distasteful as it is, soon becomes an acquired taste, and then a habit. Although the first taste of a cigarette is unpleasant, those who continue to smoke eventually come to need it with desperate intensity. So to do the Believers become addicted to the Leviathan's touch. This addiction makes them capable of fanatic courage and utter ruthlessness. A Believer does not hesitate to sacrifice his life—or anybody else's—in service to the Church.

From Millennium to War

The new millennium began a New Age, as many claimed it would. Unfortunately, it was not the utopian spiritual awakening expected. Instead, it was a time of shocking discoveries, unchecked fear, and rampant prejudice, a time in which humankind revealed some of its potential and its terrible shortcomings. Even before the Reckoning took place, it became clear the new era would be fraught with upheaval.

In the world of *Armageddon*, the burgeoning good economic times of the 1990s came to an end during the "double-oughts." A financial crisis struck the world, first in Europe, then Asia, and finally the U.S. Economists were puzzled—it looked as if massive amounts of money were simply vanishing into thin air, instead of being invested into goods and businesses. In truth, the CoR, through corrupted money managers, was appropriating the money and using it to fund its covert armament program. To this date, nobody has figured out exactly how they managed such a feat, the largest robbery the world has ever known.

The Magic Generation

The Wise Crafts, the arts of magic and second sight, had long been considered ill-conceived fantasies, dismissed by Science and unsuited for the age of reason. Despite the vocal minority claiming otherwise, people, other than consulting the occasional horoscope, had little interest or belief in the supernatural. Even religion, in many cultures the only link between humans and the spirit world, had long fallen out of fashion among many sectors of society, or become a series of empty rituals with no true meaning.

Towards the end of the century, a series of events shook that indifference. The number of unexplained happenings increased steadily. A young girl burned a house in Kentucky, and the authorities were at a loss to explain how she did it. In Seattle, police and the FBI cornered a serial killer who managed to walk through a hail of bullets and escape, killing three law-enforcement agents in the process. In Washington, a psychic publicly predicted the murder of a prominent Senator, six months before the event. In New Orleans, a bizarre cult left over a dozen corpses behind, all drained of blood. And so on.

At first, the events were glossed over, passed off as freak events, or became conversation topics for a week and were forgotten the next. Soon, they became too numerous to be easily dismissed, however. A deranged college student summoned a creature of fire that burned down a dormitory and killed six people. A witness recorded the event on his camcorder, and the footage was broadcast around the world. A year later, a man claiming to be a true sorcerer created a tornado in a television studio; this event was broadcast live. A series of grisly New Orleans murders were solved, and several cult members arrested. As the perpetrators were being moved out of a holding facility the next morning, they burst into flames when exposed to sunlight.

Hundreds are killed before National Guard units cordon off the worst areas and literally wall off the people inside. Cities pass a series of Safety Ordinances, restricting travel to and from these "Safety Zones," effectively imprisoning several million people in the worst slums in America, leaving them bereft of any law enforcement and other public services.

2005—Johann Goering leaves military service and disappears, a wanted deserter.

2006—The CoR makes its first public appearances in Germany, Argentina, Turkey, and Vietnam. The first recorded appearance of people with the Mark of Leviathan occurs. The Cult gains wide popularity among young people, the poor, and discontented. Rumors that prayers to Leviathan are answered with tangible results spread like wildfire. Many people who pray to Leviathan for a lark find themselves seduced by its power, as they gain quick fortune or fame through unusual coincidences.

Chapter Two

By 2001, some headlines in the *New York Times* seemed more appropriate for the *National Enquirer*. In 2003, a Gallup Poll cited that 36% of all respondents listed "the supernatural" as one of their greatest fears and concerns. The same year, a furious mob burned down the corporate headquarters of the Psychic Pals Network, killing six people, all of them clerical workers or (non-psychic) telephone operators. The genie, so to speak, was out of the bottle.

Many of these incidents involved teenagers and young adults who had developed paranormal abilities. Statistics showed most of the subjects had been born after 1980, and the media started talking about a "Magic Generation." Some people reacted with awe; many tried to find teachers, or looked for arcane tomes to learn the secrets of magic. Others became fearful and lashed out against suspected "witches." Many Pagans were among the first victims of this new wave of hate crimes. The persecution did not end with them, however. Attacks on Jews, Muslims, and other religious minorities in America and Europe escalated rapidly between the years 1999 and 2004.

Behind the scenes, the military and intelligence agencies of many countries understood the potential of this Magic Generation. A number of secret societies representing those who had kept the old secrets alive stepped in and quietly offered aid and support, in return for certain considerations. Hands were shaken in the offices of the most powerful men in the U.S. and Great Britain, and the Covenants of Magic, who had been hiding their existence for centuries, became part of the system.

The Matthews Riots and the Safety Ordinances

In 2004, copies of the same videotape arrived at the offices of half a dozen national and international news agencies, including the major networks. A subsequent investigation revealed the tapes were sent by former police officer Cynthia Muldoon. Muldoon's body was found in her home a day later; she and her husband had been killed execution style.

The tapes each contained the same 63-minute recording. It documented a meeting of the White Justice Society, a national network of rogue police officers. During the meeting, a man later identified as police Captain Albert Matthews of the NYPD casually spoke about the murders of nine black men he had carried out for the WJS. Other murders were also referred to in the tape. It was clear that the WJS had organized over a dozen death squads in several parts of the country in recent years.

ABC News aired the videotape the day it was received, following the six o'clock news. CNN did the same less than an hour later.

By midnight, cities were burning.

Racial and economical tension in the U.S. rose to an all-time high. Cuts in social programs had gradually reduced the standard of living of inner city dwellers, most of them minorities, while at the same time the declining economy restricted their opportunities to escape their economic plight. The Matthews tapes were the last straw. The U.S. faced the worst series of riots in its history. Actual casualty figures were never reported, but it is believed that over a thousand people were killed in riots that ravaged over a dozen cities. The worst riots took place in Los Angeles, Chicago and New York; for a number of hours, the rioters sealed off Manhattan from

2007—The CoR grows to over three million members, with more joining each day.

2008—The Munich Disaster occurs. Sometime between 11:00 p.m. and 12:00 a.m. on April 30th-May 1st, the entire population of Munich—over a million and half people—dies. The only living being left within the city limits is Johann Goering, found standing on the top of the Neues Rathaus, the City Hall building. Germany is plunged into chaos and panic.

German armed forces begin mobilization. In response, other NATO armies do the same, ostensibly to prevent panic and public disorder in Germany and surrounding countries.

George J. Morrison (R) becomes the 44th President of the United States. He concentrates on domestic issues, and the eventual repeal of the Safety Ordinances.

the rest of the country before National Guard units could retake the major bridges. In Los Angeles, mobs attacked commuters on their way home and burned dozens of people in their cars. The National Guard later admitted to shooting two hundred rioters. Some testimony alleged a death toll twice as high.

By the end of the week, soldiers forced rioters back into the lowest income neighborhoods, and cordoned the areas off. Los Angeles was the first to pass a Safety Ordinance, sealing off entire sections of the city, and restricting travel to and from the area. Other cities soon followed suit.

The Safety Ordinances had first been proposed just after the turn of the century by the New Patriot Party, composed of right-wing extremists. The Ordinances proposed the most dangerous inner city areas be isolated for "the protection of innocent citizens whose only sin is having business in the city." During the desperate hours following the riots, several city mayors implemented the proposals. They let the rioters run rampant through certain neighborhoods, and at the same time built walls around them.

There was an immediate public outcry about the unconstitutionality of the Ordinances. Chicago Mayor Brett Junkins' response was typical. Waving a picture of Alissandra Johnson, a young woman whose battered corpse the rioters hung from a lamppost, Junkins said "Tell Alissandra Johnson about the Constitution!" He went on to paraphrase Andrew Jackson, "Let the Supreme Court come and tear the walls down."

While "liberal" groups spoke out loudly against the Ordinances, a large segment of the electorate remained quiet. The pictures of burning and rampaging rioters scared people much more than the violation of civil rights. Even middle-class minority members were less sympathetic to the rioters' plight than would have seemed natural.

The legal battles over the constitutionality of the Safety Ordinances took years to settle. Significant "States' Rights" advocates and hard-liners managed to stalemate both Congress and the Executive. Sharp lawyers kept the courts at bay through legal wrangling. Meanwhile, barbed wire topped the newly-built walls, and some three million Americans in a dozen cities were cut off from the rest of country. By the time the Supreme Court struck down the Ordinances, the country was at war and had no time to deal with the problem.

The War

In one night in 2008, over one million people died in the city of Munich, Germany. Search and rescue parties found only one man left alive, a former soldier named Johann Goering.

Terror and grief wracked Germany, Goering used his new notoriety to declare the Munich Disaster "a sign of the end of this era." According to Goering, those who wished to avoid such destruction should follow the "true God," whom he referred to as the "Ancient Great One." The CoR hailed Goering as "the Apostle of the True God."

In 2009, German police and anti-terrorist units tried to arrest Goering, living in Berlin, on charges of mass murder and conspiracy. In a pitched battle between cultists and police, Goering revealed his superhuman powers. Spurred by the CoR, rioters descended on the city. After six months of civil war, the German government fell and the CoR seized control over the entire country, with the support of elements of the military and police. Goering became the Apostle, Supreme Leader of all Germany.

A year later, in 2011, the war started.

Nobody in a position of power, either in

2009—An attempt to arrest Johann Goering in Berlin starts a citywide riot and the death of hundreds of police officers and thousands of civilians. Several military units, thoroughly infiltrated by the Believers, capture or kill non-converted soldiers and officers, and take over key strategic points throughout Germany.

In Turkey, a military coup unseats the government. The armed forces and police, thoroughly corrupted by the CoR, declare the nation for the Leviathan. The Black Imam, Priest of Leviathan, becomes the ruler of the country. The Patriarch of Constantinople, and all local Islamic, Christian, and Jewish religious leaders are publicly executed. The Turkish Army is disbanded, and a new army appeared overnight. The Second Army of Revelations (AoR) mobilizes and masses on the borders of Syria and Iraq.

America or Europe, had any understanding of the situation until it was too late. The Munich Massacre was viewed as a horrible disaster, and the rest of the world quickly sent humanitarian aid. The riots that ravaged Germany were considered an internal problem, and nobody wanted to interfere. The Russians knew better, but they were beset by their own internal problems (now suspected as being the work of Church Agents). When satellite intelligence showed the German Army mobilizing and armored divisions that seemingly appeared out of nowhere, there was no time to regain the initiative. The French Army began mobilizing by the end of 2010. The British followed suit a few months later. The U.S. government, consumed by the economic crisis and the political repercussions of the Safety Ordinances, paid no attention to the warnings of the U.S. military. In many ways, it was an almost comical re-enactment of a similar tragedy.

The Army of Revelations (AoR) struck early in April, 2011. It used a fleet of advanced tech bombers it had been secretly building. The nearly undetectable aircraft bombed key targets in Europe—and in America. For the first time in U.S. history, the American mainland came under sustained air attack. Aircraft slipped through the American air defenses ravaged by poor maintenance and deep funding cuts, and struck at bases and factories in three states, killing hundreds and severely weakening the U.S. military. Other bombers sank three U.S. aircraft carriers and damaged two more. In Europe, the first wave of attacks crippled the NATO air force. As Believer fifth-columnists and saboteurs struck behind the French lines, the AoR rolled west.

Five days later, the French used nuclear weapons in a desperate attempt to break the offensive. The weapons failed to detonate. Within a few days, the world's leaders all reached the same chilling conclusion: nuclear deterrence was no longer a factor. No tactical or nuclear device worked. A large-scale nuclear exchange passed into the history books as Dud Night. The war would go to the side with the bigger battalions.

America and Great Britain did what they could. Hastily assembled Expeditionary Forces landed in France, arriving just in time to stave off the Fall of Paris by a few months. The war in Europe lasted two years. France fell in less than six months. American and British forces escaped into Spain or were evacuated near Normandy, in a sad reversal of D-Day. Poland, Italy, and Spain fell within two years.

As the AoR marched on Rome, crushing the last remnants of the Italian Army and NATO forces, a miraculous event occurred, filmed by a few courageous journalists. The skies opened up, and a Host of angels descended upon the city, attacking the invaders. Called the Ten Thousand at Rome, the assault soon turned into a nightmare. The AoR used arcane powers and high technology to defeat the angelic forces. Catholics around the world watched in horror as the Apostle himself executed Pope John XXIV on live television .

The only major reversal in the Revelationist offensive occurred on the sea. Freak storms interfered with the AoR's planned amphibious invasion of the Nordic countries and Britain. The storms were clearly not natural; a being who called himself Odin announced that the Aesir—the Norse Gods of legend—were responsible. The announcement was met with a mixture of skepticism, fear . . . and hope.

2010—Germany falls. Believer-controlled police and military units, supported by secretly trained paramilitary bands equipped with ultra-modern weapons, seize members of the Bundestag and Bundesrat (German parliaments) and the Chancellor. The Dark Apostle becomes the Supreme Leader of all Germany, and High Priest of the CoR. The German armed forces engage in a brutal internal. All those who refuse to convert are killed. The First Army of Revelations (AoR) is established.

The United Nations holds an emergency meeting to deal with the crisis. A lone suicide bomber, later identified as a U.N. translator, detonates an explosive device carried on his person, killing thirty-three delegates. An autopsy reveals the Mark of Leviathan on his forehead.

Nations around Germany try to seal their borders. Refugees trying to flee German soil are fired upon by soldiers of the First AoR.

Meanwhile, the war opened on other fronts. Turkey became the second nation to join the Church, and its armies, also equipped with new, cutting-edge technologies, swept through Iraq and Syria. Greece became a giant battleground, and the ancient gods of those regions roused themselves from ages-long slumber. In the following years, Argentina and Vietnam became the third and fourth nation members of the Church. It became clear by then that the enemy represented a world-spanning network undreampt by the most fevered conspiracy theorist.

For the U.S., the final shock came when the Third AoR advanced through Mexico, heading north towards Texas. For the first time in two centuries, the American mainland was threatened by a foreign foe. The U.S. Army and National Guard poured south to meet the enemy. Mexico ceased to exist as a nation as the country descended into chaos. The Revelationists were stopped, but not before bombing raids leveled much of San Antonio and several other cities of the American Southwest.

By the end of 2016, the war hung in the balance.

Global Status

The year is 2017. The U.S. plans a major push to throw the enemy out of Mexico, but significant areas of North American remain chaotic. Most of Europe and South America are under the yoke of the CoR. Half of the Middle East and perhaps a third of Asia are in a similar state. Both sides race to rebuild their war machines while maintaining an active war effort.

2011—The War begins. On April 15, surprise attacks by Punisher stealth bombers, over eighty of which were produced in secret, strike three continents, destroying and damaging key military installations in France, Poland, Great Britain, the Russian Republics, the U.S., and the Middle East. Bombers also target several holy sites, including the Holy Rock of the Kaaba in Mecca, St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome, and the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem. The bombs damage, but do not destroy those sites, and the attacking planes are mysteriously destroyed. The American aircraft carrier Nimitz is severely damaged, and two other carriers are destroyed by the surprise attack.

Shortly thereafter, the First AoR in Germany, supported by a horde of monstrous beings, attacks France. On April 20th, French forces use tactical nuclear weapons against an AoR offensive. The weapons fail to detonate. Repeated attempts demonstrate that no explosive nuclear reaction is possible. Some unknown force prevents nuclear fission from taking place except in controlled environments such as nuclear reactors.

Chapter Two

The United States

The years 2011 to 2016 transformed America. Already wracked by internal problems, the war was a shock from which many people have yet to recover. The U.S. Armed Forces faced an unprecedented challenge: rebuild and replace staggering loses at a time when heavy industries had been all but dismantled in the continental U.S. They managed to do so, and actually performed admirably, given the circumstances.

The American people were faced with a national and religious threat, and the differences between the two threatened to tear the country apart. To most people, the danger to the U.S. came first, and patriotism rose to new levels. For others, the rise of the Dark Apostle was a sign of the Apocalypse, or the End Times. Fundamentalist fanatics denounced America's sins, and some prompted their followers to build their own communities of the "elect," since only the righteous had any hope of salvation. Secessionist movements sprung up in several parts of the U.S., at a time when the government had precious little resources to deal with them.

Beyond these internal problems, and the threat of the AoR in Mexico, loom the danger of supernatural predators. Humans were not the only beneficiaries of the "New Age" that led to the birth of the Magic Generation. The walls between realities had been weakening for some time, and creatures of horror had been slipping through. Hiding among humans, these predators struck at random, adding to the general fear and uncertainty. To make things worse, the CoR had a fifth column of Believers in the U.S.; these fanatics performed numerous acts of terrorism and sabotage, despite the best efforts of the FBI to root them out.

This is the America of *Armageddon*—a land at war with itself as much as with an alien enemy.

Government

In 2008, George J. Morrison (R) became the forty-fourth president of the United States. A moderate conservative, Morrison was elected on a domestic agenda, including to fight for the repeal of the Security Ordinances. Even before his inauguration, however, Morrison was no longer in control of events. He came to power during a time of war and chaos, when America desperately needed an extraordinary leader. Unfortunately, the former Governor of Kansas was not such a man.

In 2011, after foreign aircraft bombed the U.S., Morrison resigned his office, a move denounced as cowardly by many. It was, however, possibly the best thing Morrison could do for his country. His Vice-President, Beatrice Holland, already the first female to be elected to that post, made history for the second time and became the 45th president. A former U.S. Marine and Senator from Texas, Holland proved to be the leader that Morrison was not. Under her guidance, America geared itself for war. Holland was overwhelmingly re-elected in 2012, and again in 2016.

In 2014, a group of military officers, religious leaders, and the governors of two southern states conspired to overthrow the federal government. The group had become convinced that America must be "purified" before it could gain victory against the forces of darkness. Those to be "cleansed" were "immoral or anti-Christian"—homosexuals, Jews, pagans, sorcerers and even, to some degree, non-whites. The plot was uncovered by a group of human psychics and magicians, and the leaders were imprisoned and tried for treason; two await execution, while the rest serve life sentences.

The Second AoR strikes from Turkey and decimates Syria and Iraq. Local Believers start riots, acts of terrorism, and sabotage in the invaded countries to weaken the local forces and facilitate the conquest process.

President Morrison resigns, ashamed to have presided over the first bombing of U.S. soil. He is replaced by Vice-President Beatrice Holland.

2011-2014—Hastily assembled British and American Expeditionary Forces join NATO troops in the Battle of France. All nations of Europe save Switzerland declare war on the Church of Revelations. By the end of the year, Paris falls and France is conquered. Work begins on the First Fleet of Retribution to facilitate an invasion of the Nordic countries (Norway, Sweden, Iceland, and Finland),

The Second AoR conquers Syria and Iraq, but is stopped at the Saudi border by a coalition of Middle Eastern countries, including Israel.

Setting

Life in the U.S.

A journalist described life in the U.S. as a "schizophrenic effort at maintaining normalcy in the face of terror." On the one hand, the country is at war—a more immediate and threatening conflict than any since the Civil War, and with even worse consequences should it be lost. Americans have seen nation after nation overrun, stripped of its national identity, and oppressed by the most totalitarian regime in modern history. The religious implications of conquest by the CoR are enough to drive many people into rabid fanaticism: this is a war fought not only over territory or wealth, but for the sake of their very souls. Secular Humanists and the Religious Right, liberals and conservatives—they all agree the CoR must be fought to the last.

On the other hand, life goes on. People go to work, watch television, surf the Web. True, more people attend church and wear religious symbols. Everyone who ventures out into the streets carries a little pouch with a gas mask and an anti-toxic injector, to deal with the occasional gas bomb dropped from a stealth bomber or carried by an ICBM. In all, people tend to go out less frequently, although that could just be a reflection of the influence of the Internet on the social habits of America. Crime continues to be a worry.

The lives of the poor have gotten much, much worse. The Safety Ordinances, which were struck down by the Supreme Court as unconstitutional in 2009, still remain in effect in several cities. This is due in part to the supernatural infestations that have wracked the slums—authorities fear that if the walls come down, all manner of inhuman monsters will spread through the rest of their cities. In some ways, the people trapped within have simply been forgotten by the rest of the country. For the time being, joining the army is the only sure escape from the slums.

The countryside of some heartland states has become lawless and dangerous. Bandit gangs composed of Army deserters, Believers or religious fanatics of all persuasions roam the back roads on motorcycles or in trucks, raiding some towns and robbing motorists. Some small towns and counties have declared themselves independent, looted local armories, and blocked off roads leading in or out of their communities. Local patriarchs try to build model societies, or create their own petty kingdoms. The government does not have the time or resources to deal with any but the largest and most visible of these communities.

The Native American communities in the U.S. have remained strangely silent during this conflict. Other than sending their share of soldiers to the war, they have had little impact on the conflict so far. Some sorcerers feel a major gathering of power in some sacred sites; it is possible that the tribal shaman bide their time before they make their move. Whether this move proves as disagreeable for the white man as for the CoR remains to be seen.

The Military

In the past, former enemies of the U.S. have referred to the nation as "the sleeping giant." The CoR may have caught the U.S. napping, but the country has awakened. The military is growing at the fastest rate in its history. There is nothing like an enemy at the gates to concentrate the mind. For the first time since the 1990s, new weapons are being produced in great quantities, and hundreds of thousands of new volunteers (the draft has yet to be re-established) are being trained every year. Even so, some military planners think it may not be enough.

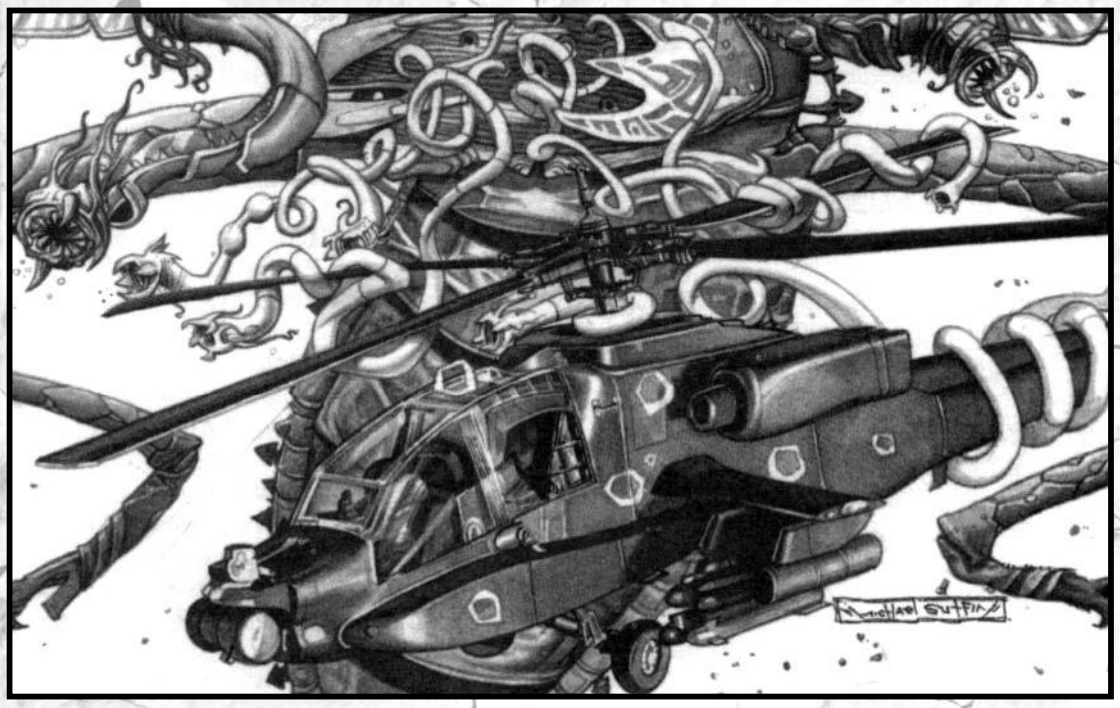
Sightings of angel-like appearing over battlefields are reported. Superhuman beings claiming to serve mythological gods are also reported by shocked eyewitnesses in battles throughout Europe and Asia.

2012—President Beatrice Holland is elected by a significant majority.

Bombs continue falling over Britain, the U.S., and the Nordic nations, which remain unconquered.

2013—Most of Western Europe comes under the control of the First AoR.

The Argentinean government falls, replaced by the Supreme Archbishop of the Church of Revelations. The "cleansed" Argentinean Army becomes the core of the Third AoR. Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay are quickly absorbed. Aircraft deploying from Argentina bomb cities in South and North America.



In the years before the war, individuals and even whole secret societies claiming to possess supernatural powers contacted various governmental agencies, including the armed services. Although these groups were dismissed at first, they offered incontrovertible proof of their powers. When a bookish college professor managed to walk into a secured room in the Pentagon with nobody the wiser, people became ready to listen.

By 2006, the Special Operations Task Force Command (SOTF-COM) was created, although its existence remained secret until 2011. SOTF units were a mixture of "common" Special Forces soldiers and men and women with paranormal abilities. At first, sorcerers and psychics dominated SOTF teams, but as recruitment of newer members of the Magic Generation increased, so did the proportion of supernatural beings joining the force, including their share of Nephilim, Inheritors, and Avatars. Members of SOTF teams receive basic military training, as well as instruction in how to best use their special abilities. To the annoyance of many at the Pentagon, however, SOTF-COM is an independent command, and can conduct operations at its discretion.

It is believed that the CIA has its own version of SOTF-COM. Rumors also say that the entire Agency has been co-opted by the ever-so-helpful secret societies, to follow their own agendas using the CIA's resources.

2014—Switzerland is overrun.

Vietnam becomes the Fourth Archdioceses of the CoR. Local Revelationists overrun parts of China, supported by the Fourth AoR and by more monstrous beings, summoned by the Church Priests.

A freak storm is destroyed the First Fleet of Retribution in port. Some reported that the damage is caused by the Norse gods.

A conspiracy including several religious, military, and business leaders attempts to overthrow the U.S. government. The movement is dominated by religious extremists who wish to "cleanse" the nation in preparation for the war. Gifted sorcerers and psychics uncover the plot, and the principal conspirators are arrested.

The Americas

The AoR rules supreme over most of South and Central America. Of the nations of South America, only parts of Brazil remain free. The U.S. stationed several Marine divisions in Venezuela to protect valuable oil fields, but they were pushed off into the hinterland, and the fields are now burning wrecks. So far, the Marines and the remnants of the Venezuelan and Brazilian Armies, helped in part by the Andes mountains and the Amazon jungle, have managed to keep the invaders at bay.

Canada's armies fighting inside the U.S. under the auspices of the United Nations. Tens of thousands of Canadian soldiers stand along the Mexican border, fighting side by side with their American neighbors. The Quebec Separatist movement, which has been infiltrated by the CoR, poses the main threat to Canada's well-being. Denounced by even most Quebecois or its terrorist tactics and separatist agenda, the underground group becomes more brutal with each passing day.

The Spirits of the Amazon: A number of native shamans deep in the Amazon jungles conduct their own war against the AoR. Using magical powers that have not been as strong in centuries, these medicine men attempt to heal the jungle while also repelling the invaders. A horde of nature spirits and other beings who dwell deep in the heart of the jungle aid those efforts.

Asia

Much of Asia has been overrun by the AoR. Large areas of India, Southeast Asia, and China have been conquered, and resistance elsewhere is disorganized and primitive at best. Nothing resembling a modern army remains on the mainland; the AoR air power has seen to that. Instead, bands of guerrillas conduct harassing operations from bases in the countryside or among the populace in the cities. In many places, these operations make entire provinces or regions ungovernable, and the Believers hold only the zones directly in range of their guns. In others, guerrilla activity is little more than an inconvenience, and would-be freedom fighters are quickly rooted out and executed.

Communist China was destroyed by surgical strikes that eradicated the nation's entire leadership, and by devastating armored attacks that crushed whole armies. A nation with over a billion citizens is not so easily conquered, however. The Revelationists, even reinforced by millions of Chinese converts, lack the firepower to completely suppress every factory, every armed uprising, and every secret society. By 2016, the AoR could lay claim to only about a third of the country, and even there it has to deal with constant guerrilla activities. The rest of the country is in a state of anarchy. Starvation, plague, and banditry, caused by the breakdown of communication and commerce, ravage many regions.

A few places have been luckier. The ports of Hong Kong and Shangai come under Japanese protection. The two cities are safe but are hotbeds of intrigue and espionage, thoroughly infiltrated by Revelationist spies, profiteers, and crime lords.

India, which by 2010 had passed the billion mark in population, was a similarly tough nut to crack. Too numerous to overwhelm and fiercely religious, the Indian peoples have resisted the invaders with stubborn courage. Unfortunately, large numbers of people have become worshippers of Leviathan, especially the poor and the outcasts, who saw little profit in remaining true to the old ways. Still, resistance remains fierce, with horrible atrocities perpetrated against those suspected of collaborating with the invaders.

2014-2016—The Third AoR overruns most of Western South America, Central America, and Mexico. U.S. armed forces stops the AoR near the Texas border. San Antonio is razed by bombardment.

2015—Italy and Spain fall. Pope John XXIV is executed on live television by the Apostle himself.

2016—The seat of the Catholic Curia is relocated to New York City. Pope John Paul VII presides from St. Patrick's Cathedral.

U.S. and Japan send troops to Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Taiwan, using those areas as staging bases for air warfare against the Fourth AoR in China.

President Holland is re-elected for a second term.

The Mexico Counter-offensive begins. The U.S. Army, together with elements of the Mexican, Canadian, and British armies, starts pushing south.

The Church controls large parts of Southeast Asia, with the exception of Cambodia and Thailand, who were temporarily left alone while the Church concentrated on China. Vietnam, despite being the core nation of the Church's presence in Asia, remains a hotbed of rebellion. A new generation of Viet-Cong once again war against foreign invaders. In an ironic twist, the U.S. ships a small but steady supply of weapons, equipment and military advisors into Vietnam, in an effort to undermine the enemy.

The U.S. still maintains a presence in the Pacific. Staging from bases in Hawaii, Japan, and Korea, U.S. aircraft rise up to challenge the AoR's air wing. Special Operations soldiers conduct raids or training missions in Asia, helping carry the battle to the Church on every front. If the CoR wins in Asia, the U.S. is doomed—once the Believers assimilate two billion people, America's technological might will avail it little.

Chinese Secret Societies: The peoples of China have a long tradition of forming secret societies to fight would-be oppressors. Even the Communist regime was never able to completely suppress it. Now, after the Chinese government has collapsed and the CoR seized control over much of their land, the old societies returned with a vengeance. Groups like the Yellow Turbans and the Boxers were reincarnated, and new groups, like the Red Hand (Communist activists), have multiplied in both conquered and disputed territories. In many areas, these groups are the only law of the land, defending the local peasantry from bandits and Revelationist patrols, and sometimes oppressing the people they claim to protect.

In addition to a myriad of largely mundane organizations, China has a number of supernatural organizations as well. Some of them have joined the Alliance, or at least have agreed to cooperate with it. Supernatural Covenants in China include The One-Thousand Immortals, a mixed band of True Immortals and Inheritors who claim to be led by the thunder god Lei-Kung, the Storm Dragons, a group of mystic martial artists who claim to be led by an ancient dragon, and the Society of the Harmonious Pattern, geomantic sorcerers of great power.

Europe

Great Britain and Northern Europe remain free, although barely so. A furious air war is fought daily over Great Britain. This new Battle of Britain uses fewer aircraft, but it is as destructive as the one waged seventy-odd years ago. Only the activities of the ancient gods of Britain, Ireland, and the Nordic countries keep the invaders at bay. Meanwhile, Britain prepares for the inevitable invasion. In Great Britain and the few remaining forests of Europe, the Fey return in great numbers and lend a hand against the CoR.

In Eastern Europe, Russia still exists to some degree. The AoR wins every battle offered there, but the Russian people fight on with the same stubbornness they demonstrated in World War II. A number of local spirits and deities also stand with the resistance movements there. The Thunder God Thor is said to operate in Russia, protecting the nation that Viking settlers founded.

The Underground Movement: Like the Resistance of World War II, the Underground ranges from former soldiers to civilians from all walks of life, all dedicated to fighting the CoR. This Underground is as much religious as it is secular. Some of their activities include secretly conducting religious ceremonies of all denominations and sects, thus undermining the CoR's corruption of the souls of the conquered peoples. It also engages in more mundane acts of sabotage, assassination, and espionage.

The Underground is a generic name for a varied group. Some Underground cells are composed of religious fanatics of some denomination or another, while others are open to all who wish to fight the common enemy. Several other groups, from the Heavenly Host to the Alliance, help some or all Underground cells in their fight against the minions of Leviathan.

The Middle East

The Second AoR deployed from Turkey and conquered Iraq and Syria. An unprecedented coalition of Arabs, Persians, Israelis, and U.S troops stationed in the area stopped the Believers on the Saudi border. Sunni and Shi'a Muslims, Jews and Christians—all forget their differences to retain possession of their holiest sites. Even then, bombers damaged the Holy Rock of the

Kaaba and the Wailing Wall of Jerusalem. But here, in this holiest of regions, the Heavenly Host prepared to make a stand. Twenty thousand angels have arrived in the region, and they have grudgingly chosen to follow the orders of the human commanders of the region, having learned the lesson of acting on their own in Rome.

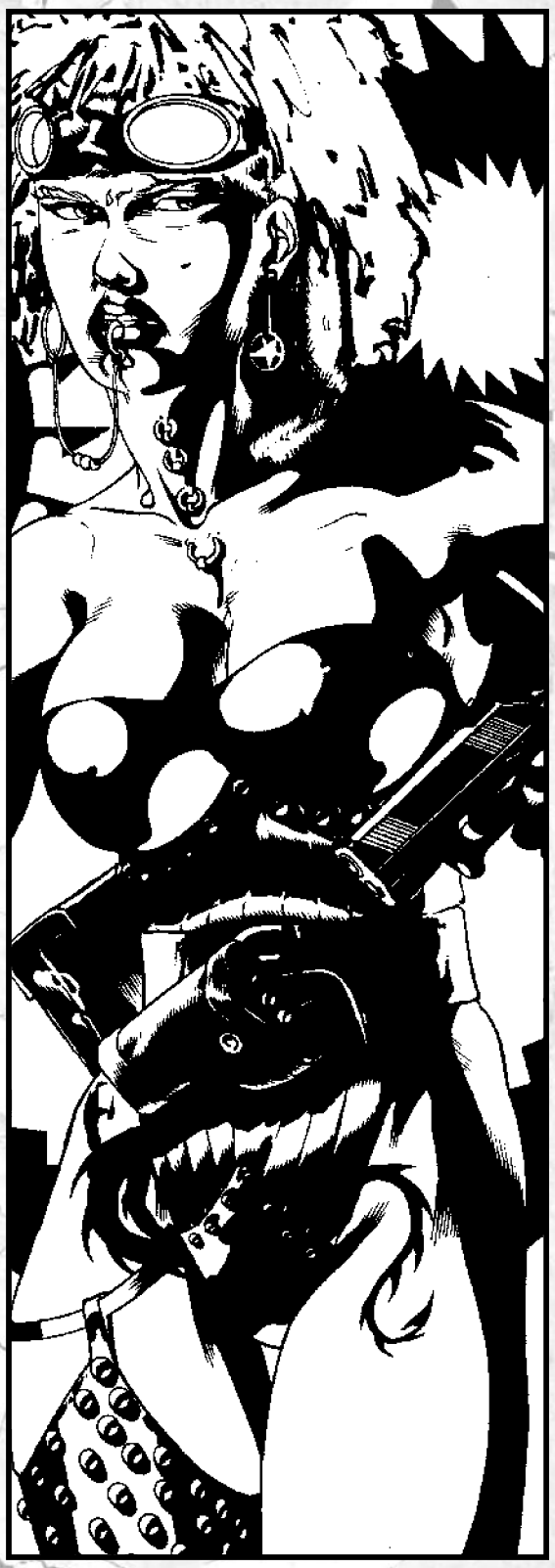
The Middle East has become a land of miracles and shaken beliefs. Holy men of three religions see in the angels confirmation of their doctrines—but the angels' equal protection of all three credos runs counter to the idea that only one of them held the Truth. Most have agreed to put aside their doctrinal conflicts, while hard-core bands of fanatics still carry on with their pointless fighting.

A Time of Heroes

Armageddon is, above all, a roleplaying game. So what are the roles the players will assume? There is no single answer.

This world of chaos, teetering on the verge of destruction, desperately needs heroes and leaders, people who by their actions inspire the fearful, or ensure others do not have to endure the horrors lurking in the dark. *Armageddon* characters can be those heroes—human or supernatural warriors who, by chance or design, rise to challenge the dark tide washing over the world.

The world has its share of *anti-heroes*, characters who act out of selfishness, or are driven by destructive impulses or obsessions. Joining the Dark Apostle means becoming the slave of an alien, monstrous force (and is not recommended), but the turmoil of the war offers a number of opportunities for those ruthless enough to seize them. And being on the side of the angels (sometimes literally) does not mean profit or self-aggrandizement are strictly forbidden, or even discouraged. Many anti-heroes, by choice or circumstances, eventually try to do the right thing, or risk giving ground to the encroaching forces of darkness. In the end, whether motivated by self-interest or heroic ideals, all living beings have but two choices: fight the CoR, or be absorbed and destroyed



CHAPTER THREE: ROLES

Chapter Three

Transition.

It's always painful. Like being born again—pulled out of the nice warm comfort of the womb, dragged into the cold, loud world and given a good swat in the butt. Binah is the most wonderful place—and it's not even Heaven, at least not how I used to understand it. Saying Binah is Heaven is like saying an army camp during maneuvers is home. It may have some comforts, but it's nothing like the real thing.

Maybe one day I'll go to Heaven. For now, there is too much work to do.

I suck in a lungful of cold air. I feel like crying.

The Earth was never my favorite place. Even during my previous life, I found the cruelty and hatred of the world too much to bear. I preferred to withdraw to the make-believe worlds of books and movies. And now . . .

As if to emphasize the point, my superiors have Transcended me into the burned-out building, probably a result of the firebombing of 2011. Paris had been gutted then, and the occupiers are just now beginning reconstruction.

I step out of the ruins, carefully, looking around. I haven't been in Paris since 1998. It had been a small errand of mercy—a priest who was about to lose his faith, his plight so desperate that I was allowed to go to him and help him tap into his inner strength. Those had been the good times. Then, I returned to Earth to help people. Now, we are more like glorified spies, sent on a forlorn hope.

It takes me a while to recognize the landscape, as scarred as it is. I see the Seine, so this must be the Latin Quarter. Make that "used to be." When the Battle of Paris became a house-to-house affair, the entire area was leveled. Some of the ruins are now being used as low-income housing, mostly for people of Gentile status. The Gentiles are second-class citizens, but are better off than the so-called Infidels—the people who refused to renounce their God.

I wonder what happened to the priest whose soul I saved, not quite twenty years ago. If he's not dead, he's probably wearing the yellow jumpsuit that marks an Infidel, and is in some work camp or another. I know that he would not have submitted to the Church of Revelations.

The streets are deserted; this section of the city is poorly lighted, and is mostly empty anyway. I wait, hidden behind a half-collapsed wall. My contact should be here, soon.

"There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet," a voice whispers harshly behind me. The man is very quiet—it's hard to sneak up on an angel, even my retread variety.

"Amen," I reply, turning around. He is human, of Algerian descent, short and stocky, his potbelly indicating softness, belied by the fanaticism burning in his eyes. He must have had to forgo most of the normal Muslim duties to escape being labeled an Infidel. The Soul Police make a point of snapping up anybody who dares perform the five prayers, or show any other outward signs of faith.

"Come with me, Angel," he says. "We must hurry."

We walk in silence through the darkened streets. If it wasn't for the moonlight, we would be stumbling in the darkness; my night vision is slightly better than a normal human's, but not by much. Finally, we reach our destination. From the looks of it, this used to be a coffee house, now converted into a dwelling. The man knocks on the door, two times, then three in rapid succession, then twice more. We hear a bar being removed from the door, and the clicks of several locks, then we are allowed in.

"We are here," the Algerian says unnecessarily. A lamp is lit, revealing the dusty remains of the coffee house, tables and chairs still in place, and I can see the rest of the cell members.

A blonde man and a woman, clearly brother and sister, smoking and sitting at a table by themselves. Two pistols rest on the table. A teenage boy, seventeen at best, standing by the bar, carefully putting down a submachine gun. At a glance, I can tell he has the Gift: the Second Sight in one of its manifestations. And, sitting by yet another table, shuffling cards now that the lamp has been lit again, another man, dark-haired, with movie-star good looks. My eyes widen with recognition when I see him.

"Oh my God!"

The rest of the cell looks at me suspiciously. The movie-star smiles. "Welcome to our small corner of the Underground, Kerubim."

The aura is unmistakable. He is Seraphim—but he is not one of ours. That leaves two possibilities. He could be a renegade Watcher, or . . .

"The Boss sends his compliments," the Seraphim says. That and the nasty smile prove it. He is of the Fallen. If I tell the others he is a demon, and they believe me—not a certainty, under the circumstances—then this cell would fall apart. At the very least, the Algerian would not knowingly work for an emissary of Lucifer. One word, and a shoot-out may erupt. So I say nothing, and give a silent prayer that my decision is not damning.

"Yes, I thought you looked familiar," I say in a friendly tone, and the tension diminishes a little. I look at the group, my new allies, perhaps even my friends someday.

"There is much work to do."

Introduction

Characters are perhaps the most important building block of any story. Without well-defined, compelling characters, the best plotline will fail to attract the reader or viewer's interest. So it is with a roleplaying game. Each player controls a character in the game. In effect, the player is both playing a part and scripting it. Each player makes the decisions for her character, and the Chronicler and other players come up with the consequences of those decisions. Through the give and take of this process, a Story is created.

Character creation is one of the parts of roleplaying that works most like writing a short story or a script. Each player gets to create a fictional persona, somebody she would like to portray in a game. This character can be heroic, cowardly, sensitive, or silly. Her habits, personality, and typical behavior are completely in the player's hands. The character can be a carbon copy of the player, or an utterly different person.

There are limitations, however. A character must fit the story, or in this case, the game setting. Rambo would be out of place in a Noel Coward play, and silly and unrealistic in a Tom Clancy novel, for example. The scheming, treacherous and complex Iago could not jump from the pages of *Othello* into a four-color superhero story—at least not as a main character. He would make a great villain, though—but generally it is the Chronicler who gets to play those.

This is not to say the characters need to be heroes, or even the white-hat-wearing "good guys." They can be flawed, selfish, or misguided. Generally, however, they should be similar to fictional characters in a story: interesting, fun to observe (and play), and, most importantly, helpful in the shaping of the Story, the final goal of any roleplaying game.

The Chronicler influences the creation process. Ultimately, it is up to the Chronicler to decide whether or not a character is appropriate for a campaign. In some cases, she might decide that a character would be disruptive for the story, or too powerful (or weak) for the tasks and troubles the cast is likely to face. Players should also try to keep in mind that roleplaying is a *group* activity. Creating a character for the exclusive purpose of dominating the game or hogging the spotlight might be one player's idea of fun, but it ruins everyone else's enjoyment—and may lead to no games being played. If the Chronicler disallows a character idea or conception, she probably has a good reason. Respect her judgment.

How to Create a Character

Would-be *Armageddon* players should be familiar with the setting of the game. *Armageddon* is a game of war, myth, and horror. Each player should consider what type of character would be appropriate for this setting.

The Chronicler should give the players an idea of the game's specific location and main themes. For example, if the game deals with a Heavenly Host team of Seraphim and Kerubim waging a guerrilla war against the CoR, playing a pagan Inheritor is probably not a good idea. In some games, the Chronicler may drastically restrict the choices available to players. The themes of many possible games could require all the characters be members of the same organization. Players should not feel they are being forced to play the same characters, however. Even within a single Association, many choices and possibilities for different characters exist.

Some players may feel overwhelmed by too many choices. Although the rules allow players to create a character fairly quickly, deciding what kind of character to play can take a while. Sometimes it helps if the Chronicler takes the time to help each player with the creation of her character, before the first game. If all else fails, the Archetypes (the ones in these books as well as others in future supplements) may help.

Chapter Three

Archetypes

For those who wish to jump into the game right away, several Archetypes are available at the end of this chapter. These pre-created characters are almost ready to play. Once given a name, they can be played as is. Otherwise, they may be modified to suit the individual player's tastes. Finally, the templates may be used for inspiration to come up with a separate creation. For those ready to create their own personas from scratch, the remainder of the chapter provides the means to do so.

The Creation Process

The **Unisystem** uses a point system to create characters. Basically, the player buys different Attributes and abilities by spending character points. The better or more powerful a characteristic is, the more expensive it is. Some negative characteristics, known as Drawbacks, do not cost any points. Instead, they have a negative value—by acquiring them, the player actually gets more points to buy other things. Keep in mind, of course, that these Drawbacks limit or hurt the character in some way, so loading them on carelessly may not be a good idea.

Not everything is based on points, either. Some character elements are creativity-driven: the character's Concept (what kind of person she is), as well as the character's name and history. These depend largely on the player's imagination.

The Character Elements

Characters in *Armageddon* have eight basic elements. Some elements are conceptual (what kind of character is this?) while others are numerical Attributes (what are the character's actual abilities?). As the player makes each selection, she narrows down the character's possibilities until a clearly defined fictional persona is ready for play.

Although the elements are listed in numerical order, they need not be followed strictly. Creating a character does not follow a kitchen-recipe approach, with steps that must be followed in order. Look over the different elements, and deal with them in the method that works best for you. Sometimes, for example, it is easier to come up with a Concept or Association after the character's Attributes and Skills are filled in; in the process of selecting skills, ideas about what the character is like arise. Some players may want to choose their character's Qualities and Drawbacks first, because they can get extra points to spend.

Character Concept

The Character Concept is a brief summary of the character's goals and personality. It also helps to determine the most important parts of the character's story and background. Described below are a number of Concepts. Each concept has a number of related questions, likely Qualities and Drawbacks, Professions (which helps decide which skills the character should know) and Associations.

These questions are among the most important steps. By answering them, the player fleshes out the character before she even starts choosing numerical Attributes. Answer the questions quickly, jotting them down on a piece of paper, or just decide them later, when there is time to go into them in detail.

Coming up with a Character Concept is not indispensable. If a player does not find it helpful, she can always move on to the other creation steps. Also, sometimes it is better to select a Type and Association before moving on to the Concept, or even save the Concept for last. Each player should determine what works best for her.

Common Character Concepts

Listed below are a few common Character Concepts. Chroniclers and players are encouraged to make up their own. Also, players can pick more than one Concept and mix its questions and suggestions into a unique whole.

Avenger

Someone has wronged you, and now you seek revenge. Your tormentors could have been individuals, or might belong to an organization. In the latter case, you might be seeking revenge against all members of the group. Whatever was done to you (or a loved one) was so horrible that you are obsessed with the thought of paying your tormentors back.

Character Elements

1. Concept: What are the character's goals and principles?

2. Type: A Character Type determines the character's general power level and nature.

3. Association: What group or organization (if any) does the character belong to?

4. Attributes: What are the character's natural abilities, both mental and physical?

5. Qualities and Drawbacks: What innate advantages or penalties affect the character?

6. Skills: What does the character know?

7. Metaphysics: What supernatural abilities does the character possess?

8. Possessions: What does the character own?

Character Creation Example

Throughout this chapter, we detail a character creation example. The player doing the creating is Jean, and we will follow her through each step.

The first step is Character Concept. Jean wants to play a Fanatic (she already had the idea that she wanted to play an angel of some type, and she thinks a Fanatical Lesser Seraphim—the Chronicler told her that a full Seraphim will be too expensive for the game—would make an interesting character). She decides her name will be Graelle, and starts to go over the concept questions.

What does the character believe in? That is easy—the dogmas of the Heavenly Host are simple and strict.

What made the character into a fanatic? Obviously, all angels are devoted, but they are not all fanatical. Jean decides that her character's fanaticism results from an experience that shook her beliefs to the core: to compensate, she redoubled her faith, and now is obdurate in maintaining their rightness. Looking over at the history of the Seraphim (see p. 176), Jean finds out about the Diaspora (the failed quest the Seraphim undertook to find God). She decides her Seraphim got separated from the group and spent centuries alone in the most God-forsaken places in the Higher Planes. The only thing allowing her to survive was her faith, and after rejoining her brethren, she refuses to question the beliefs of the Host. She is a fanatical follower of Gabriel, and as far as she is concerned he can do no wrong.

Defining Questions: Who wronged you? Was it an individual, or a group? What did they do to you? Why did they do it (do you know why, or do you care)? How did the injury or insult affect your life? How are you going to get your revenge? How does getting revenge affect your life?

Qualities and Drawbacks: You tend to have an Obsession with the target of your revenge. You make enemies (acquiring the Adversary drawback), including those you are trying to destroy, any friends of allies of your target, and the authorities, who rarely approve of vigilante justice.

Professions: You may come from any walk of life. Stereotypically, you are a former soldier, police officer, or somebody with combat training. You might have been a previously mild person with a mundane occupation (accountant or teacher, perhaps), who was totally transformed by the crimes you wish to avenge.

Daredevil

You love to take chances; to you, life without adventure and risk is not worth living. That is why you insist on getting involved in dangerous capers, legal or not, whether you need the money or not. Maybe you crave the rush of adrenaline you feel after surviving yet another mad stunt. Or you may just love the challenge of pitting yourself against dangerous foes or situations.

For you, danger is the spice of life. You may have become jaded by previous shocks or experiences, or you might be convinced that you are immortal and can get away with anything. In any case, you are often as dangerous to others as you are to yourself. One day, you will take one chance too many and pay the ultimate price.

Defining Questions: What turned you into a daredevil? What do you do for thrills (and is it

legal)? Would you risk someone you love as well as yourself? Do you always take chances, no matter what the stakes, or do you at least consider the consequences of failure before you jump into danger? Have your stunts gained you any rivals or enemies?

Qualities and Drawbacks: You often have a Delusion ("Nothing can happen to me"; "I am invincible") worth two- to three-points, depending on how far you are willing to test that notion. Note that in the dangerous world of *Armageddon*, the 3-point version of this Delusion is quite deadly. You most likely have gained a reputation that may reflect in positive or negative status, either as a hero or a dangerous lunatic.

Professions: Typically a stunt man, acrobat, cat burglar (for the challenge more than the money), and test pilot (except the brass does not like it when you risk multi-million dollar planes as well as yourself).

Fanatic

You are a True Believer. This may be a religion, or a Cause, or some political ideal. Whatever it is, you think it is the most important thing in the world, and you are willing to lay down your life (and, in some cases, the lives of others) to serve your beliefs. Depending on what those beliefs are (and whom you ask), you could be considered a dedicated hero or a dangerous madman. Patriots, religious leaders, and visionaries can all be Fanatics. Delusional paranoids also fit the bill. Which one are you?

Defining Questions: What do you believe in? How did you become a follower of this belief or principle? What made you a fanatic (as opposed to a normal follower of this belief)? What do you do to follow this belief in your everyday life?

Qualities and Drawbacks: Zealot is the universal drawback for your type, of course. You often make many enemies (see the Adversary Drawback), and fellow fanatics can provide contacts and allies (as per the Contact Quality).

Professions: Some of you are priests of a religion or cult; some have normal professions and occupations and worship or serve your beliefs in private. If you happen to be patriotic, you may serve in your nation's military forces.

Forsaken

You have lost everything and nobody cares about you—or at least you think so. Maybe you ran away from home, or you are an orphan. Perhaps you committed a crime so heinous that all your friends and loved ones turned away from you. Perhaps you were falsely accused of such a crime. You could belong to a group or sector of society despised by the mainstream, or could be afflicted by a severe problem or disease that makes you undesirable or contemptible in the eyes of others. This might not be your fault, but society's. Still, the effect is the same: you are alone and outcast.

You have few friends, but you are often loyal to those you do have. You might be bitter toward the world that has rejected you, or you might blame yourself and be consumed by self-loathing. Among you are runaways, prostitutes, the homeless, and people with unconventional lifestyles (punk, gay, gothic, and similar fringe or underground groups).

Unlike the Weird Ones (who may be just as unconventional; see p. 46), your behavior, history or status makes most people react negatively. While a typical Weird One inspires puzzlement and maybe a little fear, you attract hatred and contempt. Whether or not you have earned such feelings is for each player to decide.

Defining Questions: What made you an outcast? Is it something you did (or people think you did), or just who you are or what group or minority you belong to? Why isn't your family on your side? Do you even have a family, and if not, what happened to it? How do you feel about being Forsaken? Do you return society's contempt with your own, or do you wish you could change?

Qualities and Drawbacks: You often have low Social Level and Resources. Sometimes you are an Addict or suffer from such mental Drawbacks as Delusions, Emotional Problems, or Paranoia. Sometimes you have Contacts among other people on the fringes of society.

Professions: You often work in marginal jobs, either low paying (like busboy at a low-rent diner) or illegal (panhandling, prostitution, petty theft).

Fugitive

"They" are after you. They could be anybody—the authorities, the Mafia, the Combine, or the re-animated body of someone you did wrong come back for beyond-the-grave payback. Whoever They are, you know you do not want Them to catch you. To avoid getting caught, you may be on the run, never staying anywhere for too long, or you could be in hiding, maybe under a false identity—one you might have used for years. You could be guilty of whatever you are wanted for, and avoiding your just punishment, or you are innocent and trying to prove your innocence while staying one step ahead of your pursuers.

Defining Questions: Who is pursuing you, and why? Did you do something to deserve the pursuit, or were you falsely accused? What are you doing to escape pursuit (running, hiding or both)? Do the people around you (friends and companions) know of your plight? Did they take you in or accompany you anyway? If you were framed, who framed you (if you know)? What are you doing to prove your innocence (if anything)?

Qualities and Drawbacks: Your pursuer is an Adversary. You almost always have low Resources and Social Status. If you are pretending to be someone else, you have a Secret instead of an Adversary, or both. Most of you end up developing the Paranoia Drawback (with good reason).

Professions: Any. You can come from all walks of life.

Reluctant Hero

All you wanted was a normal life, but Fate had other things in store for you. Time and time again, you were faced with danger. Somehow, you managed to get through these situations in one piece, but now people expect similar acts of heroism from you. And you have the feeling that, instead of running away like a sensible person, you will do something really stupid like getting involved once again.

Defining Questions: If you had not been dragged into unusual adventures, what would you do with your life? What turned your life around and forced you to become a hero? Do you regret doing the right thing, or do you just claim to regret it? How did the incident affect your life?

Qualities and Drawbacks: Sometimes you have the Clown drawback, and jokingly demean your own actions and the dangers you face. Many of you have a code of honor (Honorable) that forces you to help others.

Professions: Any, although most of you have fairly safe and boring occupations. Circumstances, not your job, forces you into dangerous situations.

Scoundrel

You always look out for number one. You do not mind doing things the good or right way, but that usually does not turn out well. You have not problem lying, cheating, or stealing, if that is what it takes to get by. Even when you do the right thing, you often try to squeeze out some profit or benefit for yourself. You may or may not exploit your friends, but strangers are almost always fair game. This does not mean that you are wholly evil—sometimes, you act with perfectly good intentions, but your path always seems to lead to trouble. You can be humorously incompetent, or coldly efficient. Many of you are con men, gifted with charm and a good eye for human weakness. Even when fighting for a good cause, your methods are questionable.

Keep in mind that this character concept does not necessarily excuse acting against the interests of other Cast Members. You do have friends and allies you would rather not betray. Furthermore, even a villainous or weaselly character like you does not foolishly endanger your position (or your life) by incurring the wrath of powerful companions. If you needlessly provoke others, you cannot avoid the consequences of your actions by shrugging and saying "it's in my nature." Sometimes it is better to sublimate your baser urges in order to gain greater benefit from your allies.

Defining Questions: What made you into a scoundrel? Were you deprived as a child, and now you covet wealth and fortune? What do you want to acquire—money, power, or knowledge, and how far will you go to acquire it? Do you seek to exploit everyone around you, or do you have some limits? Would you betray a friend for a large enough reward, or do you save your dirty tricks for your enemies only?

Qualities and Drawbacks: Covetous is the most common Drawback. If you have been successful, you may have high Resource levels, but typically you are relatively poor and hungry (which motivates you to do anything to get and stay ahead).

Professions: Many (but not all) of you belong to illegal or quasi-legal professions, such as confidence man or thief. Sometimes, you belong to mainstream professions, but tend to stick to the seedier aspects, such as ambulance-chaser lawyers or used car salesmen. If you are Gifted, you often exaggerate your knowledge and power to impress and exploit the gullible.

Seeker of Knowledge

You want to know the Truth. You hate to be kept in the dark about anything, and your goal in life is to accumulate as much knowledge about as many things as you can. In the course of your activities, you have discovered that there are many groups or individuals who wish to hide what you are trying to uncover, and that these people go to great lengths to protect their secrets. You do not care, and continue searching for answers despite the risks.

You want to discover the secrets of magic and the supernatural. You may be trying to explain the supernatural in scientific terms, or accumulating occult lore for its own sake. Insatiably curious, you risk almost anything in order to make yet another discovery.

Defining Questions: What knowledge do you seek? How did you become interested in the search? What do you hope to achieve? How are you trying to gain more knowledge? Is anybody interfering with your research or investigations? What have you discovered so far, and how much further do you wish to go? How does your search for knowledge affect your everyday life.

Qualities and Drawbacks: Many of you are Obsessed with your quest for the truth. Sometimes, you suffer from Delusions or Emotional Problems caused by your constant search. If you threaten the secrets of powerful hidden organizations, you may end up gaining powerful Adversaries.

Professions: Scholar, occultist, private investigator, journalist, conspiracy theorist.

Student

You have embarked on a quest for knowledge. Unlike the Seeker of Knowledge (see p. 44), you have recently begun, and are just now being initiated in the ways you have chosen to follow. Whether you are a budding mystic learning your first Invocations, or a graduate student of archeology being introduced to forbidden knowledge, you are eager to learn, and perhaps a little too impatient. Sometimes you think you are more powerful and learned than you really are, which may lead to serious trouble.

You must always have a teacher—you may be a new member of a Covenant, being introduced to the mysteries of the Gifted, or you may have been taken under the wing of a learned practitioner. The teacher could help you out of sheer altruism, or may demand a heavy price (typically in services rather than money) for the knowledge he shares.

Defining Questions: What made you interested in learning the secret arts? Are you motivated by curiosity or ambition? Who are your teachers? How did you come to be their student?

Qualities and Drawbacks: Depending on your motivations and previous history, you may have a wide variety of Qualities and Drawbacks. Some of you are Covetous, being motivated by the desire for power, while some might be Obsessed with the desire for knowledge. Many of you have low or average Resource levels, but your school or teacher counts as a Contact.

Professions: Since you must spend most of your time pursuing your vocation, you generally work at part-time jobs. You might be anything from a librarian to a waiter to a bouncer. Sometimes you are employed by the school in a number of capacities.

Survivor

You have lived through horror and tragedy. Whether you endured life with an abusive family, were victimized by a crime or accident, or underwent some devastating trauma, you were able to endure and carry on. Your experiences have affected your life; in some ways, you are a far stronger person, but you still carry the scars (physical or psychological) of your ordeal.

You may have been affected by a supernatural event or experience, or by the horrors of war. You might have been raised by a dark cult that tormented you in your youth, or you might be the lone survivor of a bombing raid. As a result of the event, you are now aware of the many horrors lurking beneath our everyday "reality." Your motivations should be strongly linked to the event or situation that marked your life. You may be trying to make sure the situation does not happen to anybody else, or you might be seeking revenge (in which case this concept could be combined with the Avenger, see p. 40).

Defining Questions: What was the experience you survived? How long ago did it happen? How did you escape or endure the situation? Who else (if anybody) was affected by the experience? How has the experience affected the rest of your life? Are you a stronger person as a result? What do you want to do about it (if anything)? Is there any chance a similar (or worse) experience happening to you in the near future?

Qualities and Drawbacks: Almost any mental Drawback, from Recurring Nightmares to Emotional Problems and Delusions, are possible for you.

Professions: Any.

Wanderer

You are a modern-day nomad, never staying in one place for too long, never settling down. Eventually, you always find an excuse to move on. Maybe you are afraid of the responsibility of committing to one place and the people in it, or perhaps you feel there is something better waiting for you in the next city, or you might just be driven to travel and see new things. Unlike the Fugitive, you are motivated by your own inner demons or yearnings. Like many nomads, you may have a "circuit" of places you visit periodically, so that anybody who knows you has some an idea of where you'll be at a given time of the year. Alternatively, you may wander at random, rarely returning to the a place you previously visited.

You travel through countries or continents, sometimes by vehicle, sometime on foot or relying on the kindness of strangers. The remote roads of *Armageddon's* America are dangerous places, and those of you traveling therein have to be quite adept at a number of mystical and mundane skills if you hope to survive. You who choose the roads less traveled often find signs of the Taint in small towns and lonely trails, haunting the wilderness or hiding in the cities' underbelly.

Your type works best for short Stories where you arrive at a locale, deals with whatever conflict you encounter there (working with local Cast Members), and then move on, or Stories where all the characters are also on the move for their own reasons (the other Cast Members could also be Wanderers, Fugitives, or Seekers). On the other hand, you might decide to stay in a place for an indefinite period of time if there is a compelling reason for it (i.e., for the duration of a Story).

Defining Questions: What made you choose your nomadic lifestyle? Do you have a destination (real or imagined) in mind? What is your preferred mode of transportation? How do you make a living as you travel? Do you stick to a general route, going back and forth between a string of destinations, or do you wander aimlessly, always going to a different place? Do you make friends in your travels, and do you ever return and visit them? What are your favorite places to visit whenever you arrive to a new destination?

Qualities and Drawbacks: Some of you are motivated by a negative mental trait such as Obsession or Emotional Problems. Most of you do not have much in the way of Resources, and only own a vehicle and whatever you can carry in it. Those of you who follow a specific path back and forth often have Contacts (and Adversaries) on some of your customary stopping points.

Professions: Most "ordinary" jobs are difficult to perform if you do not have a permanent address, so you tend to stick to temporary work, such as farm hand or fast-food employee. Many of you have to do what you can to earn enough money to move on: you might play the guitar at a club in one town, and pick fruit for minimum wage at another town.

Warrior

Your life revolves around strife and conflict, and you plan to win every time. You may hate yourself for it, but you never feel more alive than when you are in combat, doing what you do best, meeting a worthy foe and coming out on top. You may care about the cost of war, about the butcher's bill that must be paid, but that does not prevent you from doing what needs to be done. You might be a nice person most of them time, but if you are put into a situation where it's kill or be killed, you become a lethal, remorseless fighter.

You can be a veteran of a war (or, the reincarnation of a veteran from many wars through history!), who has acquired a taste for battle in addition to the skills to fight in one. You may be reluctant to get into a fight, but once you are in one, you plan to see it through.

Defining Questions: Where did you first fight in combat? Where and how were you trained? What do you do now? Do you go out of your way to seek fights, or do you prefer to avoid violence except when necessary?

Qualities and Drawbacks: Most of you have Situational Awareness, Fast Reaction Time, Hard to Kill and other physical and combat-oriented qualities. Some of you may have mental Drawbacks as a result of your exposure to the horrors of war.

Professions: Soldier, bodyguard, martial artist.

Weird One

You do not belong in normal society. Maybe it's just how you look—maybe you dress funny, or are overly fond of tattoos and body piercings, or deliberately flaunt fashion. More likely, it's how you act. You may have beliefs, attitudes, or behaviors that strike others as odd or disturbing. They may think you are crazy—and they may be right.

Many Gifted are Weird Ones. Being raised by a family of magicians, believing that magic and spirits exist, would certainly qualify you for the scorn and disbelief of society as a whole. While these things exist and are generally public information, openly practicing magic or other metaphysical abilities is regarded as "weird." You may no longer care about conforming to social rules of behavior, or may have been so deeply traumatized that you are not able to follow those rules.

Defining Questions: What makes you different from the rest of the world? Did you choose to be different, or was it the way you were raised by your parents (or adoptive parents, or wolves in the jungle) that makes you unusual? Do you want to be accepted and cannot help being weird, or do you revel in your strangeness and rub it in other people's faces? How do "normal" people react to you?

Qualities and Drawbacks: Mental and social Drawbacks may be common.

Professions: Usually something unusual, like undertaker, or artistic, like freeform poet or tattoo artist.

Character Type

The Character Type determines the combination of physical and mystical abilities of a character. In the **Unisystem**, a character's Attributes and traits are determined by allocating a number of points to each one. In essence, the player buys the Attributes, qualities and skills she wants. Since the player only has a limited number of points to buy things with, she has to make choices. For example, if the player makes a character too strong, there may not be enough points left to buy a high intelligence. The Character Type determines how many points you have to spend on each character component.

The four character point components used in *Armageddon* are Attribute, Quality (and Drawback), Skill, and Metaphysics. Attribute Points are spent on a character Attributes (Strength, Intelligence, etc.). Quality Points may be spent on Qualities of any category, including Supernatural (as long as the Chronicler approves). Drawback Points are not awarded by a Character Types. They are taken, up to the limit allowed by the Character Types, in order to better define the character, and to gain additional character points (see p. 65 for the limitations on spending Drawback Points on Attributes). Metaphysics Points are used to gain mystical or other supernatural abilities. Metaphysics Points may also be used to purchase Supernatural Qualities, including racial Qualities.

The Character Types allowed depend on the type of campaign the Chronicler wishes to conduct: Pre-heroic, Heroic, Legendary, or Mythical. The more epic the campaign, the more powerful the characters will be. It is recommended that the Chronicler start at Heroic or Legendary levels; they are suited to most *Armageddon* games

Pre-Heroic Characters

Suited for games where the characters start from the bottom and work their way up in the world, these folks start with fewer points than other Character Types, representing relatively normal people. Their numbers are not what make these characters distinctive—their goals, personalities, and specialties do. These characters are ideal for introductory games, where the characters were just plain folks before the events of *Armageddon*.

Potential Hero

"I only care about making it through another day—not an easy thing to do, nowadays. Something tells me it's only going to get harder from now on."

Young, inexperienced, or perhaps just untried, Potential Heroes are not much better than the general run of humanity, but circumstances have forced them into the role of warriors, defenders, or avengers. These men and women probably led utterly normal lives until the ongoing Reckoning dragged them into trenches and dark alleys, to face things that should not exist. If they live long enough, they develop the skills and abilities needed to deal with those threats. Meanwhile, survival is a struggle in itself.

Potential Heroes begin with 15 points for Attributes, 5 points for Qualities (and up to 10 points in Drawbacks), and 30 points for Skills. They are considered to be mundane humans, and cannot acquire the Gift or Metaphysics.

Beginning Gifted

"At first I thought I was crazy—I kept seeing things that weren't there, and having weird dreams. Then I found out I was some kind of freak. Now I'm supposed to learn how to be a better freak. Life sucks."

These are characters who have just found out they are different from the norm. Most of them only have one or two minor abilities. They can be magical apprentices, recently awakened Seers, or some other type of beginner in the field of the occult. Some of them may not have any powers to begin with (except the Gift) and are in the process of learning to develop those powers.

Beginning Gifted get 15 points for Attributes, 5 points for Qualities (and up to 10 points in Drawbacks), 25 points for Skills, and 5 points for Metaphysics. The Gift Quality must be purchased during character creation.

Creating New Character Types

At each Campaign Level, Character Types are all built with the same total number of points. So, Pre-Heroic characters have a total of 50 points spread over the four basic categories (Attributes, Qualities, Skills and Metaphysics/Powers). Heroic characters have 80 points total, Legendary characters have 120 points, and Mythical characters have 200.

A Chronicler and her players may wish to re-distribute these points as they see fit, or even modify the point total, to create new Character Types. In general, assigning more than 30 points to Attributes is unbalancing, even for "super" games. Some basic guidelines are given below:

Pre-Heroic: These characters are built with 30 to 60 points in total. These are realistic, normal people.

Heroic: 70-100 points in total are spent to make characters at this level. These are skilled, outstanding people, or fictional heroes from relatively realistic settings. The companion Unisystem games *WitchCraft* (with 80 points for characters) and *All Flesh Must Be Eaten* (with 70 points for Survivor characters) are Heroic games.

Legendary: These worthies are composed of 110-150 points in total. They are powerful fictional characters, or minor comic book superheroes. At this level and beyond, most characters are assumed to have powers beyond the human norm—if they are human at all. The only exception would be highly trained characters with tremendous skill point totals.

Mythical: Very powerful characters use 160-350 points in total. These are comic book superheroes, beings of near-godlike powers, or major players in supernatural events.

Transcendental: 400+ points in total. These are more powerful comic book characters (the guy with the big red 'S'), or god-like entities.

Race and Campaign Level

In *Armageddon*, humans are not the only characters available. Celestials—angels and mythological gods—are also part of the conflict. Demigods, the hybrid offspring of angels and humans, and True Immortals can be used. Not all these "races" are appropriate for a given game, however. A Story about urban survival in the face of chaos and supernatural influence may not work with glowing angels tossing around bolts of energy, for example. Also, the more powerful races are too expensive to use in all but Legendary or Mythical games. Outlined below are some guidelines as to what races are appropriate to a given game style. Humans are appropriate for all power levels, although at the higher levels, they are humans with superhuman abilities, set apart from the rest of the world by their abilities.

Pre-Heroic Games: Generally speaking, only humans are appropriate for Pre-Heroic Games. With a lot of point-juggling, it just might be possible to play some of the weakest supernatural beings, but the result will not be very convincing.

Heroic Games: The lesser run of supernatural, like True Immortals (who use the Gifted Character Type), as well as inexperienced Kerubim, Seraphim, and Inheritors, are appropriate to this level.

Legendary Games: Lesser Seraphim, Avatars, and experienced members of the aforementioned races work best with this point total. Common and Greater Seraphim, as well as Incarnates, can be created with these points, but they represent less mature members of those races—perhaps "young ones" either recently born or who have spent millennia in the dream-like state known as Ecstasis.

Mythical Games: Very powerful and ancient members of the lesser type of supernatural, and typical members of the greater races like the Seraphim and Incarnates can be created with those point totals. Even at these levels, however, the more powerful Celestials, like Archangels or Titans, are beyond the point allotments given here. Those beings have point totals in the hundreds, and their basic abilities, limits, and powers are far greater. Fortunately, they are not numerous, and they rarely risk themselves by taking action directly in the world.

Heroic Characters

Heroic characters are larger than life, but are not overwhelmingly powerful. Their abilities, influence, and experience are great, but they are not the "movers and shakers" of the war. Instead, they are the "foot soldiers," the agents who put themselves in harm's way, often for purposes they do not fully understand.

Most Heroic characters are Gifted (with full-fledged supernatural powers) or Lesser Gifted (with better skills and Attributes but lower special abilities). Mundane characters are given a great many points to spend on normal Attributes and skills, but have no supernatural abilities. They are at a disadvantage in most games, but can make for interesting characters, supplementing mystical knowledge with simple mundane know-how. Lesser Supernatural characters are young, inexperienced people with a non-human heritage.

The Gifted

"We can see what others can't, and can perform impossible feats. But it is no blessing, I'm afraid, for what we see is often horrible to behold, and we must perform impossible feats just to stay alive."

The Gifted possess special powers and senses, and have spent time honing their abilities. For this reason, they have a decent amount of points to purchase Metaphysics, special powers, and abilities. Being Gifted also has disadvantages. These characters have powers that make them easily noticed and targeted by supernatural predators, other Gifted, and Mundane enemies. Also, the Gifted are the most likely to be dragged along by the currents of Fate; strange events seem to happen around them. They often find themselves in dangerous and unusual situations, ruining any chance of leading a normal life.

Gifted characters get 15 points to distribute among Attributes, 10 points for Qualities (and can gain up to 10 points in Drawbacks), 25 points for Skills, and 30 points for Metaphysics. Gifted characters must have the Gift Quality, or they must belong to the True Immortal race; this is what defines them, and the basic prerequisite for their other abilities.

Lesser Gifted

"I don't like to rely on all that mumbo-jumbo stuff. If I need to contact somebody, I use the telephone: who needs spells? Sometimes, though, you need more than guns and phones and cars to survive, and I've got just a little edge I save for those occasions."

The Lesser Gifted are characters with only a touch of supernatural power. To make up for their lower occult powers, Cast Members who select this type are more accomplished in other areas. Although weaker in the area of magic and unusual abilities, the Lesser Gifted have higher Attribute and skill scores than their more supernaturally-adept counterparts. This is for game balance only; the "run of the mill" Lesser Gifted character would have average Attributes and skills.

These characters are less likely to attract the attention of supernatural beings except when they actually use their special abilities. They have a better chance of living a relatively peaceful existence, although their powers often lead them into trouble.

The Lesser Gifted start out with 20 points for Attributes, 15 points for Qualities (and can gain up to 10 points in Drawbacks), 30 points for skills, and 15 points for Metaphysics. The Lesser Gifted also must buy the Gift Quality, or must belong to the True Immortal sub-race.

Mundane

"I don't know what is going on, and I don't care. I'm sure there is a logical explanation for this, but for now I'll humor you—you seem to know how to avoid getting killed, even if what you say is crazy."

These characters have no supernatural skills whatsoever. Mundanes are at a serious disadvantage in the world of *Armageddon*, because they lack the ability to face (and in some cases even perceive) many of the dangers hiding beneath the shadows of reality. Mundane Cast Members should be extraordinary individuals (perhaps with a few Attributes near or at the human maximum), whose great physical or mental prowess allows them to be of assistance to their Gifted allies and friends.

Mundanes start out with 25 points for Attributes, 20 points for Qualities (and up to 10 points in Drawbacks), and 35 points for Skills. They get no points for Metaphysics (and cannot acquire the Gift Quality or any Supernatural Quality that has the Gift as a prerequisite).

Lesser Supernatural

"I'm not human, but I share many of your problems. I can be thwarted and made to suffer; I can even be killed. More importantly, though, I'm on your side."

Lesser Supernatural characters are not truly human, although they may appear so. They belong to another order of being—Celestials, or the hybrid offspring of Celestials and humans. They have great power but are not yet experienced enough to make full use of them. They could be young Nephilim Inheritors who just discovered their inhuman origins, or neophyte Kerubim on one of their first assignments. Although more powerful than humans, their natures can be sensed by the Gifted and other supernatural beings, making them easier to find, for good or ill. Supernatural beings also have many ancestral enemies, from human cults to other inhuman beings.

Lesser Supernaturals start out with 15 points for Attributes, 15 points for Qualities (and up to 10 points in Drawbacks), 25 points for Skills, and 25 points for Metaphysics. Finally, they must belong to one of the supernatural races described in the Qualities and Drawbacks section.

Legendary Characters

Legendary characters are powerful and experienced. If human, they are very powerful sorcerers or psychics. They may not be leaders, but they certainly are considered to be "major players," people that others in their field speak about with respect or fear. These characters are able to make a deep impression in world events, and their deeds, if they ever become public, may become modern myths.

On the other hand, their power can be a heavy burden. Their foes—and often their friends—never let them rest. Even soldiers are not expected to be on the front lines all the time; heroes can rarely afford the luxury of rest. And their own success brings about more problems. They become personal targets of the enemy, as do their friends and loved ones. Like the superheroes in comic books, they live in constant danger—and unlike typical superheroes, a determined enemy can destroy them.

Playing the more powerful supernatural beings in the complex world of *Armageddon* requires a good deal of familiarity with both the game system and the game setting. Thus, Legendary characters are not recommended for beginning Stories.

Mixing Legendary and Heroic characters is also not recommended for most games, because of the wide differences in power. A few exceptions are possible, however. If a player is more mature and knowledgeable about the game world than the rest of the group, she could take on the role of teacher or mentor. Her reward for the extra work of having to know the world almost as well as the Chronicler would entail playing a more powerful character. With this power should come responsibility, however; the character should feel a great deal of care and respect for the "weaker" characters. The designated mentor should not abuse her abilities by bullying her "pupils." As usual, the Chronicler knows best how her gaming group would deal with such situations, and she should make the final decisions. Finally, power is relative in *Armageddon*—a normal human piloting an F-22 jet fighter is the match of most angels in aerial combat. In the field of intrigue and conspiracies, mortals often manage to outmaneuver ancient supernatural creatures—one of the themes of *Armageddon* is that age and power are not necessarily accompanied by wisdom.

Supernatural

"I have known war since men first forged weapons of iron and rode chariots toward their doom. It is amusing to see that the only true improvements are in the weapons they wield. How foolish these mortals be."

This type covers beings of great supernatural power, such as the Kerubim, Lesser and Common Seraphim, Avatars, and their ilk. They are not human—or they have not been human for quite some time. Their high point totals are meant to reflect beings of great age and experience, as well as tremendous power. Supernatural characters are far above mere humans in terms of power and skills. Only Gifted humans, large numbers of mortals with modern weapons, or other supernatural creatures can match a Supernatural. Chroniclers should tailor the adventures they design for these characters to provide them with interesting challenges.

Supernatural characters have 30 points for Attributes, 20 points in Qualities (and up to 15 points in Drawbacks), 40 points for Skills, and 30 points for Metaphysics. They must belong to one of the supernatural races described in the Qualities and Drawbacks section.

Greater Gifted

"Things have not been this lively since—well, since I was a mere mortal, and that was a long while ago. I get the feeling that my entire existence has been nothing but a training run to deal with this situation."

These are humans who have cultivated their occult powers to superhuman levels; they represent some of the greatest sorcerers and psychics of the world, movers and shakers of human affairs. Many of these humans are very long-lived or even immortal.

Greater Gifted characters have 20 points for Attributes, 15 points in Qualities (and up to 15 points in Drawbacks), 35 points for skills, and 50 points for Metaphysics. These characters may be Gifted or True Immortals, and must purchase the appropriate Qualities.

Mythical Characters

This is the upper range of power for beginning characters. Mythical characters are only a few rungs below the great Powers in the setting. They are superhuman beings, among the best at their specialties, any one of them the equivalent of a small army of normal humans or even supernatural beings. These characters are meant for "super-heroic" games—fast and furious action, fighting against seemingly impossible odds, or rubbing elbows with the movers and shakers of the world. Powerful beings such as these attract the most fearsome enemies.

Even more so than Legendary characters, Mythical characters should be used with some degree of caution. Unless the Chronicler puts some thought into the game, the super-powerful characters may end up chewing up the scenery, getting away with murder, and mowing down Supporting Cast characters with gleeful abandon. Only the most epic and far-reaching Stories can use these characters, and then there is the risk that the players may become jaded—"We saved the world again. Woohoo." For people who like four-color adventuring, and for Stories that follow the dynamics of comic books, however, Mythical characters fit right in.

This is not to say in-depth roleplaying and character development are necessarily secondary for Mythical characters. Some players may wish to portray Greater Seraphim or Incarnates conspiring with their greater brethren, for example, or arch-magi leading their Covenants in the war effort. In either case, both the Chronicler and the players must know a great deal about the setting and the cosmology—the Chronicler has to work even harder, for it is impossible to predict who the Cast Members will seek out in the course of their adventures.

In theory, the best way to approach the setting is to start at the Pre-Heroic and Heroic level, and then, over time, develop other Stories at the higher power levels, with a mixture of experienced characters from earlier games and newly-created powerhouses, to suit the players' tastes. A long-running game may end up in a dramatic, epic Story at the highest power levels. Such a climax may be a lot more satisfying than starting from the top—at some point, there will be nowhere else to go . . . but down.

Greater Supernatural

"Oh, brave new world! So much has changed since I walked among mortals. So many things to experience, to study—and to change. Stand against me at your peril."

The more powerful supernatural characters can be built with these point totals. Greater Seraphim and Incarnates, and very experienced members of the other supernatural races are included in this total. In short, anyone short of an Archangel falls under this Character Type. Chroniclers wishing to build impressive Supporting Cast characters (both as allies or enemies) can use these point totals as guidelines.

Greater Supernatural characters have 30 points for Attributes, 20 points in Qualities (and up to 15 points in Drawbacks), 60 points for Skills, and 90 points for Metaphysics. They must belong to one of the supernatural races described in the Qualities and Drawbacks section.

Gifted Master

"These are not the witches you're looking for."

Gifted Masters are men and women who have developed their powers over decades of study and practice, until they can challenge even powerful supernatural creatures. After a lifetime of dealing with occult matters, many of these Masters are as alien and removed from humankind as true supernatural beings. Alternatively, they may be the "child prodigies" of the Magic Generation—relatively young, but with unearthly powers (internally developed powers like the Sight and Divine Inspiration are more appropriate for this alternative—the study of magic would require years of study to achieve the power levels described here). Most of these characters have a great deal of power and status in their respective Associations.

Gifted Master characters have 25 points for Attributes, 20 points in Qualities (and up to 15 points in Drawbacks), 55 points for Skills, and 100 points for Metaphysics. These characters may be Gifted or True Immortals, and must purchase the appropriate Qualities.

Associations

The organization a character belongs to can be an important factor in the character's development. People who work for the Heavenly Host, for example, usually have a different set of beliefs, duties, and outlook than a member of, say, the Lodge of the Undying. Choosing an Association is not mandatory; the Lone Wolves are a catch-all term for independent Gifted, Mundane, or Supernatural characters who have no real Association. Cast Members who do not want to belong to any group are considered to be Lone Wolves automatically.

A character's Association is useful in helping determine background and education. It also gives some idea as to appropriate Qualities and Drawbacks, Skills, and professions. An Association is not meant to be restrictive, however. There is a great deal of variety within each Association, and there is no need to stick to the stereotypes described below. For example, not every Heavenly Host member is full of virtue and self-righteousness. Some players may have fun twisting the stereotypes, like creating an angel who wears power suits, carries a cell phone, and sees the war between Heaven and Hell (or between Leviathan and Creation) as a corporate power struggle, with souls, not stock options, being fought over.

Described below are seven Associations, including the "catch-all" Lone Wolves. The descriptions are brief and include only the most basic knowledge about the Association. Chroniclers who wish to reveal more on Associations during game play should limit their players to the material presented here. Otherwise, players and Chroniclers alike may review this information and the more expansive text of **Chapter Six: Associations.**

Alliance

We must hang together, or we surely will hang separately.

—Rael, Exiled Seraphim

Look, I don't care what you guys did to each other a thousand years ago. You are going to cut the crap and start working together, or I'm going to open a can of whoop-ass on y'all.

—Cindy Falco, Gifted human

Description: The newest organization in the world, the Alliance is a motley grouping of humans and non-humans brought together by a common goal: to defeat Leviathan's servants in the world. The group operates largely underground, although the U.S. government has a number of unofficial ties with it. The Alliance fights Leviathan behind the front lines, unearthing and destroying Its agents in the Free World and assisting resistance movements in Church-controlled territories. The Alliance makes it a point to recruit newly awakened Gifted humans and beings such as True Immortals, Nephilim, and Inheritors.

It is possible to belong to both the Alliance and another Association. In this case, the player must decide which organization holds the character's primary loyalties, and she gains the Special Abilities of that Association.

Qualities and Drawbacks: Many members have strong and dangerous Obligations to the organization. Combat and investigation-related Qualities (Hard to Kill, Acute Senses) are prized for field agents.

Skills: Depending on their specialty, Alliance members have skills ranging from Occult Knowledge to Guns (Sniper Rifle).

Metaphysics: Any power or race from *Armageddon* or *WitchCraft* is appropriate for this organization. Angels of all types, Exiles, and Nephilim are fairly common.

Special Abilities: Human, non-Gifted members get two free levels of the Good Luck Quality. Gifted and Supernatural members get two extra Metaphysics Points.

Common Professions: Occultists, spies, soldiers, and policemen can be found among the ranks of this Association. Some of them are ancient and powerful beings who live off a web of power and influence, and hold no real jobs. Many other members were normal (usually young) men and women who are now being inducted into this group.

Heavenly Host

We are God's messengers. To us fails the honor to cherish and protect all of God's creations. Even when we must protect them from their own shortcomings.

—The Archangel Gabriel

Character Creation Example
(Continued)

This one is easy. Graelle, Jean's character, belongs to the Heavenly Host. Jen makes a note that Graelle gets a free level of the Theophany skill. This will come in handy when she has to choose powers.

It's going to take you a while to get used to working with humans. They smell, they are rude, and they sin. All the time. I loathe them. I truly do.

—Zidkiel, Greater Seraphim,
to a recently Transcended Seraphim

Description: The members of the Host are the holy angels of religion and legend. Self-styled agents of the Creator—whom they have not been in contact with for millennia—the Host alleges to carry out the Will of God. They are locked in an eternal struggle against the Infernal Legion. With the coming of Leviathan, the Host has abandoned its subtle tactics, and now operates openly on a number of fronts. The war against the Tainted has superseded all previous concerns, but they are still not forgotten.

In addition to angels (Seraphim and Kerubim), the Host employs a number of human agents, both Gifted and Mundane, to fight the good fight. Some of these agents do not know exactly who employs them, although most of them believe they are crusaders in a holy cause.

Qualities and Drawbacks: Many angels have Delusions, especially Prejudice against humans, other "lesser beings," even other ranks of angels. By the same token, the angels of the Host are expected to have a 2- or 3-point Honorable Drawback. Angels are not allowed to accumulate worldly goods. Social and economic Qualities and Drawbacks are meaningless to them and cannot be acquired. Adversaries, on the other hand, are common, and include demons, Gifted humans, and even other angels.

Skills: Many angels have little experience in human affairs (before the beginning of this Reckoning, most Seraphim had not walked the Earth in centuries). They should have few modern skills (e.g., Guns and Driving), and, when they do, they should not have them at high levels. Others were human once and are more experienced in the ways of mortals, however.

Metaphysics: Most angels have a limited array of powers, or Theophanies (see p. 258). Only the Archangels transcend those limits. Gifted human agents are either Divinely Inspired or have a Spirit Patron, usually an Archangel.

Special Abilities: Celestial Characters gain one free level of the Theophany Skill. Additional levels must be purchased separately. Human members (both Gifted and Mundane) gain two levels of Improved Essence Pool—their contact with the Celestials has strengthened their souls.

Common Professions: Few angels spend enough time on the physical realm to get jobs. Within the Host, however, an angel's powers usually define his vocation. Mortal agents include clergymen of every monotheistic denomination, as well as private investigators, terrorists (or, more euphemistically, "freedom fighters"), and soldiers.

Infernal Legion

The damn war ruined everything. I had a great gig going. Drugs? Nah. Little League. No, not the kids, you moron. The parents. Those boomers will sign over their souls just to have Junior win a game or two.

—The demon Jethrel

The times are changing, my friend. The boys with the halos are busy, and our esteemed leaders have a lot of irons in the fire right now. A couple of enterprising guys could go far in this new world order, if we stab the right backs. We might even get ourselves a ticket out of Hell.

—Roger Sacco, Qliphonim

Questionable Allies

Of all the Associations presented here, the Infernal Legion is the most likely to be controversial and problematic. In the game cosmology, members of the Legion are constantly tormented, are often under the close supervision of cruel and brutal masters, and generally are brutal and sadistic individuals. As such, they may not be appropriate for many *Armageddon* games. Keep in mind, however, that not all members of the Legion are heartless monsters; a few crave redemption and escape from their condition, making for interesting characters.

Description: Tempters and corrupters, the Infernal Legion is controlled by the Fallen, angels who tried to destroy humankind in the distant past. Defeated and exiled to the Death Realm by their fellow Seraphim, these demons have spent millennia plotting against humans, trying to make them self-destruct through greed, lust, and hatred. With the coming of Armageddon, many demons have set aside those goals. While most still hate humankind, they are forced to preserve, as a bulwark against the Leviathan, those same humans they sought for so long to destroy. The irony of the situation is not lost on them.

The Infernal Legion hierarchy is composed of Fallen Seraphim. It also employs Fiends (evil spirits) as warriors and enforcers. Most of their agents on Earth are Qliphonim, damned souls who, faced with near-eternal torment after death, agree to serve the Legion and help corrupt others. They also have a number of human servants and agents. A few knowingly serve the Demon Lords, but many others do so unwittingly, often with the best intentions.

Qualities and Drawbacks: Cruel, Delusion (Prejudice) and assorted mental Drawbacks are common. Angelic, demonic, or human Adversaries are also frequent.

Skills: Agents on Earth have an assortment of skills geared toward the corruption of unwary humans, including Acting, Haggling, Seduction, and Smooth-Talking. Most of the Fallen also have an assortment of combat skills, for the inevitable conflicts with angels.

Metaphysics: The Fallen Angels have their own version of Theophanies and the Theophany Skill. Human agents usually have a Spirit Patron (Demon Lord) and a number of powers through them.

Special Abilities: Celestial characters (all Seraphim types and Qliphonim) gain one level of the Theophany Skill. Gifted agents gain two points' worth of Spirit Patron (Demon) powers. Mundane agents gain two points worth of Qualities (typically Physical or Social), "gifts" from their masters.

Common Professions: Servants of the Legion find work as pawnshop owners, pimps, drug dealers, attorneys, talent agents, and political advisors.

Lodge of the Undying

Do you want to live forever? You and I can. The rest of the world can't. Not our fault, but do you think they'll be sympathetic if they ever discover us? Keep your nose clean and your mouth shut, and you'll live longer. A lot longer.

—Dagobert "Dago" Ferrell, to a new Lodge member

Many of you laughed at my New Age "crap" not too long ago. What do you say now? Our ancestral enemy rules half the world!

—Serena Carroll, Immortal

Description: The Lodge of the Undying is a gathering of True Immortals, people who never grow old, and are extremely difficult to kill. For quite some time, this organization has served as a semiformal gathering and mutual assistance society, a place where a young Immortal could rub elbows with others of her ilk and learn the finer points of eternal youth. The Association was also concerned with learning the truth about its kind. Most Immortals have visions and dreams of their previous lives, glimpses of a glorious past where Immortals ruled a powerful civilization, often identified with such mythical lands as Atlantis and Ultima Thule. Some members have been able to recreate some "Atlantean" super-science, however, and that is definite proof there is something to those dreams.

Faced with the War, this Covenant is divided and uncertain. Many members are certain that Leviathan is the old nemesis of Atlantis, the being who came to rule over Ultima Thule, and nearly destroyed all of humankind millennia ago. Others are content to hide and let humans and the other powers deal with the situation. This conflict may tear apart the Lodge very soon.

Qualities and Drawbacks: Almost all members must have the Immortal Quality, for obvious reasons. However, other long-lived beings and people have on occasion been accepted. For the older Immortals, Age and high levels of Resources are standard. Many Immortals have Adversaries (typically other long-lived people and creatures). Some have accumulated impressive lists of Delusions over the years, too.

Skills: Any skill combination is possible, since the Undying have the time, and usually the resources, to pursue any occupation. Long-lived Immortals should spend at least some points on

archaic skills (Hand Weapon, Riding, etc.) to represent past accomplishments. Those archaic may not be at high levels (representing "rusting" through lack of practice), however.

Metaphysics: Immortals cannot have most Gifted abilities, but they have their own array of unique powers (see p. 303). Non-Immortals can have almost any power.

Special Abilities: Because of their extensive research materials, all members gain one free level of Occult Knowledge (Immortals).

Common Professions: Younger Immortals can belong to any profession. The older ones tend to have enough wealth to make a job superfluous, although some own businesses, or work as artists or in similar freelance occupations.

Lone Wolves

Cannon fodder—that's all you are if you join up with anybody. Angels, Demons, Gods, they are all the same. You'll be their pawn, and they'll use you up like you'd use a bullet. Screw 'em all, is what I say.

—Joe Smith, Exile

The meeting of the Psycho Ward has convened to test a new candidate. Say your name, please. All right, when I say the word, take off your blindfold and try to kill me. If you impress me enough, you are in.

—Kevin Feist, leader of the Psycho Wardens

Description: The Lone Wolves are individuals or small groups, each with their own perspective and stake in the War. Some are men and women with tremendous powers who only wish to be left alone. Others have their own mini-Associations, different only in size from the groups described in this section. This "Association" covers all characters who do not belong to any of the larger groups. They can be normal people in the military, young characters who have just discovered their powers and have not given allegiance to anyone, or members of a tiny secret society with its own agenda.

Qualities and Drawbacks: Any are possible. Members of small secret societies may have Obligations and Secrets as a result.

Skills: Any skill that is appropriate. Those without a teacher are unlikely to have Occult Knowledge or similar esoteric abilities.

Metaphysics: Any. Members of small groups are more likely to have Necromancy or Magic, while true loners may have more internal abilities like the Sight. Inheritors, Exiles, and Nephilim are also very likely as well.

Special Abilities: Lone Wolves get two additional Metaphysics Points to put into any power or ability they have.

Common Professions: Any, as determined by the background. Few characters with unusual powers are able to lead a normal life, unless they are careful to hide them. Those who do not likely end up serving in the military or the secret services of their respective nations.

Pantheons

It is good to tread on Midgard once again—even if it is just in time for Ragnarok.

—Ivar Thorson, Asgardian Incarnate

So the so-called gods from a few dozen pantheons want to join forces and work together like a big happy family. This is going to be some mess. But what the hell, count me in; it's been a boring century.

—Scarlett Wenczel, Inheritor of Ares

Description: More of a loose confederation than a cohesive Association, the Pantheons comprise a number of different groups of Old Gods. The main goals of the Pantheons is to save the world—without humankind, their own Realms will cease to exist—and to revive their power and influence over mortal affairs. The second goal puts them in conflict with the Heavenly Host, but for the time being the greater threat of Leviathan overrides all other concerns.

By helping save the world, the Old Gods hope to regain some of the worship and adoration humans felt for them. Members of this Association include Incarnates (lesser gods made flesh), Avatars (god-touched humans), Inheritors (the half-mortal children of Old Gods), and Servitors (humans who devote themselves to serving a pantheon, in return for power). Mundanes occupy the lowest ranks of the Pantheons, but they have their uses.

Qualities and Drawbacks: In addition to the above racial Qualities, members (especially Servitors) have Spirit Patrons (see p. 243). A high Obligation to the Pantheons is common.

Skills: Theology or Myth and Legends (appropriate Pantheon) is indispensable, if only to know who one is dealing with. Recently arrived Incarnates (and Inheritors and Avatars from the Realms of their Pantheons) are not familiar with the modern world, and should not have high skill levels in such things as Guns, Driving, or Piloting.

Metaphysics: Avatars, Incarnates, and Inheritors possess a number of mythic powers. These powers are defined by the Aspects they embody (see p. 275). Human members can have a number of other powers, although Servitors usually have Spirit Patrons. Magic is also fairly common among all members.

Special Abilities: The Blessing of the Pantheons gives all characters (Gifted, Mundane, or Supernatural) either two levels of Hard to Kill or Increased Essence Pool, or one level of each.

Common Professions: Under the circumstances, most Pantheon members on Earth are involved in the War, usually in the military, or as guerrillas or partisans behind enemy lines.

Watchers

Our sin was loving humans too much. We abandoned Elysium, and now hide among mortals. Humans must be protected—from the demons who would tempt them, and from the angels who would turn them into ignorant sheep.

—High Archangel Azazel

My father was an angel. I most certainly am not.

—Jenny Diaz, Nephilim.

Description: A group of Seraphim and Titans founded the Watchers to help humans regain some of the knowledge they had lost after the Flood destroyed the Elder Kingdoms. Persecuted by both the Heavenly Host and the Pagan Pantheons, this organization stayed in the shadows for millennia, aiding humankind in covert and subtle ways. They also spent that time gathering powers for the inevitable conflict with their fellow Celestials. The advent of Leviathan's Apostle caught them by surprise, and now the leadership struggles to come to terms with the new order of things. Many former Watchers have joined the Alliance. Others fight the CoR on their own.

The membership of the Watchers include a few Seraphim (of all types), a larger number of Exiles, many Nephilim, and a smaller contingent of Inheritors, Avatars, and other supernatural types. They also have a fair number of Gifted and Mundane humans in their ranks.

Qualities and Drawbacks: Adversaries and Secrets are very common. After decades or centuries of persecution, many members are also Paranoid. High Status and Resource levels are common among some of the older members.

Skills: All Watchers call the physical plane their home. They can possess any human skills, although some of the older Seraphim live in remote areas and are less likely to be experienced in the ways of the modern world.

Metaphysics: Any. Seraphim members have Theophanies or Maleficia. Gifted characters can have any power, except those granted by demonic or Tainted entities.

Special Abilities: Watcher characters gain one free level of any Gifted or Supernatural power (the power must cost no more than three points per level). Mundane characters gain a +2 bonus to resist any power that can influence or control their mind.

Common Professions: Many Watchers are professionals of assorted types. Several are extremely wealthy, and appear to be aimless members of the idle rich, a perfect cover for many Watcher agents. Scholars and academics are also very common. Many Watchers network operate on college campuses around the world.

Using Other Associations

The Covenants found in *WitchCraft* and such supplements as *Mystery Codex* or the *Abomination Codex* can be used in *Armageddon*, at the Chronicler's discretion. All *WitchCraft* supplements have some notes on using the organizations in the *Armageddon* setting.

Attributes

Attributes are inborn characteristics of a character: her physical strength, intelligence, senses and so on. By selecting a set of Attributes, the player defines the limits of what the character can and cannot do. For example, if the player buys a very low Dexterity, she should not be surprised in the course of the game if her character routinely fails at anything that requires grace and manual coordination. As the player buys Attributes, she starts getting a sense of what the character is like. Is she strong but clumsy, tough but oblivious, alert but weak-willed?

When determining a character's Attributes (and in general, when creating a character), it is suggested that players use a pencil to write the numbers down. This enables players to make changes or use leftover character points from other elements to increase an Attribute.

There are two kinds of Attributes: Primary Attributes and Secondary Attributes. Primary Attributes are purchased using Attribute and other character points. Secondary Attributes are calculated from a character's Primary Attributes.

Buying Attributes

During character creation, Cast Members get an allotted number of points to distribute to their Primary Attributes. The exact number of points is determined by Character Type (see p. 47). Attributes can be bought up to level five on a one to one basis (e.g., Strength 3 costs three points, Strength 4 costs four points, and so on). Attributes after level five are much more expensive: three points per additional level. Human beings cannot purchase Attributes past level six, the absolute maximum (buying an Attribute up to level six would cost eight points).

It is recommended that at least one Attribute Point be put into each Attribute. No Attribute is useless, and concentrating Attribute Points into one or two characteristics makes the Cast Member's life difficult in the course of a game.

Strength

A measure of the physical power of the character, Strength determines how much damage the character inflicts with hand-to-hand weapons, how much weight she can carry, and, in part, how athletic the character is. Since Strength is a result of the character's physical condition, it also helps determine how much damage and exertion the character can withstand before collapsing.

Strength is useful to people who do a lot of heavy lifting or are likely to engage in hand-to-hand combat. Characters apt to have a high strength include athletes, manual workers, and soldiers. A low Strength indicates either small size and body weight, or just a lack of exercise.

A character may safely high jump (Strength x 10) inches (x 2.5 cm) and broad jump (Strength) yards (meters). Double these numbers with a good running start. Anything greater requires the character to "push the limits" and attempt a Difficult Strength Task; each Success Level grants the character an effective +1 Strength for purposes of the jump only. A failure means the character miscalculated or stumbled. He jumps using an effective -2 Strength. That could prove disastrous.

The Strength Table details how much a character of any given Strength can lift without much effort (carrying capacity). Higher weights can be raised with effort. Assume a maximum lifting weight—for brief periods (Constitution minutes)—equal to double the carrying capacity.

Strength Table

Strength	Lifting Capacity	Benchmark
1-5	50 lbs/25 kg x Strength	Strength 5: 250 lbs/125 kg
6-10	200 lbs/100 kg x (Strength - 5) + 250 lbs/125 kg	Strength 10: 1250 lbs/625 kg
11-15	500 lbs/200 kg x (Strength - 10) + 1500 lbs/750 kg	Strength 15: 2 tons
16-20	1000 lbs/500 kg x (Strength - 15) + 5,000 lbs/2,500 kg	Strength 20: 5 tons
21-25	1 ton x (Strength - 20) + 5 tons	Strength 25: 10 tons
26-30	5 ton x (Strength - 25) + 10 tons	Strength 30: 35 tons

A character can "push the limits" here too and try to lift more by passing a Simple Strength Test. Every Success Level achieved allows the character to lift an additional 10% of his maximum lifting weight. This effort costs the character D4(2) points of Endurance for every Success Level in the Test. A failure on the Strength Test causes D4(2) Life Points of damage—the character strained himself and tore something up.

Dexterity

Dexterity is a measure of the character's coordination, agility, and gracefulness. It is used to determine how proficient a character is with any skill or task that requires motor control and precision, from performing card tricks to picking pockets to punching somebody in the face (Dexterity helps the punch land; Strength determines how much the punch hurt the other guy). Any task in which the character's speed and coordination matters is influenced by Dexterity. A high Dexterity is common among dancers, gymnasts, or pickpockets. People with low Dexterity are clumsy and ungraceful.

Constitution

This Attribute determines how physically hardy or healthy the character is. Constitution is important when it comes to dealing with diseases, damage, and fatigue. This Attribute is also used (along with Strength) to determine how much physical injury the person can survive and still remain functional. Constitution comes into play with physical skills that involve endurance, like swimming and long-distance running.

Intelligence

This Attribute determines the character's ability to learn, correlate, and memorize information. Also, this Attribute is used to understand and interpret information. Note that intelligence and education are two separate things; a character can be brilliant but illiterate. Education is covered in the Skills sections, which determines what a character has learned in her life. Intelligence is important to anybody pursuing a higher education, or performing most technical jobs; most computer-related skills (except arcade games) are dependent on the character's Intelligence.

Perception

Perception governs the character's five senses. It gives a general overview of the character's ability to sense things. This Attribute is used to find clues, notice things, and avoid surprise. Also, Perception determines the character's intuition and alertness. A character with a low Perception would be nearly oblivious to what is going on around her.

Perception is an important Attribute for the Gifted—many of their abilities are based on their intuition and detection powers, and this is where Perception plays a role. This Attribute also comes in handy for detectives (to discover those important clues), poker players (to read the expressions of their opponents), and sports referees (to spot rules violations).

Willpower

This Attribute measures the character's mental strength and self-control, and her ability to resist fear, intimidation, and temptation. Willpower is vital to magicians; after all, magic is "the Science and Art of causing Change to occur in conformity with Will." Most other Gifted abilities and powers are also dependent upon Willpower. This Attribute is important for the Mundane, however, for it can be used to resist magical coercion, psychic mind control, and the influence of panic, greed and lust, among other things.

Attribute Bonuses

Depending on the character's race, some Attributes may be modified. If the character belongs to a race that is on the average stronger than human, for example, then a bonus is added to that Attribute. These are numerical bonuses, either positive (e.g., +1 to Dexterity for a graceful race) or negative (e.g., -2 to Intelligence for a race of drones or mindless brutes). These bonuses are applied *after* Attributes have been purchased normally. For example, if a player spends three points on Dexterity, and the Cast Member's race has a +1 Dexterity, the character would have a final Dexterity 4. Even if her character belongs to a drone race, a player might want to create a true genius among its kind. She could spend eight points to get a base Intelligence value of six (five points for the first five levels, three points for the sixth). Still, after the -2 modifier was applied, the Cast Member's final Intelligence would be four.

Racial Attribute Modifier Table

The following bonuses are added to Attributes after they are purchased, depending on the character's race. The number in the parentheses is the racial maximum. These maximums cannot be exceeded either during character creation or by increasing Attributes through experience (see p. 146), except where a special ability allows a character to exceed her racial limits.

	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Per	Wil
Humans	0 (6)	0 (6)	0 (6)	0 (6)	0 (6)	0 (6)
True Immortals	+1 (7)	+1 (7)	+1 (7)	0 (6)	0 (6)	0 (7)
Inheritors	+3 (8)	0 (7)	+3 (8)	+1*(6)	+1*(7)	+1*(8)
Nephilim	+2 (9)	+2 (8)	+2 (8)	+1 (7)	+1 (7)	+1 (7)
Kerubim	+3 (9)	+2 (9)	+3 (9)	0 (6)	+1 (6)	+1 (6)
Avatars	+4 (10)	+2 (8)	+4 (8)	+1 (6)	+1 (6)	+1 (6)
Lesser Seraphim	+3 (10)	+3 (9)	+3 (10)	+1 (8)	+1 (8)	+1 (8)
Seraphim	+3 (12)	+3 (12)	+3 (12)	+2 (9)	+2 (9)	+2 (9)
Greater Seraphim	+5 (18)	+4 (12)	+4 (15)	+3 (10)	+3 (10)	+4 (10)
Incarnate	+6 (20)	+3 (10)	+4 (15)	+2 (12)	+2 (12)	+2 (12)

* Inheritors may only raise one mental Attribute by +1.

While buying Attributes for non-human races, racial maximums must be observed. Humans have a limit of six for all Attributes, but other races may have lower or higher limits. For example, if the drone race could not have an Intelligence higher than three, the most points that could be spent on Intelligence would be five (for a base of five, modified down to three).

The Meaning of Numbers

Here are some guidelines for the meaning of Attributes:

Level 1: The character is below average in the Attribute. A Strength 1 indicates a poor physique, either a petite or flabby, sedentary person. A Dexterity 1 indicates clumsiness—a character likely to drop things, not to be trusted with delicate manual work unless she has trained hard to do so. An Intelligence 1 is below average—not mentally challenged, but certainly a bit slow on the uptake. A Perception 1 character is not very aware of her surroundings, likely to miss what's going on around her. Characters with a Constitution 1 are delicate and often in poor health. They get sick easily, and their low physiques may be caused by abuse of drugs, tobacco, or alcohol. A Willpower 1 person is easily intimidated and influenced by others, a follower, and somebody who is likely to succumb to temptation.

Level 2: This is the average for human beings. Most people in any given group have Attributes in this range, typically with one or two Attributes at levels one or three.

Level 3: This is above average but not extraordinary. A Strength and Constitution of three show some athletic aptitude, probably somebody who works out regularly and vigorously, or a natural athlete who has not taken time to develop her talent. Characters with a Dexterity 3 are graceful individuals. An Intelligence 3 indicates a bright person who can easily learn new skills, if she has the temperament to do so. A Perception 3 character has good senses and intuition, and is not easily fooled or confused. A character with a Willpower 3 is rarely convinced or bullied under normal circumstances.

Level 4: An Attribute at level four is well above average. Perhaps one out of every ten persons in a random group has one or two Attributes at this level. Strength and Constitution 4 can be found only in athletes, including the best football players in a large high school or college campus,

Character Creation Example
(Continued)

Jean continues to create her character, the fanatical Angel Graelle. The game is going to be relatively high-powered, so she can pick a Legendary Character Type—a Supernatural, to be exact. Jean has 30 points for Attributes, 20 points for Qualities (and up to 15 points for Drawbacks), 40 points for Skills, and 30 points for Metaphysics. Pencil in hand, Jean prepares to do some math—not her favorite thing, but something that needs be done only once before play.

The Lesser Seraphim are among the most powerful races in *Armaggedon*, and that Quality costs 35 points. Jean will address that when she turns to her Qualities and Drawbacks (see p. 86).

For now, let's focus on Attributes. Jean has 30 points to distributed among the six Attributes. She spends four points each on Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution, for a total of 12 points. She decides Graelle has a very high Willpower, so she buys a level of six. Levels one to five cost a point apiece, but level six costs three points, so the total cost for that Attribute is eight points. She has 10 points left, and she distributes them evenly between her character's Intelligence and Perception.

If Graelle was a human, that would be it. As a member of the Lesser Seraphim race, she gets a number of Attribute bonuses. Checking the table, Jean sees that Lesser Seraphim gain a +3 to all physical Attributes, and a +1 to all mental ones. After adding those in, Graelle now has the following Primary Attributes: Strength 7, Dexterity 7, Constitution 7, Intelligence 6, Perception 6, Willpower 7.

So Graelle is inhumanly strong, fast, and resilient—enough to break all Olympic records, and over three times as strong as the average man. Her will is indomitable, above the human limit—only the most powerful or terrifying experiences have any effect on her. Finally, she has near-superhuman levels of Intelligence and Perception. Given who her enemies are likely to be, she will probably need those high Attributes.

extensively trained Special Forces soldiers, and other people who spend a large amount of time and effort keeping in shape. A Dexterity 4 would only be common among gymnasts, acrobats, dancers, and other talented individuals. Mental Attributes at level four indicate near genius (Intelligence), acute senses and intuition (Perception), and an "iron will" (Willpower).

Level 5: This is the "practical" human limit. People with these levels are extraordinarily talented, able to perform complex and difficult feats with little practice. While people with Attributes at level five are not "record breakers," they are among the best and the brightest representatives of humanity. In a small or medium-sized community, only a handful of people have one or two Attributes at this level, and they are likely to be well known for their strength, wisdom, or toughness. Cities, large college campuses, and groupings of the Gifted have more of these extraordinary individuals, but even there they are not common.

Level 6: This is the true human limit. A few people with "freakish" Attributes may exceed it (to level seven), but they are a handful even among the teeming billions living on Earth in the 21st century. Characters with one or more Attributes at level six are extremely rare, something on the order of one in ten thousand, or less. People with more than one Attribute at level six are perhaps ten times less common, and so on.

Level 7+: Someone with Strength 7 would be as strong as a horse, for example. To give a basis for comparison, divide the Attribute by two, and round up. This gives a measure of how many times greater the Attribute is compared to the human norm. A Strength 10, for example, can be translated as "five times stronger than a normal man;" Dexterity 12 would indicate six times the average human reaction time.

Very High Attributes and Skills

In general Tasks (but not Tests), characters with an Attribute above 10 are treated as if the Attribute were a 10. So, a character with a Dexterity of 12 and a Guns skill of 4 would only add a 14, not 16, to her result. Tests use the full Attribute, however, regardless of its level.

Secondary Attributes

Once the six Primary Attributes are determined, the player must do some quick calculations to figure out the character's Secondary Attributes. The formulas uses Primary Attributes and varies depending on the character's race.

With the exception of Speed, which determines how fast a character can run at an all-out dash, the other Secondary Attributes form a pool of points. Certain factors (injury, fatigue, or the use of magic) temporarily increase or decrease the amount of points in each pool. For example, Life Points determines a character's current health. If an injury is sustained, the health (the Life Points) of the character is lowered. Healing the damage eventually raises the pool back to its original level.

Life Points

This Attribute determines the character's physical health. The Strength and Constitution of the character are the determinant factors. A big, muscle-bound athlete can survive more punishment than a pencil-necked, cold-catching nerd. On the other hand, a bullet to the head or a solid whack with an ax will probably kill either character. Life Points determine the amount of physical damage the character can sustain before being unable to function. Other things that drain Life Points include disease, extreme fatigue, and some supernatural attacks.

Each race has a different Life Point formula. Supernatural beings tend to be stronger and hardier than humans. A Seraphim, for example, could be shot several times before being crippled or slowed down. The varying formulas are presented in the Life Point Formula Chart.

Endurance Points

Endurance Points measure the character's ability to withstand fatigue and exertion. Endurance Points use Constitution and Strength, as well as Willpower, taking into account that some people can push themselves past normal physical limits through sheer will power. The more Endurance Points a character has, the longer she can run, lift things, swim, and so on. As the character exerts herself, she starts losing Endurance Points. When Endurance Points are reduced below zero, the character eventually passes out from exhaustion (see p. 141). In some cases, light damage from non-lethal attacks is subtracted from Endurance instead of Life Points (see p. 139). Again, Endurance Point formulas vary according to race, and are summarized on the Endurance Point Formula Chart.

Life Point Formula Chart

Avatars	(Strength + Constitution) x 5 + 60
Greater Seraphim	(Strength + Constitution) x 5 + 150
Humans	(Strength + Constitution) x 4 + 10
Incarnates	(Strength + Constitution) x 5 + 150
Inheritors	(Strength + Constitution) x 5 + 40
Kerubim	(Strength + Constitution) x 5 + 50
Lesser Seraphim	(Strength + Constitution) x 5 + 50
Nephilim	(Strength + Constitution) x 5 + 30
Seraphim	(Strength + Constitution) x 5 + 100
True Immortals	(Strength + Constitution) x 5 + 15

Endurance Point Formula Chart

Avatars	(Constitution + Strength + Willpower) x 5 + 50
Humans and True Immortals	(Constitution + Strength + Willpower) x 3 + 5
Inheritors and Nephilim	(Constitution + Strength + Willpower) x 3 + 30
Kerubim and Lesser Seraphim	(Constitution + Strength + Willpower) x 5 + 30
Seraphim, Greater Seraphim and Incarnates	(Constitution + Strength + Willpower) x 5 + 10

Speed

This Attribute represents how fast a character can run at maximum speed. It only comes into play on the few occasions when running speed is a consideration, such as when a character is chasing or being chased by somebody. The Speed formula is the same for all races.

Speed Formula

All Races: (Constitution + Dexterity) x 2 (miles per hour); Constitution + Dexterity (yards per second)

Essence Points

Essence is the amount of spiritual energy the character has within herself. It measures the strength of the character's soul and life force. Essence is also the binding force of reality. This means that inside each human being are the building blocks of Creation. Magic, Inspired Miracles, and other abilities channel Essence for a variety of powerful effects. Although Essence is used primarily in the performance of magic, it can also be temporarily drained by strong emotions (like fear and hatred), as well as by the attacks of some supernatural creatures. Totally draining a human being of her Essence can lead to her death. The Gifted often have extra Essence, due to their greater control over the flows of primal energy; this extra Essence is purchased during character creation as a Quality (see p. 83). Each race's formula as detailed on the Essence Point Formula Chart.

Character Creation Example
(Continued)

Jean calculates the Secondary Attributes of her Lesser Seraphim Graelle. She takes the values from the Primary Attributes and puts them in the appropriate formulas.

For Life Points, she adds Strength and Constitution (7 and 7, for a total of 14), multiplies it by five (for a total of 70) and adds 50. Graelle has 120 Life Points—she is one tough customer.

For Endurance, she adds the character's Strength, Constitution, and Willpower (7, 7 and 7, for a total of 21), multiplies the result by five (for a total of 105), and adds 30 to the total, for a final result of 135.

For Speed, Graele's Constitution and Dexterity together come to 14 (7 + 7), multiplied by two gives 28 miles an hour, or 14 yards per second. Not too shabby.

Essence, an important factor to use Graelle's supernatural abilities, comes last. She adds all of her character's Primary Attributes (for a total of 40 points), then adds 60 points, for a sum of 100 Essence points. She hopes to buy some extra Essence to raise the Pool, if she can afford the expense later.

Essence Point Formula Chart

Add all the character's primary Attributes together. Then add the following depending on the character's race.

Avatars	+50
Greater Seraphim	+70
Humans	+0
Incarnates	+75
Inheritors	+20
Kerubim	+50
Lesser Seraphim	+60
Nephilim	+30
Seraphim	+65
True Immortals	+25

Qualities and Drawbacks

Qualities are innate characteristics that give the character an advantage or positive trait. Drawbacks are characteristics that somehow limit or detract from the character. Qualities and Drawbacks help round out the character, and can be helpful in roleplaying and in "succeeding" in the course of a game.

Qualities are desirable traits, and therefore they cost character points. Drawbacks, on the other hand, are limiting factors, and as a reward for acquiring them the character gains extra points. Points acquired from Drawbacks can be used in any point category—Attributes, Qualities, Skills, and Metaphysics.

Using Drawback Points

For point categories other than Attributes, Drawback Points can be used on a one-to-one basis (i.e., one Drawback Point is equal to one point in any of those categories). Attributes can also be bought, but at a more expensive rate. Raising an Attribute with Drawback points has a cost equal to the new Attribute level. For example, raising Dexterity from three to four would cost four Drawback points. This cost is cumulative: raising Dexterity from three to five would cost nine character points (4 for level 4, and 5 for level 5).

Categories

Qualities and Drawbacks are labeled by category. For the most part, these categories are descriptive and do not affect play. In certain circumstances, however, the category matters. The major example is Supernatural Qualities and Drawbacks—generally Mundanes may not purchase Supernatural Qualities or take on Supernatural Drawbacks. The following Quality/Drawback categories are used: Mental, Physical, Social, and Supernatural.

The majority of Qualities and Drawbacks are alphabetized by name (see pp. 33-79). The Supernatural category has been separated from the rest and included at the end of this section (see pp. 79-85).

Numerical Qualities and Drawbacks

Some Qualities and Drawbacks are expressed in numerical ways: the most common examples include Attractiveness, Charisma, and Resources. These are similar to Attributes. Qualities and Drawbacks change the character in positive or negative ways. As a result, they are represented as bonuses or penalties. For example, a Charisma +2 represents a bonus of two levels on any Task that involves influencing or manipulating people through social skills, while a Resource level of -2 indicates low income and few possessions, well below the national average.

Unlike Attributes, numerical Qualities have an average value of zero. If a player does not want to deal with any such Quality, it is simply assumed to have a base value of zero. Shifting the Quality below the average turns it into a Drawback and gives the character extra character points.

Qualities and Drawbacks During Play

Some Qualities and Drawbacks may be acquired or lost in the course of a game. In some cases, a Quality or Drawback might change. For example, a scarring wound could reduce the character's Attractiveness, or a change in fortune might increase or reduce the character's Resources or Social Level. When such a change occurs, no experience points are involved. Only when a player wants to purposefully change a Quality or Drawback must she spend experience points and come up with a good reason for the change (see p. 146).

Creating New Qualities and Drawbacks

The list below is far from exhaustive, although it covers most of the basics. In many cases, a "new" Quality or Drawback can be an extension or variation of an existing one. The value of the characteristic should be balanced out by the benefits or penalties it grants the character. Most Qualities or Drawbacks should be worth between one and three points; only the most powerful or crippling of them should have a value of four or higher.

Qualities and Drawbacks List

The following Qualities and Drawbacks may be taken by any character, as long as the Chronicler approves. Those that require a subcategory or Type are so indicated.

Acute/Impaired Senses (Type)

2-point Physical Quality or Drawback

This Quality/Drawback must be purchased separately for each sense: sight, hearing, touch, smell, or taste. Normally, the five senses are represented by the Perception Attribute. Acute or Impaired senses indicate one or more senses that are higher or lower than normal for a person with that Perception Attribute.

When bought as a Quality, an Acute Sense gives the character a +3 bonus to any Perception-related Test or Task that relies on that sense. If acquired as a Drawback, an Impaired Sense gives a -3 penalty to similar Tests or Tasks.

Some Impaired Senses (hearing and sight in particular) can be easily corrected in the modern age through the use of glasses, hearing aids, and similar devices. If the impairment is eliminated by the use of such devices, Chronicler should reduce the value of the Drawback to one character point. It is possible to have more than one type of Acute or Impaired Sense, or, for example, to have Acute Hearing and Impaired Eyesight. For obvious reasons, a character cannot select both the Impaired and Acute versions of the same sense.

Addiction (Type)

Variable Mental Drawback

An addict craves a substance and must have it, even against her better judgment. Most addictive substances eventually impact on her health. Many of them are also illegal, and using or purchasing them may land the character in jail should she be discovered. Those concerns matter little to the addict, however; when the craving hits, she can rarely resist it. She often does things she would normally never consider in order to satisfy her need, from cheating and stealing to committing serious crimes, from selling her body to even betraying her friends.

When an addicted character cannot get her usual "fix," she suffers from debilitating withdrawal symptoms. Most mental actions (e.g., any Tasks or Tests using Intelligence, Perception, or Willpower) suffer a penalty equal to the value of the Drawback (so, a character with a two-point Addiction suffers a -2 penalty to most mental actions) until the addict can get what she needs. The most severe drugs (like heroin) also produce strong physical effects; such addicts have a penalty of -3 to all physical actions in addition to the above penalty on mental actions.

The severity of the addiction and the relative effects of the drug or substance determines the value of this Drawback. A detailed description of the effects of different addictive substances would fill an entire book or more. Chroniclers should adjudicate the game effects of a "high" on a character. This can range from a small action penalty for being slightly "buzzed," to the complete stupor of a heroin trip. In the game, as in real life, drugs are dangerous and unpredictable, and an addict character is often unable to control herself.

The Addiction Point Value Table gives guidelines for the value of a given Type of addiction. Chroniclers should modify these values as desired.

Unlike most Drawbacks, this problem cannot be easily overcome. Generally, the best a character can hope to do is to deny his craving "one day at a time." Getting rid of this

Addiction Point Value Table

Habitual drinking or smoking:	1 point
Heavy drinking or smoking, light use of marijuana or LSD:	2 points
Heavy use of marijuana or LSD:	3 points
Alcoholism, habitual use of barbiturates or cocaine:	4 points
Habitual use of heroin, heavy use of barbiturates or cocaine:	5 points
Heavy use of heroin:	6 points

Drawback should never be a matter of saving up enough points to buy it off. Resisting the craving requires a series of daily Willpower Tests. Once the character accumulates 10 Success Levels *in succession* from successful Willpower Tests, one character point may be spent to reduce the strength of the addiction by one point. For each Willpower Test up to the level of the character's Willpower, these Tests are Simple. For each one after that, the Tests are Difficult. All Tests suffer a penalty equal to the point value of the Drawback, plus an additional -1 to -4 depending on the strength of the drug and its availability (tobacco is so available and addictive that Willpower Tests are at a minimum penalty of -4 or even higher).

Another 10 Success Levels in succession are needed for the next point, and so on, until the Drawback is eliminated. If any Test is failed during the course of accumulating the 10 Success Levels, all Success Levels are lost, and the accumulation process must begin again.

For example, Joshua has a Willpower 3, and a two-point Addiction to marijuana. He starts to kick the habit, and begins making daily, Simple Willpower Tests. These Tests have a -2 penalty for the level of the Addiction, and a further -1 for the drugs availability and potency (Chronicler's judgment). For three days, Joshua rolls a 6, 8, and 15 (using the Rule of Ten, see p. 121). Adding his Willpower doubled (6), and subtracting his penalties (-3), the results are 9 (one Success Level), 11 (two Success Levels) and 18 (five Success Levels). This amounts to eight Success Levels. Joshua only needs two Success Levels to bring the Addiction down to a 1-point Drawback. Unfortunately for Joshua, however, the going gets tougher, and Difficult Willpower Tests are now required. The next day, Joshua rolls a 4. Adding his Willpower (3—no doubling) and subtracting his penalties (still -3), the result is 4. This failure sends Joshua in desperate search of a "fix." If he decides to try and kick the habit again, a new series of Willpower Tests must be begun—with no successes accumulated.

This struggle should be a major part of the character's roleplaying. A convincing depiction of the torments of the addict may be rewarded with bonuses to the Willpower Tests, at the Chronicler's discretion.

Adversary (Type)
Variable Social Drawback

At some time in the past, the character has made an enemy, or she belongs to a group, race, or nation that automatically attracts the enmity of others. An Adversary is more than somebody who dislikes the character, however. He, she, or they wish nothing less than the destruction of the target, either by killing or ruining her.

The more powerful the Adversary, the higher the value of this Drawback. Chroniclers should determine if an Adversary is appropriate to the game in question. If the Adversary is unlikely to appear frequently, the Chronicler can reduce the point value or disallow it altogether.

Individuals are worth one to three points as Adversaries, depending on their resources and abilities. A normal person would be worth one point; a Green Beret or multimillionaire would be worth three points. An organization may be worth two to five points, depending on its power. A gang of thugs would be worth two points, the police department of a city would be three to four points (depending on its size and competence), and a large national agency like the CIA would be worth five points or more. The CoR as a whole is worth 10 points, but it would take some major feat to gain the entire church as an Adversary. An organization within the Church, like the Soul Police or the Mendicant Knights is worth three to six points, depending on how badly the organization wants the character. All of the above assumes the CoR is interested in the character personally.

The player should have a good reason why her character has earned the enmity of the Adversary. Chroniclers can then weave this enemy into the plot of the Story in any way she sees fit.

Artistic Talent (Type)
3-point Mental Quality

Some people have a natural gift for producing astounding works of art, even if they lack formal training. Geniuses like Mozart and Picasso had the ability to create true art seemingly without effort. A character with this Quality has the talent to become a famous artist. Artistic Talent affects only one form of artistic expression, such as Painting/Drawing, Sculpture, Singing, etc., and the character should purchase some skill level in that area (unless she wants to work unskilled, see p. 120, and attempt to get by on sheer talent). It is possible to buy this Quality multiple times; each additional purchase grants the bonuses to an additional Type of Fine Arts. Further, Essence bonuses (see below) are cumulative.

Whenever a work of art is created, the character receives a +3 bonus to all related Task attempts. Additionally, even if the Task is failed, a minimum of one Success Level is always acquired—even a failure by the truly talented still has artistic merit. Finally, this Quality adds +1 per level to the effective skill of the characters to determine maximum Success Levels.

True artists have very strong souls. A character with Artistic Talent adds 12 Essence Points to her pool to represent the power of her spirit. In some worlds, this also makes artists more likely to be targeted by entities that feed on Essence, which may explain the often-tortured lives of true artists.

Attractiveness
Variable Physical Quality or Drawback

This Quality or Drawback determines the character's looks (or lack thereof). The average person has an Attractiveness 0, which means she is plain and undistinguished unless she takes steps to enhance her appearance (clothing, makeup, and poise always make a difference). Positive values in Attractiveness indicate pleasing features, while negative values indicate ugliness, scars, or unpleasant characteristics. The character's Attractiveness value can be added to or subtracted from any Test or Task that involves making an impression on other people. In some cases, negative Attractiveness values can be useful. When trying to intimidate or scare people, positive Attractiveness values have no effect, but negative ones count as bonuses! For example, a character with an Attractiveness -3 would add +3 to any Task where intimidating people is a factor.

Note that the physical Attributes of a character determine exactly how her Attractiveness is expressed. For example, a character with Strength and Constitution of three or four and an Attractiveness +4 appears extremely athletic, likely tanned from outdoor exercise, with a well-muscled body. A character with Constitution 1 and the same Attractiveness rating is probably a delicate-looking, pale person, with almost doll-like features.

Purchasing Attractiveness costs one point per level if bought as a Quality, or adds one point per level if acquired as a Drawback. After character creation, Attractiveness can change only by events that modify the character's entire appearance, either through scarring or plastic surgery.

Attractiveness can range from -5 to +5 in humans. A +1 or +2 makes the person stand out in a crowd and attract attention unless the character somehow hides her features. At +3 or +4, the character can easily make a living through looks alone, as a model or entertainer. At +5, the character would be as comely as the top models, beauty pageant contestants, and movie stars in the world. Some non-human beings may have Attractiveness levels above +5. Levels of +6 or higher represent unearthly levels of beauty. Normal people will be awestruck when seeing them. On the other hand, at -1 or -2, the person has homely features, or unsightly blemishes or scars. At -3 or -4, the character's features are downright repulsive. At -5, people are taken aback by the character's appearance; looking at her is a source of discomfort. Beings with inhuman features can have levels as low as -10.

Charisma
Variable Mental Quality or Drawback

This trait represents the personal magnetism and leadership qualities of the person, ranging from -5 to +5. A character with a Charisma in the negative range is instinctively disliked by most people she meets. People are naturally inclined to antagonize or avoid her. Charisma can be added to any Task where the character is trying to influence other people. Negative Charisma, of course, reduces the chance that any attempt to influence people will work. Charisma may be combined with Attractiveness, or the two Qualities may offset each other, in certain circumstances.

Clown
1-point Mental Drawback

The Clown refuses to take things seriously, and is always coming up with jokes and wisecracks, even during the most inappropriate moments. Perhaps the character is deeply insecure and tries to gain other people's acceptance through humor, or she simply delights in keeping people off-balance with her comments. This character cannot keep her mouth shut even when she knows a joke will only work against her.

Clowns are generally accepted and liked in situations where their quirky humor is not out of place (parties and other social gatherings, or among friends). Their sense of humor gets them in trouble during tense and dangerous situations. Also, people often do not take the Clown seriously even when they should.

Contacts (Type)
Variable Social Quality

The character has friends or allies who can provide her with information, warnings and even help, should she require it. The more helpful the contact is, the higher the Quality's point value. For any and all Contacts, the Chronicler determines whether or not the Contact is available at any given time. Generally, the more time the character has to reach or get word to her Contact, the more likely the Contact is to come through.

A Contact that only provides rumors and hearsay is worth 1 point. If the Contact usually provides reliable information and helps the character out in small ways (offering a ride, letting the character spend the night at the Contact's apartment), this Quality is worth two points. Actual allies who help the character in any way they can are worth three to five points, depending on the Contact's resources.

Covetous (Type)
1- to 3-point Mental Drawback

A Covetous character wants certain things and is prepared to go to great lengths to acquire them. She may be motivated by love of money, lust for sensual satisfaction, hunger for power, or the search for glory. Whatever she desires, be it fame, fortune, or influence, she will do almost anything to get it, limited only by any sense of caution or morality she may have—and in some cases, not even by that. A Covetous character usually refrains from breaking her own moral code or the laws of the land in the pursuit of her goals, but if a golden opportunity presents itself, the temptation may be just too great.

There are four Types of covetousness, based on what the character wants: Greed (money and wealth), Lechery (sexually attractive people), Ambition (power and influence), and Conspicuousness (fame and renown). It is possible to covet two or more of those things, but each additional source of desire adds but a single point to the value of this Drawback.

The Covetous Drawback has levels of severity, worth one, two, and three points respectively.

Level 1: The first level is relatively mild. The character knows what she wants, and she spends a great deal of time and effort to attain her goals, but she won't break her own rules or those of society to do so. Her desire otherwise dominates her life, however. Most of her actions should be directed toward achieving her objective, directly or indirectly.

Level 2: The second level is stronger—presented with enough temptation, the character may act even if it goes against her better judgment or morality. She may resist if the action she contemplates is truly wrong and reprehensible—stealing credit for a heroic deed performed by a friend, for example—but resisting requires a Simple Willpower Test, at a penalty of -1 to -3 if the temptation and possible rewards are great.

Level 3: The third level is the strongest—a desire so strong that it often overwhelms any scruples the character may have. When presented with temptation, she can only avoid acting by passing a Difficult Willpower Test, with penalties ranging from -1 to -5 depending on the size of the "prize." For a high enough reward, the character turns on friends or loved ones, and even betrays her cause or principles.

Cowardly

1- to 3-point Mental Drawback

A Cowardly character is easily scared and intimidated. Furthermore, she is very reluctant to take any risks; putting her neck on the line always strikes her as incredibly foolhardy. Note that this does not mean that a Cowardly character will not fight if necessary. Such a character usually tries to stack the odds in her favor, however, before resorting to violence. She would have no compunction (except as determined by other Drawbacks) against attacking others if circumstances minimized the danger. A coward can hide her Drawback from others easily, as long as she is not involved in a situation that is clearly dangerous. Only then may her limitations become apparent.

This Drawback has three levels of intensity, worth one, two, or three points respectively. The level of the Drawback acts as a modifier to any Willpower Test or Task to resist fear, intimidation, or bullying. For example, a character with a two-point Cowardly Drawback incurs a -2 penalty to any Fear Test (see p. 122).

Level 1: At the first level, the character avoids taking unnecessary risks, but fights when cornered (or when she thinks she has the upper hand). Simple Willpower Tests are necessary to avoid fleeing or surrendering when confronted by what the character considers to be superior foes. The same goes for taking even small chances, like confronting her boss, asking for a raise, complaining about some problem, or the like.

Level 2: The second level of this drawback is stronger. The character needs to pass a Simple Willpower Test to fight back even when she thinks the odds are in her favor, and needs to pass a Difficult Willpower Test to avoid fleeing dangerous situations, or taking chances.

Level 3: The last level is the worst, requiring Difficult Willpower Tests to get involved in confrontations or risky situations even when the character has a good chance of succeeding. Truly dangerous or heroic acts are simply impossible; the character never knowingly or willingly endangers herself, and may actually even betray her friends if she thinks she will save herself in the process.

Cruel

1- or 3-point Mental Drawback

Cruel people enjoy making other people suffer. The truly evil derive satisfaction from anybody's pain. Some people are perfectly normal and nice most of the time, but when angered or given offense, make their enemies pay—and love doing it.

This Drawback has two levels of intensity. The second level is best restricted to villains, as it indicates a serious mental problem that may make characters unsuitable for the typical campaign. As always, the Chronicler has the final say.

Level 1: This character would never hurt a friend or loved one. Enemies, especially those who have really angered her, are a different matter. She enjoys inflicting pain (mental or physical) on those she feels "deserve it." These characters are capable of committing atrocities under the right circumstances, but do not go out of their way to find opportunities. This is a one-point Drawback.

Level 2: This person is a true sadist, and never passes up the chance to inflict pain on others. Even friends and loved ones are not safe from

her. When it comes to enemies or those who get in her way, she enjoys nothing so much as their utter destruction or humiliation. When no enemies are available, she uses her "talents" on those around her. This is a three-point Drawback; people with this Drawback rarely keep any friendships, and quickly gain enemies.

Delusions (Type)
Variable Mental Drawback

Delusions are beliefs that have no basis in reality—at least as reality is understood by society at large. The character refuses to abandon such beliefs even in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary, or at best comes up with rationalizations to explain away any contradictions. The more impact a Delusion has on a person, the higher its value as a Drawback. Some examples are given below.

Delusions of Grandeur: This person thinks she is somebody far greater and more powerful than she really is. In extreme cases, the character thinks that she is a historical or mythological figure like Napoleon or Sherlock Holmes. The more common type has an exaggerated sense of overconfidence. Some examples: "I am a genius, but nobody understands me—which is why the best job I've held is cashier at a 7-11" (1 point); "I am the Messiah; prepare for the Second Coming!" (3 points).

Phobia: A Phobia (however defined) counts as a Delusion, worth -1 to -3 points depending on the severity. So, claustrophobia would be worth -1 if the character is uncomfortable in enclosed spaces and -3 if the character is unable to enter an elevator without suffering an anxiety attack.

Prejudice: The belief that a group of people (racial, ethnic, or national) has certain characteristics (positive or negative). While everyone has some prejudices in some way or another, a deluded person staunchly holds to these beliefs. In some cases, the person refuses to trust or befriend any member of such a group, regardless of the merits of the individual person. Such a Delusion is worth one to three points, depending on how intense the belief is, how large a group it applies to, and how it dominates the character's life. At the one-point level, the character could be an "Archie Bunker" type bigot; at three points, she would be a rabid white supremacist, unable to communicate with people of the wrong color.

Weird Delusions: Any strange belief that flies in the face of reality. Some examples: "Aliens talk to me through my wristwatch," "I have to wear this tin foil cap so the laser satellites don't make me kill again," "Dogs are the Spawn of Satan and must be destroyed." The value depends more on what the character does about the Delusion than about the Delusion itself. For example, if the character in the last example simply refuses to pet dogs, and avoids being next to a dog, a one-point Delusion would be sufficient. If she tells people about her beliefs all the time, and keeps pestering any dog-owners about the dangers of keeping such monsters around, a two-point Delusion would be appropriate. If she carries her insanity to its "logical" conclusion and starts hurting or killing dogs, the Delusion is worth three points and she is likely to get in trouble with the law.

Emotional Problems (Type)
Variable Mental Drawback

Those with Emotional Problems react in unreasonable ways to certain situations and problems. The reaction can be anger, pain, or anguish, typically more extreme than normal. Maybe a traumatic event in their life (or even in a previous life) has made them this way. These emotional problems can be triggered by ordinary events in normal life, or events that may bring distress to most people but which prompt a strong reaction from a disturbed character. Some situations that can trigger emotional problems are discussed below.

Depression: This character's emotional problems make the very act of living seem like a hard chore. Common symptoms of depression include sleep problems (either oversleeping or bouts of insomnia), severe procrastination (to the point that the sufferer may lose her job), and a lack of interest in anything. A character with Depression is at -2 to most Tasks, and tends to avoid becoming involved in anything. This is a two-point Drawback. A severe shock may snap someone out of this state for a while (a life-threatening crisis might do it), but the character sinks back into inactivity afterwards. Certain drugs and psychiatric treatment can reduce the effect of this problem (which also reduces its value).

Emotional Dependency: These types tend to be "clingy" and overly dependent on others. Once they make a friend, they want to hang around him all the time. When involved in a relationship, they are excessively needy. This behavior tends to annoy people around them. This is a one-point Drawback.

Fear of Commitment: Whenever this character starts feeling too close to somebody, she becomes afraid and starts pulling back. Maybe she is afraid that if she lets somebody get too close, they will hurt her, and it is not worth the pain. Or perhaps she fears that if she reveals too much about herself, the other person will see the "real her" and be appalled or disgusted. This makes it difficult to have a healthy relationship with either friends or lovers. This problem is a one-point Drawback.

Fear of Rejection: This person is afraid of rejection, and when she experiences rejection (or thinks she has been rejected), she feels hurt and angry. She may be afraid to make friends or approach people she is attracted to, and if her fears come true, may harbor a great deal or resentment and anger. This is a one-point Drawback.

Overcoming an Emotional Problem: A common theme in fiction involves characters who in the course of the plot manage to overcome their flaws. Emotional Problems can be overcome by characters during play. This should always be roleplayed. If the player was able to convey the inner struggle of her character over the course of several Stories, the Chronicler might allow her to eliminate the Drawback without having to "pay" any Experience Points to do so (see p. 146).

Fast Reaction Time
2-point Mental Quality

Unlike most people, who are easily surprised and blind-sided, these quick individuals can often anticipate their enemy's moves and counteract them. They almost never "freeze" in a dangerous situation. In combat, contact sports, or other physical confrontations, characters with this Quality can act first without needing to check for initiative, restricted by common sense (Fast Reaction Time does not help the target of a sniper half a mile away, for example). If opponents have Fast Reaction time, the advantages cancel each other, and initiative is resolved normally between them before moving onto to other characters in the same combat. This Quality also provides a bonus of +1 on Willpower Tests to resist fear (see p. 122).

Hard to Kill

1- to 5-point Physical Quality

Characters with this Quality are extremely tough, and can withstand an amazing amount of damage before going down. Even after being severely wounded, medical attention has a good chance of reviving them, scarred but alive. This Quality is bought in levels. Level five is the highest possible for human beings. Some non-human races may be allowed to have more than five levels of Hard to Kill. This will be covered in individual race descriptions. Each level of Hard to Kill adds three Life Points and a +1 bonus to Survival Tests (see p. 139).

Honorable

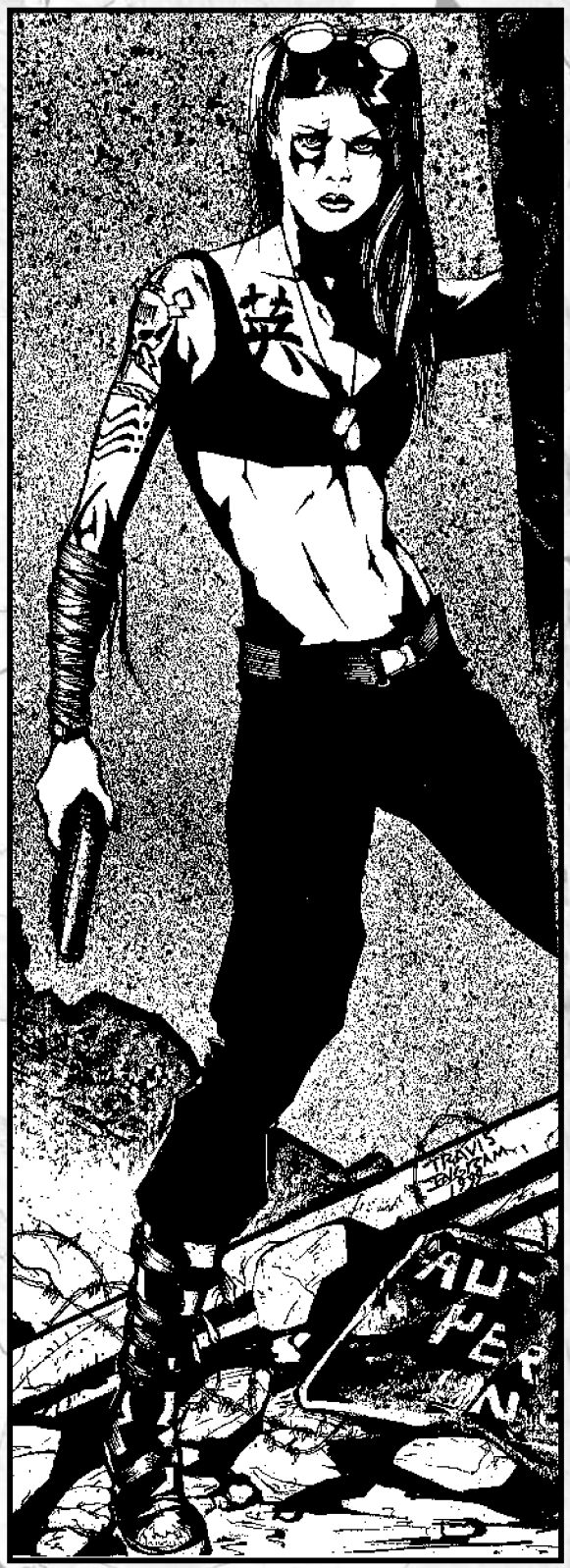
1- to 3-point Mental Drawback

The Honorable character follows a code of honor that she does not break lightly, if at all. The more restrictive and rigid the code is, the higher its value. In a life-or-death situation where honor must be ignored, the character might do so, but even then a Difficult Willpower Test is necessary to pass the psychological barriers reinforcing the code of honor. Players whose characters ignore honor for the sake of convenience should be penalized for poor roleplaying. The levels of the Honorable Drawback are discussed below.

Level 1: These characters do not lie or betray friends or loved ones, or people they respect. Anybody else, especially people from groups they dislike or are prejudiced against, is fair game. This is a one-point Drawback.

Level 2: This code of honor is more complex, and applies to everyone, friend or foe. The character always keeps her word and does her best to fulfill any promises she makes. She does not betray the trust of others once she has accepted it. Note that the character may be reluctant to give her word except in a good cause, because once it has been given she abides by it. This is a two-point Drawback.

Level 3: This person lives by a strict set of rules. In addition to all the other restrictions above, she refuses to participate in acts of betrayal such as ambushes, striking a helpless or unsuspecting foe, or cheating in any way. Lying is anathema, and is done only in cases of extreme need. Even then, she does it without conviction; any tasks requiring lying have a -2 to -6 penalty, determined by the Chronicler. This Drawback grants three points.



Humorless
1-point Mental Drawback

The Humorless character lacks the ability to laugh at life, and takes everything with the utmost seriousness. Other people's attempts at humor leave her cold or annoy her. Most people find this facet of her personality unattractive or bothersome. Clowns and practical jokers usually select the Humorless as their favorite target.

Lazy
2-point Mental Drawback

This character does not like to work and always looks for ways to avoid it. This limits how much she can learn or accomplish in life. A Lazy character must roleplay an unwillingness to work, except in situations where the work is extremely important, and even then she tries to shirk her duties or select the easiest task. More importantly, the character has a hard time learning skills, due to her inability to spend the required time and effort.

When determining and improving skills for a Lazy character, the character point cost becomes higher after reaching a certain level. This level is determined by the character's Attributes. A Lazy but intelligent or dexterous person can learn a great deal with little effort—at least at first. Skills are purchased normally until their level is equal to the Attribute most commonly associated with them. Combat and physical skills are linked to Dexterity, technical and scholastic skills are associated with Intelligence, and so on. After reaching that level, further improvement costs double. Given this, lazy people are unlikely to ever excel at anything.

For example, Gert is a near genius-level woman (Intelligence 4) who has never had to work hard to be successful. She could have been a great computer programmer, but has instead settled for being a good one. Gert's Computer Programming Skill can be bought up to level four in a normal manner—during character generation, each new level costs one character point; after character generation, each new level cost a number of experience points equal to that new level. During character generation, level five costs two character points, and each level above that would cost six character points (double the normal three). After character generation, it takes 10 experience points to raise the skill to level five, and 12 points to raise it to level six! Indeed, Gert never goes beyond level 4, too lazy to transcend this limit.

Military Rank
Variable Social Quality or Drawback

The character belongs to the armed forces. High rank has privileges: soldiers or sailors obey the character's orders. On the other hand, low-ranking soldiers are at a disadvantage. They get ordered around, and disobeying is not a good option. The value of Military Ranks ranges from –1 to +9, and costs 1 point per level (positive or negative). Keep in mind that high Rank also entails numerous duties that may restrict the character's actions even more than very low Rank. The rank names in the table below are taken from the U.S. Army system; other services and other nations have different names for equivalent ranks.

Military Rank Table

Rank Level	Description
-1	Private, Seaman
0	Corporal
1	Sergeant
2	Sergeant, First Class
3	Lieutenant
4	Captain
5	Major
6	Lieutenant Colonel
7	Colonel
8	Major General
9	General

Minority
1-point Social Drawback

A Minority character is considered a second-class citizen because of race, ethnic group, or religion. He is a member of a small or disadvantaged group, disliked by the mainstream. People of the dominant group tend to act in negative ways toward him; many will be automatically suspicious, fearful, or annoyed at him for no reason other than who he is. This Drawback has a one-point value to reflect a relatively enlightened early 21st-century America, where people cannot be denied service in a restaurant because of the color of their skin (in most places, at least). In other settings, where prejudice has the full weight of the law and tradition behind it, this Drawback might be worth two to three points.

Multiple Identities
2 points/Identity Social Quality

Some characters have more than one identity. The false persona comes complete with such records as a birth certificate, a social security number, and a credit rating. Only characters with criminal, espionage, or law enforcement connections are likely to have this Quality, because convincing papers require access to good forgeries and computer records. Each fake identity costs 2 character points. Note that characters traveling under aliases or who have purchased a fake driver's license do not need to purchase this Quality. Each Multiple Identity grants a set of papers and records that pass all but the closest scrutiny. Most police organizations can be fooled by the fake identity; an all-out investigation by agencies like the FBI or NSA reveals the truth.

Natural Toughness
2-point Physical Quality

The character is tougher than normal, capable of taking a punch without flinching. Tough characters have 4 points of Armor Value (see p. 160) against blunt attacks, such as fists, baseball bats, and the like. Bullets and slashing attacks are unaffected by this Quality, however. This Quality is common among professional boxers, bouncers, and full-contact martial artists.

Nerves of Steel
3-point Mental Quality

A character with this Quality is almost impossible to scare. Whether she is too dumb or too tough to be frightened is open to question, but she can keep her cool even in the face of unspeakable horror. Only the most bizarre and terrifying situations make an impression on a fearless character, and even then she has a good chance of not succumbing to panic. The character only makes Fear Tests (see p. 122) when confronted with the most shocking events, and gains a +4 bonus to her roll even then.

Obligation (Type)
Variable Social Drawback

Some rights are accompanied by duties. An Obligation must be followed to various degrees, and grants a number of points depending on the strictness of its dictates.

Minimal: The character is expected to obey the basic precepts of the organization or creed, and not to betray its members. This is worth no points. All members of an Association possess this Minimal Obligation. In some cases, the organization's basic precepts put members in danger (the Heavenly Host, for example), but this is usually offset by the bonuses and benefits of membership in the group.

Important: The character is expected to routinely risk herself for the organization, and go above the basic precepts of the membership. An Important Obligation is worth one point.

Major: The character is expected to put the welfare of the organization above her own. She is always on call, and does not have time to pursue such activities as a normal job, or much of a personal life. The penalties for disobedience or selfishness are severe, and may include death. This is worth two points.

Total: The character is expected to die for the organization, if need be. Missions for the organization are extremely hazardous, and the character is constantly in danger of imprisonment, torture or execution. This is worth three points.

Obsession (Type)
2-point Mental Drawback

A particular person or task dominates the character's life, to the exclusion of most other things. To pursue her Obsession, she goes to almost any lengths (as limited by her morality). She may neglect other duties, both personal and professional, to pursue that which fascinates her. This Obsession may be a person (who may or may not be aware of her feelings, but who almost certainly would be upset about their intensity) or a task (like getting revenge on somebody, or performing some important or notorious feat).

Paranoia
2-point Mental Drawback

"They" are out to get you. Trust no one. Everything is a conspiracy, everyone is keeping secrets. This character never knows when somebody is going to turn against her. A paranoid character expects treachery at every turn, and rarely trusts even her friends and relatives. Note that in a world where secret organizations manipulate centuries-old conspiracies, being paranoid can be somewhat

healthy. However, a character with this Drawback sees conspiracies and danger everywhere, including places where there are none. This makes her stories and beliefs less likely to be believed, even when they are true. Paranoid characters often suffer from Delusions and Emotional Problems (their point values are determined separately).

Photographic Memory
2-point Mental Quality

Those with photographic memories have an uncanny ability to remember things. After reading a book, they can quote passages without missing a word, and they almost never forget anything. The Chronicler should provide information the character would remember whenever it is necessary. Also, characters with this Quality receive a +1 bonus on any skill where memorizing facts is useful; most scholastic skills (e.g., Computer Programming, Humanities, Occult Knowledge, Science) fall under this category. Furthermore, in any Tasks where memory can play a role, the character gains a +1 to +3 bonus, at the Chronicler's discretion.

Physical Disability (Type)
Variable Physical Drawback

This Drawback covers any physical problems affecting the character's limbs. A disabled character may suffer from limb loss, spinal column damage, and any number of tragic impairments. The possibilities are below.

Missing or Crippled Arm/Hand: The hand in question cannot be used to grab or hold objects. Any Test or Task requiring two hands is at a disadvantage (-3 or worse) or simply impossible. This is a two-point Drawback. A character with a prosthetic hand can overcome some of these problems, reducing the Drawback to one point.

Missing or Crippled Leg/Foot: The character is unable to walk or run normally. With the help of crutches or a cane, she can move at up to one-third her normal Speed value. Hand-to-hand combat Tasks suffer a -2. This is a three-point Drawback. Prosthetics can reduce the penalties, increasing speed up to half-normal, and reducing combat penalties to -1. This reduces the Drawback value to two points.

Missing or Crippled Arms: Both arms are missing or crippled. The character cannot use any tools normally. Some people with this handicap have learned to use their feet with great skill to compensate for their loss. This is a four-point Drawback.

Missing or Crippled Legs: The character is unable to walk. Without the help of a wheelchair, the best she can do is crawl or roll on the ground. This is a four-point Drawback.

Paraplegic: Both arms and legs are crippled or missing, or the character is paralyzed from the neck down. Almost all physical activities are impossible. A special wheelchair, operated with the neck or mouth, can help the character move around (if the unfortunate has access to such instruments). Someone needs to take care of all the character's basic needs, from feeding to changing her. This highly debilitating trait is an eight-point Drawback.

Recklessness
2-point Mental Drawback

A reckless character is supremely overconfident and impulsive, willing to take incredible risks, often without thinking of the consequences. Most of the time, she never looks before she leaps—and gets into all kinds of trouble as a result. A reckless character prefers to act first and think later. She says what's on her mind with no consideration for diplomacy or courtesy, rushes into dangerous situations, and rarely wastes time on second thoughts. Reckless does not necessarily mean suicidal, however. Acting on impulse no doubt puts the character in jeopardy, but doing something clearly lethal is not roleplaying, it's just stupid.

Recurring Nightmares
1-point Mental Drawback

This character is plagued by terrifying dreams that relive some traumatic experience or are just frightening and disturbing. Every night, the Chronicler checks to see if the character suffers from the nightmare. This may be done at the Chronicler's discretion, or may be rolled randomly (a roll of one on a D10 means the character experiences a nightmare that night). On any night when the character is afflicted by the nightmare, she loses D4(2) Endurance Points as the result of her extreme restlessness.

Resistance (Type)
1-point/level Physical Quality

Some people are innately better at ignoring the bad things that life throws at them. This ability allows the character to fend off the effects of a particular type of harm. Each different Type of Resistance Quality must be purchased separately. Some examples are presented below, but others may be devised by Chroniclers and players.

For Resistance (Disease), the Quality level is added to Constitution when resisting Contagion Strength. For Resistance (Poison), the Quality level adds to any Constitution Test required, and decreases the damage caused per Turn (to a minimum of one). It could also be viewed as an "iron-clad stomach," and offers complete protection against eating bad or "off" food. Resistance (Fatigue) decreases any Endurance Point loss by its level (to a minimum of one per time period involved). A Resistance (Pain) Quality decreases the penalties associated with severe wounds, and add to the Willpower and Constitution Test necessary to avoid being stunned (see p. 139).

Resources
Variable Social Quality or Drawback
(2 points/level, positive or negative)

The character's level of Resources determines how much material wealth she has access to. This trait varies widely. Some levels are described below. The prices reflect standards of living in the year 2016.

Destitute (-5): The character has no money, the clothes on her back, maybe 15 dollars' worth of stuff, and a shopping cart. He is lucky to scrounge a few dollars a month.

Miserable (-4): The character owns about $150 worth of property (including the clothes on her back). She may live in public housing, or might be homeless. She is lucky to scrounge $150 a month.

Poor (-3): The character owns some $750 in property and lives in low-income housing. He has an income of $750 a month or what he gets from welfare.

Hurting (-2): The character owns about $1,500 in property, and lives in a small apartment in a bad part of town. She has an income of about $1,500 a month before taxes.

Below Average (-1): The character owns $7,500 in property (including an old vehicle, perhaps) and lives in an apartment. He has a pre-tax income of $2,500 per month.

Average (0): The character owns $25,000 in property. She has an income of $4,000 per month before taxes.

Middle Class (+1): The character owns $75,000 in property (will usually include a house or condominium, not to mention vehicles). He has an income of $7,500 per month before taxes.

Well-off (+2): The well-off own $450,000 in property and have an income of $15,000 per month before taxes.

Wealthy (+3): The wealthy own $1,000,000 in property and have an income of $60,000 per month before taxes.

Rich (+4): The rich own $3,000,000 in property and have an income of $75,000 per month before taxes.

Multimillionaire (+5): This lucky chum owns $7.5 million in property and has an income of $300,000 per month.

Each additional level adds $7.5 million in property and $300,000 to monthly income.

Secret (Type)
Variable Social Drawback

The character conceals a dangerous and hidden fact. The more damaging the revelation, the higher the value of the Drawback. For example, damage to one's reputation and livelihood is worth one point; a threat to the person's well-being (she might be arrested or deported if the truth were known) is worth two points; if the secret could cost the character her life, it is worth three points.

Showoff
2-point Mental Drawback

The Showoff never misses a chance to cast the spotlight on herself or her accomplishments, while quickly excusing or covering up her mistakes. She loves public acclaim, or at least the respect of her peers. Most of the time, she simply makes sure people notice her, but on occasion she tries a bit too hard to attract attention to herself and her deeds. This Drawback is slightly more complex than the Covetous (Conspicuous) Drawback, and the Showoff is less likely to betray her principles in order to hog the spotlight.

Situational Awareness
2-point Mental Quality

The observant almost always know what is going on around them, and can react with uncanny quickness. These characters gain a +2 bonus to any Perception-based rolls to sense trouble or danger in the immediate surroundings. It is difficult to sneak up on them; the same bonus applies to resist any Stealth Tasks to approach them.

Status
Variable Social Quality or Drawback
(1 point/level, positive or negative)

This trait represents the character's standing in the eyes of the people around her. It includes any fame, glory, or notoriety the character might have. Note that wealth and Status are often linked; a character gets a bonus to her Status equal to one-half her Resources level (if positive). 0 is middle-class American; -5 is a homeless person, +10 is a member of an ancient noble house, a movie mega-star, or the hero of millions.

Talentless
2-point Mental Drawback

The Talentless individual totally lacks creativity and artistic aptitude. Maybe she is too stolid and practical, or maybe he just does not have the imagination to do anything artistic. This Drawback not only affects his art, but also many social skills where creativity are necessary.

A Talentless character suffers a -3 penalty when trying to do anything artistic. Furthermore, the best he can hope for is a mediocre result—the character can never get more than one Success Level in artistic pursuits, regardless of how high his skill or roll is. This penalty does not affect Tasks where other people's art is judged; many expert critics are Talentless.

People with this Drawback also make poor liars, charmers, or social butterflies. The same penalty applies to such skills as Intimidation, Seduction, and Smooth Talking—a lack of creativity affects the ability to influence others.

Zealot
3-point Mental Drawback

Zealots are people whose beliefs (political, religious, or personal) are so strong that they dominate their lives and behavior. Zealots are willing to sacrifice anything, including their lives (or the lives of others) in service to the ideals they hold dear. These characters are dangerous to themselves and others, and show a total disregard for the law whenever it conflicts with their beliefs.

Supernatural Qualities and Drawbacks

When available, Supernatural Qualities are purchased using Quality or Metaphysics Points. Most Supernatural Qualities require the Gift Quality or a supernatural origin before they may be purchased. Others define the character's race (if non-human). For obvious reasons, only one race can be chosen. Unless otherwise desired, only Accursed, Good/Bad Luck, Old Soul, and Spirit Patrons should be available to non-Gifted humans.

Accursed

Variable Supernatural Drawback

The character has been afflicted by a powerful curse, one that may haunt her until the end of her days. The actual elements of the curse, and how difficult it is to remove it, determine the point value of this Drawback. For the most part, it is the result of a misdeed the character committed in the past, and atonement for the misdeed is a major step (but may not be the only one) needed to remove the curse.

A curse of this magnitude is only possible for the worst crimes and injuries. The Chronicler and the player should work together to decide the origins of the curse, or the Chronicler may craft it herself. In the latter case, the origin of and the solution to the curse should remain a mystery to the character.

Depending on its severity, a curse can be worth anywhere between one and 10 points. A 10-point curse would be a terrible thing, something that would utterly ruin any chance for the character to lead a normal or happy life, or which might kill the victim at any moment. Some rules of thumb to determine the power of the curse are given below. As usual, the Chronicler is the final judge as to what is appropriate to the campaign setting.

A major inconvenience or annoyance is worth one point. For example, the character seems to attract flies, fleas, and vermin; milk sours quickly in the presence of the victim; little accidents plague the accursed one.

Something more dramatic and harmful would be worth two to three points. For example, people tend to be distrustful and angry at the character for no apparent reason (-2 to -3 on all attempts to influence people), or the character can never accumulate a lot of money without losing it (this would preclude any Resource level above zero). Alternatively, small accidents and annoying incidents plague the people around the character. In this case, personal involvement is as important as that of physical proximity. A close friend of the victim suffers from the curse's effects regardless of how far away she is. By the same token, all the people sharing a subway car with the accursed person also suffer from it.

Severe or life-threatening curses are worth four to five points. For example, every day, an accident, mishap, or random occurrence endangers the character's life—a car skips a red light when the character crosses the street, a gang shootout breaks out in front of her, or a similar dangerous chance event occurs. If the character is alert, she might survive the mishap without injury, but every day, she has to live with the knowledge that sometime, somewhere, something dangerous and terrible is going to happen.

The difficulty in getting rid of a curse may add one to five points to its value. If undoing or atoning for a past misdeed is the only requisite, no additional points are awarded. If the misdeed is not known, add one point, as the character must spend time finding out why she was cursed. If the undoing process is extremely complex, or involves illegal activities (in some cases, killing the one who cursed the character is necessary), add two to three points. If a long quest culminating in a difficult magical ceremony, divine intervention, or similar extraordinary factor is necessary, add four to five points. And some curses cannot be removed by any means. This adds six points to the value of the curse, but no measure is effective in eliminating it.

Age

5-points/level Supernatural Quality

Some beings have been alive and active for several life spans; they could be powerful Gifted humans, ancient Undead, or long-lived Ghosts, Seraphim or other supernatural beings. Ancient characters are powerful, having refined their powers with centuries of practice. This Quality assumes the character has powers or natural abilities allowing her to survive this long (such powers must be purchased separately). Gifted characters with the appropriate Essence Pool can purchase this Quality (see p. 202), as can long-lived beings such as Inheritors and True Immortals.

Each level of Age adds one century to the character's life span. Truly ancient supernaturals (nearly a millennium old) have ten or so levels of Age, and are extremely powerful. As such, they are not appropriate as Cast Members in Pre-Heroic and Heroic games, or even in most Legendary ones. Beings over 1,000 years old are too powerful for even Legendary games, and work only in Mythical campaigns.

Note that the Age quality refers to periods during which the character was *active*. Many supernatural beings, like Vampyres and Seraphim, often have long periods of "down time" when they were in slumber, or in Ecstasis. A player who wants to create a character from a truly ancient period can do so, adding as many levels of Age as she can afford, and consider the rest of the time to be "down time" for whatever reasons. The bonuses the character gets are restricted to those levels of Age he bought, however. The maximum level of "non-down time" Age allowed to a character is three, or her highest Mental Attribute, whichever is lower.

Age gives the character more points to put into Skills and Metaphysics, and raises the character's Essence pool. Each level of Age gives the character one point per level of Intelligence to put into Skills, one point per level of the character's highest mental Attribute (Intelligence, Willpower, or Perception) to put into Metaphysics, and one extra point to their Essence pool per Willpower level.

If using the Optional Skill Points Generation System (see p. 88), a character with one or more levels of Age also get a bonus of five Skill points per level and no modifiers to their Attributes. This addition is cumulative with the Skill Points based on Intelligence normally gained with each level of the Age quality.

Age is not without its drawbacks, however. Over time, enemies and secrets are accumulated, and these always seem to outlast friendships and renown. For each level of Age, the character must take one level of either Adversary or Secret and gains no character points for them.

Avatar

30-point Supernatural Quality

Avatars are the human embodiment of a god's power. The Avatar is an independent being, but the god can sometimes see and even attempt to control the Avatar. Like the Inheritors, Avatars have some of the Aspects of the god who created them. Avatars gain fluency in Language (Prime) as well as their normal native language (if they were raised in a human culture), at no extra cost. Avatars are a supernatural race (see p. 270), and are generally appropriate in Mythical campaigns.

Beholden

3- or 5-point Supernatural Drawback

The Beholden are people linked to some powerful supernatural being. These links may have been established voluntarily (as done by the True Believers, who surrender their souls to Leviathan), or unwillingly (like the Avatars who find Divinity roughly thrust upon them). There are two different levels of this Drawback.

At the three-point level, the Beholden can be used by the greater power as a source of information. The deity or entity can see through the character's eyes, and sense everything going on around her. The Beholden can detect this intrusion by passing a Difficult Perception Test; if successful, she knows the entity is using her senses. Trying to stop the entity requires a Difficult Willpower Test at -2; if successful, the contact is severed for one hour per Success Level.

At the five-point level, not only can the greater being use the character's senses, it can also seize control of the character! The character can try to resist by passing a Difficult Willpower Test at -1; if successful, she retains control for one hour per Success Level. If she loses, the entity seizes control, and the character's actions are in the hands of the Chronicler.

In either version of this Drawback, the entity can "speak" to the character—offer advice, give orders, or simply bother the character.

Divine Inspiration

5-point Supernatural Quality
Prerequisite: The Gift

The Inspired can transcend the limits of the flesh, and become a tool of a Greater Power. They are Inspired to fight the forces of darkness, and dedicate their lives to this purpose.

The Inspired may use their own inner strength under the delusion that their power comes from without, or they may truly be the instrument of an omnipotent being. The important thing is that they must hold dearly to the tenets of their faith, and must never go against them.

If an Inspired character breaks a commandment or hesitates in her faith, she temporarily (or even permanently) loses the capability to perform Miracles. Furthermore, the powers of the Inspired can only be used in ways that serve the Higher Power the character worships. Characters with Inspiration are able to channel Essence using their link to a Higher Power. Most Inspired consider this Higher Power to be the "True God." Characters with Divine Inspiration cannot use Magic or Necromancy, but may have Seer Powers.

The Gift Quality is a prerequisite to purchasing Inspiration. An extended discussion of Inspiration powers can be found in **Chapter Seven: Metaphysics** (see p. 239).

Enlightened Human

20-point Supernatural Quality
Prerequisite: The Gift and Old Soul
Restriction: Cannot have a Spirit Patron

Enlightened humans are to the Gifted what the Gifted are to Mundanes. These men and women may represent the next step in human evolution. They have an instinctive understanding of the forces that humans may control. Before the appearance of the Magic Generation (see p. 25), there were perhaps a couple of hundred Enlightened humans in the world. By the early 21st century, that number had increased tenfold, as many adolescent or young adult Gifted showed tremendous potential, far greater than those of their predecessors.

The source of Enlightenment is not fully understood. It may be the result of multiple reincarnations on Earth, a natural reaction to the increase of Essence in the world, or the Creator's Will. No one knows.

The Enlightened have tremendous control over Essence, greater even than that of normal Channelers. Invocations that take a great deal of concentration for a normal Magician can be unleashed in a moment by the Enlightened. Their control over Essence allows them to resist all manner of powers. By the same token, the Enlightened are innately independent. They cannot forge bonds with "greater" beings; thus, they can never become Beholden, nor can they have a Spirit Patron.

The Enlightened have one major ability: they can use Essence at will, like some supernatural creatures. They are not limited by their Essence Channeling level or the performance of Rituals (see p. 199). Instead, they can use as much of their Essence as they hold within themselves. This ability is most effective amongst Magicians (who can unleash devastating Incantations almost instantly) and Seers (who can increase the Strength of their power at the cost of 2 Essence Points per additional Strength level). Not coincidentally, most Enlightened display one or both of those powers. All Gifted with this power can, among other things, use Essence defensively (see p. 202) without any limitations. The Inspired cannot take the Enlightened Quality (in a way, they are a sub-variety of Enlightened, one that chooses a more restrictive path). The Enlightened have a base Essence Point recovery rate equal to their Willpower every minute, plus any levels of Essence Channeling they may have (in other words, Essence Channeling is still of some use to these characters).

Essence Channeling

Variable Supernatural Quality

Essence is the Force of Creation. It exists in "solid" form in all facets of reality, in matter and energy. It is also present in "pure" form, but is invisible to the Mundanes. Pure Essence is present in our minds and souls, in invisible currents in the physical world, and in apparently solid shapes in the Otherworlds, levels of reality most humans only access through dreams or visions. Some among the Gifted have the power to channel Essence, to manipulate it, and project the strength of their souls into the world.

Essence Channeling is purchased in levels. These levels determine how many points of Essence can be gathered in a single Turn. They also determine how many Essence points are recovered every minute. The cost of each level is found in the Essence Channeling Cost Chart. Essence may never be drawn down below zero, and even drawing it down to that level is dangerous (see p. 141).

Essence Channeling Cost Table

Level	Character Point Cost
1-5	2 points per level
6+	5 points per level

Exile

20-, 30- or 45-point Supernatural Quality

Exiles are Seraphim (Lesser, Common, or Greater) who have forsaken their Celestial heritage and become flesh permanently. Exiles are difficult to find through mystical means: their diminished nature is much harder to perceive and track down. The Celestials cannot use the Finder Theophany (see p. 259) to locate them. On the other hand, Exiles forsake most of their powers—they can no longer wield Celestial Fire, fly, or use any Theophanies. Only Seraphim can become Exiles. The process, and the exact powers and abilities of Exiles are described in **Chapter Eight: Inhumans** (see p. 256).

The cost of being an Exile depends on the type of Seraphim the Exile was before her Descent. Playing a Lesser Seraphim Exile costs 20 points, a Seraphim Exile 30 points, and a Greater Seraphim Exile 45 points.

Gift

5-point Supernatural Quality

This Quality is the prerequisite for acquiring most Supernatural Qualities and purchasing Metaphysical powers and abilities. It is the defining characteristic of supernaturally adept human characters in *Armageddon*.

The Gift denotes a connection with the Otherworlds, a connection that allows the character to sense things that are hidden from Mundanes. All the Gifted have the ability to perceive the presence of supernatural energies or creatures. By succeeding at a Simple Perception Task, a Gifted character can sense if a supernatural being is near, and can detect strong flows of Essence in an area or object. This sensing is not accurate; it does not tell the character exactly what or who emanates an excess of magical energies, although the Success Levels of the Task provide the Gifted character with successively more information.

All human Gifted, Lesser Gifted, Greater Gifted, and Gifted Master characters must purchase the Gift, using their Quality or Metaphysics Points. True Immortals (see p. 302) do not purchase the Gift, but a special racial Quality (see p. 85). Other supernatural races also do not purchase the Gift.

Good/Bad Luck

1 point/level Supernatural Quality or Drawback

If a character enjoys Good Luck, fortune smiles on her far more often than most people. If the character suffers from Bad Luck, on the other hand, Murphy's Law ("if anything can go wrong, it will") always applies to everything she does.

Each level of Luck counts as a +1 bonus (or -1 penalty) that can be applied to a Task or Test, once per game session. Multiple levels can be added together for a big bonus on one Task/Test, or spread around several different actions. For example, if a character has three levels of Good Luck, a +3 bonus can be applied to one action, a +1 bonus to three actions, or a +2 bonus for one and a +1 bonus for another.

With Good Luck, the player decides when it comes into play. Bad Luck is in the hands of the Chronicler, who should exercise caution and good judgment when applying Bad Luck to Tasks or Tests. If he uses Bad Luck for meaningless rolls, the Drawback becomes little more than a minor inconvenience. Conversely, applying Bad Luck to Survival Tests or other critical rolls generates resentment among players. Make the Bad Luck count, but do not abuse the characters.

For example, Jenna has a two-point Bad Luck Drawback. At one point in the Story, Jenna takes aim with her gun as an enemy attempts to flee the area. The character's mission will be much harder if the villain escapes, but Jenna is in no immediate danger, so the Chronicler tells Jenna that a startled bird flies in front of her, spoiling her aim. A -2 penalty is applied to Jenna's shot.

Incarnate

55-point Supernatural Quality

An Incarnate is a younger Titan who has manifested herself in the world. Whereas Inheritors and Nephilim are half-human, the Incarnate is a true Primal—the Old Gods' equivalent to the Seraphim. Some of these beings have dwelt all their lives in the Otherworlds, and have little experience with our world. Others have lived among humans for decades if not centuries, and are as sophisticated as the most devious Qliphonim. Incarnate gain Language (Prime) 5 as well as their normal native language (if they were raised in a human culture), at no extra cost. Incarnates are a supernatural race (see p. 272), and are generally appropriate in Mythical campaigns.

Increased Essence Pool

1/5-point Supernatural Quality
(1/2-point after character creation)

While all living beings have Essence, Gifted and supernatural beings have a greater amount. Their connection to the Otherworlds has strengthened their souls, making them living beacons of energy. Having a large Essence Pool is both a blessing and a curse. While Essence can be used to affect the world in many ways, it also attracts the attention of evil and supernatural beings who feed on the Essence of others.

Spending one point during character creation adds five points to the character's Essence Pool. This can be done multiple times. After character creation, every two Essence Points costs one experience point. This makes it more cost effective to build up Essence when creating the character, representing the relatively slow improvement of the character's powers during the course of her life. Essence can be purchased after any game session where Essence was used, to indicate a strengthening of the character's spirit.

Any character with the Gift Quality or belonging to a supernatural race can increase her Essence Pool.

Inheritor

20-point Supernatural Quality

Distant cousins of the Nephilim, Inheritors appear when the Pagan Gods breed with humans. The Inheritors are tougher than human beings, and inherit one or more Aspects, unique powers of the gods over certain areas of reality. Inheritors are a supernatural race (see p. 272), and are generally appropriate only in Legendary or higher campaigns.

Kerubim/Qliphonim

30-point Supernatural Quality

A lower rank of angels, the Kerubim were once human, but have been given angelic powers to help defend Earth and humankind. The Qliphonim are the Infernal equivalents, damned humans sent to Earth to corrupt others. Kerubim/Qliphonim gain fluency in Language (Prime) as well as their normal native language (if they were raised in a human culture), at no extra cost. Kerubim/Qliphonim are a supernatural race (see p. 261), and are generally appropriate only in Legendary or higher campaigns, but may also be used in a Heroic game.

Nephilim

24-point Supernatural Quality

Angels sometimes mate with humans; the result of these unions are the Nephilim, beings who combine the divine nature of the Seraphim with the tremendous potential of humankind. The Nephilim are extremely strong and almost impossible to kill, and are highly resistant to all occult powers. Nephilim are a supernatural race (see p. 268), and can be used in Heroic or higher campaigns.

Old Soul

4-points/level Supernatural Quality

These characters have been reborn many times. As a result, their souls have become stronger. Old Souls tend to be mature and precocious for their age. It would be nice to believe that age invariably provides wisdom, but Old Souls are equally likely to be depraved or insightful, cruel or kind. Whatever their orientation, it is usually more extreme, having been refined over several lifetimes.

This Quality can be acquired multiple times during character creation (but it cannot be acquired afterwards). Each "level" represents some three-five previous lives lived before the character's current incarnation. The player can determine who these former selves were, where they lived, and what they know, or she can leave such information in the hands of the Chronicler. From a roleplaying point of view, creating a "past lives tree" can be interesting.

Each level adds six points to the character's Essence Pool, even if the character is not Gifted or supernatural. This may make Old Souls very attractive to certain supernatural predators. Additionally, each level adds one character point to the Attribute Point pool; these character points can only be used to increase mental Attributes (Intelligence, Perception, and Willpower). Successive lives tend to increase the character's overall insights and understanding—for good or ill. For example, Mandy has three levels of the Old Soul Quality. This gives her three more points to put into her mental Attributes, and 18 more Essence Points.

An Old Soul is sometimes able to tap into the knowledge of her previous lives. These attempts require the character to pass a single Test using both Willpower and Intelligence as modifiers, and each attempt drains the character of one Essence

Point, which is regained normally. When attempting to perform an unskilled Task, the character may receive a flash of knowledge from one of her previous lives. If the player took the time to decide what her character's previous lives knew, then the character gains, for that one Task, a skill level equivalent to the character's Old Soul level, but only the skills that the character knew in her previous lives are available. If the previous lives are not known, the character uses only one half of the Old Soul level (rounded down), but virtually any skill might be known. The only exception would be high-tech Skills that a previous life would be unlikely to know. Asking one's ancestral memories how to hack into a computer system is not likely to work very well . . .

For example, Mandy, with three levels of Old Soul, has about 10 past incarnations. The player decided to take the time to figure out who those people were. They include five peasants from different time periods (the Chronicler insisted on at least that many characters being peasants, since most people in pre-modern times tilled the soil for a living), a Confederate soldier, a Mongol raider, a Medieval Italian Princess, and a Wicce from the Victorian Era. In the course of an adventure, Mandy needs to ride a horse, and she does not know how. Her Mongol past life, however, was an expert rider. If she passes the Willpower and Intelligence Test, she can ride the horse with an effective skill of three, at the cost of one Essence Point. The skill is in effect for as long as the ride lasts; if later in the day she needs to ride a horse again, a new Test and an expenditure of Essence are required. If the player had not fleshed out the past incarnations, Mandy would have been able to ride the horse, but with a skill of only one.

Generally, only human beings can have Old Souls. Supernaturals rarely reincarnate, or do so only over spans of millennia.

Seraphim
45-point Supernatural Quality

Common Seraphim are the angels and demons of legend. Extremely powerful and ancient beings, the Seraphim have many enemies. Seraphim gain fluency in Language (Prime) as well as their normal native language (if they were raised in a human culture), at no extra cost. They are a supernatural race (see p. 251), and are generally appropriate for Legendary or higher campaigns.

Seraphim, Greater
60-point Supernatural Quality

These are the Eyes and Hands of the Heavenly Host (or the Infernal Legion). They are angels and demons who have been active in human (and occult) affairs for centuries, if not millennia. Their experience and raw power often make them the agents and trusted servant of even greater beings—the Archangels and Demon Princes who rule over their brethren. Greater Seraphim gain fluency in Language (Prime) as well as their normal native language (if they were raised in a human culture), at no extra cost. Greater Seraphim are a supernatural race (see p. 251), and are generally appropriate only in a Mythical campaign.

Seraphim, Lesser
35-point Supernatural Quality

The rank-and-file of the angelic and demonic hosts, Lesser Seraphim have spent most of their existence in Ecstasis, and have not grown in power and knowledge over time. Lesser Seraphim gain fluency in Language (Prime) as well as their normal native language (if they were raised in a human culture), at no extra cost. Lesser Seraphim are a supernatural race (see p. 251), and are generally appropriate in Heroic or higher campaigns. Given time and the opportunity to exercise their powers, they can actually evolve into Seraphim.

Spirit Patron
Variable Supernatural Quality

Many humans (both mundane and Gifted) and supernatural beings forge a relationship with a greater power—the Seraphim, Archangels, Demon Lords, any of the Old Gods, and other beings. Many Spirit Patrons confer special powers on their "clients," either in return for some service, special offerings or sacrifices, or simply because the agendas of the entity and those of the character appear to be similar. Spirit Patrons also may require that the character take on certain obligations in exchange for the power provided. Spirit Patrons are described in **Chapter Seven: Metaphysics** (p. 243).

Character Creation Example
(Continued)

Jean goes over the Qualities and Drawbacks. First, Graelle is a Lesser Seraphim, which costs 35 points. Since that is a Supernatural Quality, she can use points from the Qualities and Metaphysics pools—and she is going to have to, because she only has 20 and 30 points, respectively. She decides to spend all 20 Quality Points and 15 Metaphysics Points to acquire Lesser Seraphim.

To gain any more Qualities, she is going to have to get some Drawback Points. Jean reads the list, and decides Graelle is a Zealot (-3 points), has minor Delusions (Prejudice) against humans in general (-1 point), and, due to her time alone, suffers from Emotional Problems (Fear of Rejection) (1 point). Considering her character's background and status, she also decides to giver Graelle a high-level Obligation (-2 points) to Gabriel, whom she serves personally. Her devotion to Gabriel adds a number of potential problems (and plot lines) to the game; Jen's Chronicler tells her that Gabriel has a number of enemies within the Host itself, and those who serve him are likely to be in the receiving end of some of that animosity. Jen gives Graelle a powerful Adversary (-3 points)—the anti-Grabrielite faction of the Host. That totals 10 points in Drawbacks.

Jen thinks she's done, until the Chronicler reminds her that angels have a very strict Code of Honor, easily worth three points. She adds that—now she has 13 points in Drawbacks. That is above her maximum of 10, however. After thinking about it, she decides that the Obligation and Adversary are closely related, so she reduces them by one-point each. Zealot and Code of Honor overlap as well; she reduces the Code of Honor level to -2 points. She now has 10 points, which she can use for Qualities, Skills, Metaphysics, and even Attributes.

Jen decides to spend some of points in Qualities. She gives her character Fast Reaction Time (2 points), Attractiveness +1 (1 point; this affects her Profane form, see p. 254). Finally, since so many Seraphim powers depend on Essence, she spends four points to gain four Extra Essence Levels, or 20 Extra Essence points, raising Graelle's Essence Pool to 107 points total. That leaves her with three Drawback points, which she will use on skills.

True Immortal
15-point Supernatural Quality

The Immortals are a sub-species of humans. According to their legends, they were created by the Lords of Atlantis, who used their magic and super-technology to modify themselves into god-like beings. True Immortals have a number of special powers (see p. 302). They can recover from damage at incredible speeds, do not age, and have access to some of the lost Sciences of Atlantis. Immortals use the Gifted, Greater Gifted, or Master Gifted Character Types.

Skills

Skills are learned abilities, the result of training, study, or experience. In general, anything that can be taught is considered a skill. The character's background, education, and life experiences determine what skills he would be likely to have.

Buying Skills

To acquire skills, use the character points allocated to the Skills category (as determined by the Character Type, see p. 47). Most skills are deemed Regular Skills, and cost one point per level from levels one to five. After level five, each additional level costs three points. For example, Lorna wants her character to have the Driving Skill. She decides that the character is an excellent driver—in fact, she could race cars for a living! Such expertise would require a skill of five or higher. Lorna decides to go for broke and give the character a Driving Skill 7. This would cost her five points for the first five levels, and six points for the other two levels, for a total of 11 character points. Lorna's character will be an ace driver, but she will not have very many skills in other categories.

Optional Skill Point Generation System

The basic skill point generation system allocates Skill Category Points depending on the Character Type chosen. An optional, second method takes into account the character's background as well. This optional system tends to give characters more points for skills than normal, but is a bit more elaborate and time-consuming. If the players and Chronicler decide to adopt the optional system, drop the Skill Category Point allocations from all the Character Types discussed previously, and use the following formula. The formula is based on Character Type, Intelligence Attribute, age, and Social Resources.

Character Type: The following list details the default points awarded for each Type.

Potential Hero: 25

Beginning Gifted: 20

Gifted: 20

Lesser Gifted: 25

Mundane: 30

Lesser Supernatural: 20

Supernatural: 35

Greater Gifted: 30

Greater Supernatural: 55

Gifted Master: 50

Intelligence: Three points per level of the character's Intelligence Attribute. Characters with Intelligence 0 or less get only one point.

Age: Starting characters are assumed to be 18-30 years old (players and Chroniclers may set the character's age anywhere within that range). Younger characters subtract five points from their total points. Every full 10 years after 30, characters add five points but subtract two levels from Attributes (these subtractions can be taken from any attribute).

For example, Jory's character is a 50-year old Mundane detective with an Intelligence of 5. His base Skill points are 25, and with his high intelligence he gets an additional 15 points. Due to his age, the character has an extra 10 points to put into skills, but he loses 4 Attribute levels. Although he originally had Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Constitution 3, Perception 5, Intelligence 5, and Willpower 5, Jory decides to reduce the character's Strength to 2, his Perception to 4 and his Willpower to 4. At this point in the calculation, he has a total of 50 Skill Points.

Characters with supernatural longevity (see the Age Quality, p. 79) get a flat five point bonus but no Attribute reductions, before adding in the bonuses granted by the Age Quality.

Social Level or Resources: Characters with a positive Social Level or Resources take the highest level in either of those qualities and add one point per level. Characters with Resources of zero or below do not get a bonus or penalty.

Creating New Skills

It is impossible to account for every possible skill in this book. Chroniclers and players who do not find a skill here should feel free to come up with their own. When creating a new skill, a few questions must be answered.

Is the skill very difficult to learn (i.e., any discipline requiring several years of training)? If so, then it should be a Special Skill, with a higher point cost. Does the skill require a person to specialize (which means the skill should be broken into several separate Types) or is specialization optional or additional (in which case the Specialty rules apply)?

Finally, what Attributes are commonly used with the skill in question, and under what circumstances? Normally, physical activities rely on Dexterity and in some cases Perception, scholastic disciplines rely mainly on Intelligence, and so on.

Special Skills

Certain skills are more difficult to learn, requiring more time and greater dedication. They are called Special Skills, and include Acrobatics, Martial Arts, Medicine, and others. Special Skills cost two points per level until level five, and five points per level thereafter, unless otherwise specified in the skill description.

The Meaning of Numbers

The higher a skill level is, the more proficient the character is at using that skill. In general, a level one indicates a beginner or amateur, somebody who has just learned the rudiments of the skill. A level two or three represents general competency—the ability to perform average tasks with ease. A level four or five indicates extreme competence in the subject, the result of a lot of study or practice. Higher levels indicate true mastery of the skill or craft, and the ability to perform the most difficult tasks with ease.

Skill Types

Skill Types are required for some skills and represent broad areas of knowledge within the more generic skill category. For example, within the Guns Skill are the Handgun, Rifle, and Shotgun Types. Types most often come into play with broad scholastic skills, such as Humanities, Science, and Language. A Type must be chosen each time the more generic skill is taken. Additional Types count as separate skills. So, for example, a player who wants her character to know Humanities (History) and Humanities (Psychology) has to buy each Skill separately. The degree to which Skill Types relate to each other, and the corresponding penalty for attempting a Task with a related Skill Type, is for the Chronicler to decide (see Unskilled Attempts, p. 120). As a rule of thumb, defaults have penalties of -2 to -6. For example, driving a truck with the Driving (Car) Skill would probably incur a -2 default penalty (unless it is an 18-wheeler, which might have a -4 or worse penalty).

Artistic Skill Limit Rule

As with all Tasks, the Success Levels of artistic Tasks indicate how good the artistic expression is. Regardless of the final Task result, however, the Success Levels cannot exceed the skill level of the artist. For example, a character with Fine Arts (Drawing) 2 cannot accumulate more than two Success Levels on a drawing. This rule applies to Dancing, Fine Arts, Play Instrument, Singing, Storytelling, Writing and any other primarily creative-based skill (in the Chronicler's discretion).

Skill Specialties

Both fiction and real life display many examples of people who specialize in a specific aspect or field of study within a skill. A history student may specialize in the early medieval period, for example, or an occultist may know a great deal more about angels than anything else.

Specialties cost one point and give a +2 bonus to Tasks involving that field of expertise. For example, a character could purchase Occult Knowledge 3 for six character points. By specializing with one point, the character could gain Occult Knowledge (Symbology) 5. On the character sheet, the character would have a general Occult Knowledge Skill 3, and an Occult Knowledge (Symbology) 5.

Specialties are raised by improving the base skill. For example, if the character's Occult Knowledge Skill rises from three to four, her Occult Knowledge (Symbology) Skill goes up to six. Specialties may not be raised without increasing the base skill level. Purchasing a new Specialty after character creation costs six experience points.

Specialties should be distinguished from Types, which cost no character points. For example, a character might take Humanities (History) at level three during character creation. This costs the usual three Skill Points. If she chooses to specialize, she might learn Humanities (Pre-Columbian History). This costs one point and piggybacks on her History Skill; the Specialty skill level is five.

Learning New Skills

A Cast Member can learn new skills after character creation, during the course of play. This can be done in two ways: through formal study or training, or by hands-on experience. The first option is more time consuming, but is more dependable.

Learning new skills from scratch is usually more difficult than improving pre-existing skills. This is why it is generally better to start with a character with a wide variety of skills at relatively low levels than an overspecialized character with only a few skills. The latter character will have trouble learning new things.

The costs of learning new skills and improving old ones are in **Chapter Four: Rules** (see p. 147).

Using Common Sense

The guidelines provided in the skills listed, like all the rules in this book, should always take a second seat to plain common sense. If a player is trying to twist the letter of the rules to wring some unreasonable advantage, Chroniclers should let common sense prevail.

Skill List

Acrobatics (Special)

The ability to perform tumbles, somersaults, and other complex maneuvers. This skill teaches balance, flexibility, and speed. Use Acrobatics and Dexterity for most Tasks. This skill is commonly known by circus performers, dancers, martial artists, gymnasts, and athletes. Also, Acrobatics can be used instead of the Dodge Skill to avoid attacks.

Acting

The ability to play a role and successfully counterfeit behaviors, emotions, and other character traits. A talented actor can weep on demand, or convincingly display an array of emotions. This skill is useful to legitimate artists, and criminals and con men. Use Intelligence and Acting to give a good performance, and Perception and Acting to spot or judge someone else's act.

Beautician

This is the ability to use make-up, hair dressing, and cosmetics to enhance a person's appearance. Use Intelligence and Beautician for the Task; each Success Level adds a +1 to a person's Attractiveness by hiding blemishes and enhancing a person's good points. Modifiers to these Tasks include the materials available (a +2 in a fully stocked beauty salon, -2 or worse with improvised materials) and the subject's basic Attractiveness level.

Beautician Skills can also change a person's appearance (Beautician and Intelligence). A skilled character can use hair dyes, contacts, and make-up to modify a person's look greatly. This skill can replace the Disguise Skill, or can add a +1 bonus to Disguise Tasks for each Success Level in the Beautician and Intelligence Task.

Using Beautician and Perception allows the character to see how extensively a person is made up, and may be used to identify a disguise (this Task is resisted by the disguiser's own Intelligence and Beautician or Disguise Skills).

Brawling

Brawling covers basic street fighting, karate-parlor "martial arts" training, and similar combat skills. In hand-to-hand combat, use Dexterity and Brawling for kicks, punches, and similar maneuvers. Use Strength and Brawling for take-downs, wrestling and slamming people around.

Bureaucracy

This skill provides familiarity with the organization of, and procedures used by, bureaucratic institutions. With this skill, the character can find ways to improve an organization's service and performance, or otherwise obtain their services or products more efficiently. Use Intelligence and Bureaucracy to devise ways to make a large group or organization more (or less) efficient; use Willpower and Bureaucracy to "cut through red tape."

Cheating

The skill of breaking the rules and tricking an opponent. Mostly used in games of chance and other forms of gambling. Use Intelligence and Cheating to perform the trick, or Perception and Cheating to spot such a trick.

Climbing

A character with this skill knows how to best use any surface to get to the top. Climbing Tasks use Dexterity, Strength, or Constitution, depending on the type of climb attempted.

Computer Hacking

This is the skill used to penetrate computer systems (usually through a modem), overcome protection and password programs, and steal information or inflict damage on the system. Most tasks use Intelligence and Computer Hacking, although spotting a specific type of defense or password system may use Perception and Computer Hacking instead.

Computer Programming

The ability to write a set of commands in computer language. Uses Intelligence and Computer Programming to write a program. Use Perception and Computer Programming to recognize elements of another program.

Computers

This is the basic skill with computers, including how to use a keyboard and mouse, basic commands, and so on. As computers become more "user-friendly," Chroniclers can assume that most computer Tasks require not roll, except where they involve unfamiliar programs and operating systems

Craft (Type)

The Craft Skill covers numerous skills such as those employed by carpenters, seamstresses, weavers, weaponsmiths, woodworkers, etc. When the Craft Skill is purchased, a particular Skill Type must be specified. Characters may further want to specialize. For example, Gunsmith is the Specialty of the Craft (Weaponsmith) Skill focusing on guns. Bowyer would likewise relate to bows.

Intelligence and Craft are used to conceive and plan an item. Dexterity and Craft are tested to create the item, or repair a damaged item. Perception and Craft serve to appraise an item. The Fine Arts, Electronics, Engineering, Mechanic, and other Skills may be used to supplement the Craft Skill. Note that devising and creating a particular item may be a time consuming and difficult task. Often, it is far easier to simply buy a mass produced item.

Dancing (Type)

This skill is not necessary to gyrate to a catchy tune. Dancing represents training in a form of dance, and includes anything from ballet to tribal rituals to high accomplishment on the disco floor. The character must indicate the specific Type of Dancing with which she is familiar. Other Types have a default level equal to the Dancing level -2. In all circumstances, the quality of the performance is reflected in the levels of success. Results from these Tasks are subject to artistic skill limit rule (see p. 87). Dancing and Dexterity are used to actually perform the steps and movements needed; Dancing and Perception are used to recognize a style of dance and to judge the quality of another's performance.

Demolitions

The ability to set and disarm explosives. Use Intelligence and Demolitions to set up an explosive charge, Perception and Demolitions to understand the setup of an unfamiliar bomb, and Intelligence and Demolitions (resisted by the bomber's own Intelligence and Demolitions) to disarm an enemy bomb. Chroniclers may restrict this skill to those with access to military or espionage training.

Disguise

The ability to change one's appearance using wigs, make-up, and clothing. High-tech spies can also use rubber masks, implants, and other gadgets to completely alter their face and even body (such high-tech aids may give bonuses of +2 to +6, at the Chronicler's discretion). Use Intelligence and Disguise to apply a disguise, and Perception and Disguise to spot somebody else's disguise.

Dodge

This is a basic combat skill, representing the ability to move out of the way of attacks. Dodges include sidestepping a blow, "hitting the dirt" to avoid gunfire, ducking behind cover, etc. As a skill, Dodge is learned by people with some practice in diving for cover, generally military folks or those who put their lives on the line regularly (like adventurers). Dodge is used with Dexterity for most Tasks.

Driving (Type)

The skill to control any land vehicle of the specific Type. Most driving Tasks use Dexterity and Driving.

Common Types of Driving Skills

Cars: Self-evident—anything from a sub-compact to a small van.

Motorcycles: Any two-wheeled motorized vehicle of the appropriate configuration.

Truck: Wheeled vehicles larger than a small van or pickup truck.

Tracked Vehicle: Bulldozers and back-hoes.

Military Tracked Vehicle: Tanks and infantry fighting vehicles. Characters with regular Tracked Vehicle Skills can try their hand at the military versions, with a –1 penalty.

Electronic Surveillance

The skill to set up, use, and detect electronic "bugs"—sophisticated microphones and even cameras hidden in a location to spy on or detect people. Use Intelligence and Electronic Surveillance to set up and use a "bug," and Perception and Electronic Surveillance to detect one (resisted by the operator's original Intelligence and Electronic Surveillance Task result). Chroniclers may wish to restrict this skill to those with military or espionage backgrounds.

Electronics

This skill allows a character to build and repair all manner of electronic devices and tools, and grants the character knowledge about electronic systems and the like. The difficulty of repairing a mechanism depends on how delicate the device is, how damaged it is, and how advanced and complex it is. Chroniclers should apply a penalty or bonus depending on these factors. Finally, an electronic tool kit must be available for all but the most rudimentary repairs. A lab or workshop may also be required. All repair or construction attempts take time, ranging from a couple of hours to days. This too should be determined by the Chronicler.

Understanding an existing electronic device calls for a Perception and Electronics Task; repairing or constructing a device requires an Intelligence and Electronics Task. It should be noted that this skill and the Mechanic Skill complement one another, and are often used together.

Engineer (Type)

This skill reflects the general knowledge of structural design, material strengths, and construction techniques in a variety of fields and applications. Examples of the Types of Engineering Skill include Architecture, Civil, Construction, Mechanical, Electrical, and Biological (Human Factors). In some games, the Chronicler may just lump them all into one category, depending on how big a role such skills play in the course of a Story. Alternatively, separation between Engineering Skill Types (and even Specialties) may be important to the storyline. Planning or devising an object, structure or device within the character's Engineering Type demands an Intelligence and Engineering Task.

Escapism

The ability to escape from ropes, handcuffs and other restraints. Most of these Tasks use Dexterity and Escapism, with each attempt taking between one and five minutes, depending on the complexity of the bonds. A simple rope tie has no modifier, but complex knots might have penalties of -1 to -5, police handcuffs involve a penalty of -4, and a straitjacket/strap/chain combo might have penalties of -5 to -8. Expert escape artists also use visualization techniques—they carefully think about their method of escape before attempting it. This is an Intelligence and Escapism Task that takes two minutes; each Success Level adds a +1 to an immediately following Dexterity and Escapism Task roll.

Fine Arts (Type)

There are many Types of Fine Arts Skill, such as Drawing, Painting, Computer Graphics, etc. In some games, the Chronicler may lump them all into one category, depending on how big a role such skills play in the course of a Story. Alternatively, separation between Fine Arts Skill Types (and even Specialties) may be important to the storyline. The Success Levels of a Fine Arts Task indicate how good the artistic expression is. Results from these Tasks are subject to the artistic skill limit rule (see p. 87). Rolls to conceptualize a work of art, or to produce it from memory, improvisation, or imagination require Intelligence and Fine Arts. Rendering a concept that is recorded, such as using models or plans, requires Dexterity and Fine Arts. Appreciating another artist's work uses Perception and Fine Arts.

First Aid

This skill allows a character to treat basic injuries, and use such techniques as CPR and the Heimlich Maneuver. A successful Intelligence and First Aid Task heals some damage to an injured person (see p. 140). Typical Tasks include identifying the problem (use Perception and First Aid), performing First Aid (Intelligence and First Aid), and using CPR or applying the Heimlich Maneuver (Dexterity and First Aid).

Gambling

The knowledge of most common games of chance, their rules, and the best strategies to win. A character needs both Gambling and Cheating to effectively break the rules.

Common Gun Types

Handgun: Any handgun, including revolvers, semi-automatic pistols, and derringers.

Rifle/Shotgun: Long-barreled weapons fall under this Type.

Submachine Gun: Automatic weapons firing pistol-caliber ammunition.

Assault Rifle: Military rifle with full-auto capabilities. Note that a character with the Rifle/Shotgun Skill can use an Assault Rifle normally in semi-automatic setting, but will have a –2 penalty if firing bursts and the like.

Machine Gun: A large, usually tripod- or bipod-mounted fully automatic weapon.

Grenade Launcher: Gun or gun attachment that fires small explosive charges.

Mortars: Portable artillery that lobs shells in high arcs.

Rocket Launcher: Explosive missiles fired from a tube. Some are direct-fire weapons, while others fire guided missiles.

Guns (Type)

Allows the character to use any one type of firearm. If the skill is taken for one Type, the character can use other classes of gun, but generally at a -2 penalty to all Tasks. Use Dexterity and Guns to fire the weapon. Aiming rolls use Perception and Guns; each Success Level adds +1 to the Guns Skill on the next shot fired at the aimed target. A character may aim and fire on the same Turn, but she loses initiative to characters who do not take the time to aim.

Haggling

This skill provides the character with the ability to deal for goods and services, or otherwise bring two or more parties to some common ground. It may be applied when buying, selling, or bartering goods or services. Often used in a Resisted Task, each level of success modifies the price of the subject by 10%. It may also be used for less tangible exchanges, such a political deal-making. In such circumstances, the Chronicler should adjudicate the result given the goal and the levels of success. Haggling can also be used to determine whether the character is being misled or conned. Use Willpower and Haggling to get the best deal; use Perception and Haggling to spot a con.

Hand Weapon (Type)

Each basic type of weapon is a separate skill. Hand Weapon Skill Types include Axe, Club, Foil/Rapier, Knife, Spear, Staff, and Sword. Missile weapons like Bow and Crossbow are also Types. They must be learned separately. When using an unfamiliar weapon, use the most closely related Hand Weapon Skill at -2 to -4 (depending on how dissimilar the weapons are).

Humanities (Type)

Each of the various Humanities disciplines (archeology, anthropology, economics, history, law, political science, sociology, theology, etc.) counts as a separate Humanities Skill Type. In some games, the Chronicler may just lump them all into one category, depending on how big a role such skills play in the course of a Story. Alternatively, separation between Humanities Skill Types (and even Specialties) may be important to the storyline, and a variety of penalties may be applied when trying to use a specific Type outside its range. In any event, most Humanities Tasks use Intelligence or Perception and Humanities.

Humanities Skill Types can include many Specialties. For example, Humanities (Law) includes a number of different subjects, any one of which may be a Specialty (i.e., corporate law, environmental law, criminal law, etc.). Other than giving a character the normal +2 Task bonus for Specialties, Chroniclers may wish to penalize Tasks attempted outside the specialization. For example, a character with Humanities (Ancient History) gains a +2 bonus for Tasks involving the Spartan wars, but may incur a -1 penalty for a question concerning the Renaissance, or a -3 penalty for a question about World War I.

Instruction

Teaching is a skill and an art. The subject matter is important, but conveying that information in an interesting, stimulating, and comprehensive manner is the heart of the Instruction Skill.

The first step in using the Instruction Skill is to pick a subject matter to teach. This may be any skill known by the teacher, but it must be at least two levels higher than the student's level.

If the required skill level is possessed, the teacher and student must spend a certain period of time on lessons. For every week of game time that the two spend at least 10 hours studying the skill, the teacher can attempt an Intelligence and Instruction Task. The Success Levels of this Task are cumulative; for example, if the teacher and student spend three weeks working on the skill, the Success Levels of all three rolls are added together. When the teacher accumulates five Success Levels in the Task, the student gets one experience point toward improving that skill.

For example, Rolando is an accomplished singer (level five), and a decent teacher (level three). Maria wants to learn to sing better; she has Singing 1. Rolando's Singing Skill is more than two levels higher than Maria's, so he may teach her. After they spend a good deal of time working together during one week, Rolando tests his Instruction Skill. He rolls a six, adds three for the skill level, and two for his Intelligence for a total of 11. That is two Success Levels. The next week, they study together again, and Rolando rolls particularly well—gaining three Success Levels. Maria gains one experience point dedicated to the Singing Skill.

Intimidation

The skill to make people afraid. Bullies and others use Intimidation in most confrontational situations. A good Intimidation Task result may stop a fight before it starts by convincing the opponent that she doesn't want to mess with the character. Use Willpower and Intimidation for "real" intimidation attempts, or Intelligence and Intimidation to bluff.

Language (Type)

Every character has level five in their native or primary language (for no charge). Additional languages must be purchased as separate Skill Types. The skill level in a language determines not only basic fluency, but the "thickness" of the character's accent (see the Language Skill Level Table). Most of the time, the character need not roll to see if she communicates; as long as the character knows the language, assume that she can speak in it. A Task would be necessary in situations involving highly technical or scholarly speech (which may use a lot of words the character does not know) or when dealing with extreme regional accents or slang.

Special Languages: In addition to the normal languages of the world, there are two exotic languages: Prime and High Athalian.

Prime is the language of Celestials; Seraphim and the Titans speak it amongst themselves. Its structure and grammar are extremely complex and totally unlike any existing language. Seraphim, Kerubim, Avatars, and Incarnates know the language as an additional native language (people who were originally human or raised as human also gain their normal native language, at no cost). Other characters may learn it, but it is treated as a Special Skill. Knowledge of this language is very useful to mystics and magicians: characters who learn it and conduct rituals in it gain a bonus to their Invocation Task equal to their Success Level in an Intelligence and Language (Prime) Task.

Language Skill Level Table

Skill Level	Fluency
1	Heavy accent and frequent grammatical mistakes; the character will be immediately identified as a foreigner, and may be misunderstood.
2	Thick accent but largely fluent; the character should have no problems being understood.
3	Slight accent; native speakers will realize this is not the character's first language.
4	Full fluency, only a Resisted Test (listener's Simple Perception versus speaker's Simple Intelligence) will spot the character's accent.
5	Complete mastery; the character can pass for a native without problems.
6+	Dialects; character can perfectly imitate regional accents and dialects in addition to the main version of the language.

High Athalian is the native language of the civilization that spawned the True Immortal race. A few Immortals have re-discovered it. The language bears passing resemblance to the Hamito-Semitic family of languages, and has a number of cognates linked to Proto Indo-European (called Dravidian), but the connection is so tenuous only a trained linguist could recognize it. It is a normal language, except that less than a hundred people speak it worldwide.

Lock Picking (Type)

This skill covers the basics of breaking and entering. There are two Types: Mechanical and Electronic. Most Tasks use Lock Picking and Dexterity, modified by the difficulty of the lock. Lock Picking (Electronic) uses Perception and Intelligence, for the most part, to spot and neutralize electronic locks and security systems.

Magic Theory

Students of the occult arts often learn this skill, which covers the elements and techniques of Magic (see p. 203). Ceremonial covenants like the Rosicrucians study Magic like a science, and are more likely to have this skill, although some among the Wicce also have this systematic knowledge. Magic Theory is used with either intelligence or Perception to identify and recognize styles of Magic. Gifted characters with this skill can judge the strengths and weaknesses of any Magical matrix (such as that of an ongoing or maintained Invocation). This allows practitioners to best plan a way to counteract or dispel the Magic abilities of an enemy. Use Perception and Magic Theory for this purpose; every level of success adds a +1 bonus on any Task involving resisting or counteracting a Magical effect.

Martial Arts (Special)

This is the skill of using an advanced system of hand-to-hand combat. Characters with Martial Arts can do more damage with their hands and feet. Kicks and punches performed with the Martial Arts Skill have a damage bonus equal to the character's skill level. So, a character with Martial Arts level three does an additional three points of damage with a kick or punch. This bonus is added to the final damage result, after die rolls and Multipliers have been factored.

Mechanic

This skill allows a character to build and repair all manner of mechanical devices and tools, and grants her knowledge about mechanical systems. The difficulty of repairing a mechanism depends on how delicate the device is, how damaged it is, and how advanced and complex it is. Chroniclers should apply a penalty or bonus depending on these factors. Finally, a mechanical tool kit must be available for all but the most rudimentary repairs. A lab or workshop may also be required. All repair or construction attempts take time, ranging from a couple of hours to days. This too should be determined by the Chronicler.

Understanding an existing mechanical device calls for a Perception and Mechanic Task; repairing or constructing a mechanism requires an Intelligence and Mechanic Task. It should be noted that this skill and the Electronics Skill complement one another, and are often used together to make repairs to or construct an item.

Magic Bolt

This is the skill used by magicians or other Gifted to "throw" a bolt or blast of energy, or other aimed Metaphysical attack. The Magic Bolt Skill is used in place of an Invocation Skill or other power, but only for casting aimed effects. For example, a Magician could use the Magic Bolt Skill instead of Elemental Air Invocation Skill for casting a lightning bolt effect, but not for causing a gust of wind effect (as usual, the Chronicler's discretion rules here). Because Magic Bolt is easier to learn than most metaphysical skills or powers, the character can become quite adept at tossing around a variety of supernatural attacks fairly quickly. Of course, this comes at the expense of lowered effectiveness with the other relevant effects (which use levels in that power for Tasks). Use Dexterity and Magic Bolt to strike, or Perception and Magic Bolt to aim the attack (see Guns, p. 92, for aiming).

Medicine (Special)

This skill covers medical knowledge, including basic surgery skills, diagnosis, and general medicine. Most doctors also specialize in one type of medicine, such as cardiovascular, surgery, or neurosurgery. These are treated as Specialty Skills.

Diagnosis Tasks use Perception and Medicine, general treatment calls for Intelligence and Medicine, and surgery uses Dexterity and Medicine.

Myth and Legend (Type)

This is the knowledge of the mythology and folklore of a specific culture or nation. This skill can be used to identify supernatural creatures, but the information gleaned from myth and legend may be completely wrong or at least inaccurate. Each culture or nation is a separate Skill Type.

Notice

Notice represents the degree of a person's alertness. A character with this skill can use it with Perception to see what is happening around her, or with Intelligence to remember something she noticed some time ago. A character with Notice can use it with Perception to spot or hear another character using Stealth.

Occult Knowledge (Special)

This is the skill of true arcane knowledge. It covers most of the basic Metaphysical facts of the *Armageddon* setting, including a working knowledge of Essence and other specific supernatural features. Occult Knowledge gives the character a general understanding of the supernatural, and may allow him to identify creatures and strange events. Specialties are also common, such as Vampyres, Angels, and Magic.

Myth and Legends is a comparatively broader skill covering a variety of topics. Much of that information will be contradictory, false, or misinterpreted. Occult Knowledge, on the other hand, is less inclusive (the character does not know as much), but that information, at least as relates to Essence and mystical powers, is essentially true. The character may also know some information about a number of cults and supernatural creatures, although some of this information may be flawed or incomplete.

Pick Pocket

The skill of taking another person's hard-earned money or valuables without her noticing it. Most rolls use Dexterity and Pick Pocket, resisted by the victim's Perception and the highest of her Notice, Streetwise, or Pick Pocket Skills (if any, or Perception alone—not doubled—otherwise).

Piloting (Type)

The skill to control any aircraft or water vehicle of the specific type. Each type of vehicle (Propeller Plane, Jet Plane, Sailboat, Ocean Liner, etc.) requires a separate Piloting Skill Type. Most Piloting Tasks use Dexterity and Piloting, or Intelligence and Piloting for large vessels.

Play Instrument (Type)

The character is able to play a musical instrument of one type, chosen when the skill is selected. The character may choose more than one type of instrument to play, but each instrument is counted as a separate Skill Type. At the higher levels of the skill, the character is more proficient in tonal quality, rhythm, and improvisation. In all circumstances the quality of the performance is reflected in the levels of success. Results from these Tasks are subject to artistic skill limit rule (see p. 87). In order to play for pleasure, the character would use Dexterity and Play Instrument. If performing a complex piece, the attempt uses Intelligence and Play Instrument. If the character is performs a long piece of music, use Constitution and Play Instrument.

Questioning

This is the ability to interrogate, spot lies, and otherwise extract the truth from people. This skill is quickly learned by police officers, private investigators, and investigative reporters. Most interrogations should be roleplayed. If a Task or Test is needed, how well the player roleplayed the interview should give her bonuses or penalties of +5 to -5, at the Chronicler's discretion. Tricking somebody into revealing something uses the questioner's Intelligence and Questioning, resisted by a Simple Intelligence Test. Spotting a lie uses Perception and Questioning, also resisted by a Simple Intelligence Test. Breaking a victim's will to resist uses Willpower and Questioning, resisted by a Simple Willpower Test. The use of torture and drugs may give bonuses of +1 to +6 to the questioner's Task.

Research/Investigation

This skill allows a character to search out information or follow a series of clues and leads to a reasonable conclusion through deduction, source checking, going to libraries, searching on the Internet, and the like. Alternatively, this skill can be used by the character to do legwork—

running down leads on a story, and questioning contacts and sources of information (the latter would incur some penalties; this aspect is best be left to the Questioning Skill).

In all cases, the use of this skill takes time. The amount of time is determined by the Chronicler, based on the nature of the search being undertaken by the character. Most uses of this skill involve Intelligence and Research Tasks. In other cases, it's possible that Constitution and Research (in the case of searching through dusty old tomes for long periods of time, or walking the length and breadth of a library for the better part of a day), or Perception and Research (in the case of researching obscure facts in voluminous materials, such as finding a certain name in a room full of documents) can be used.

Riding (Type)

The skill to ride horses, carts, chariots, and other animals or animal-driven vehicles. Each type of animal or vehicle requires a separate Riding Skill Type.

Rituals (Type)

The skill to perform rituals and ceremonies of a particular culture, religion, or mystical group (each counts as a separate Skill Type). Rituals that require dancing or other complex physical activity use Dexterity and Rituals; most others use Intelligence and Rituals to remember all the appropriate steps or activities involved.

Running (Type)

There are two Types of Running. The first one is Running (Marathon). This skill covers running for endurance and distance. A good marathoner can cover ten or more miles (15 or more kilometers) without stopping. A character with Running (Marathon) can resist the effects of fatigue after a long period of extensive physical activity. A Constitution and Running (Marathon) Task reduces such Endurance losses by 1 point per minute. Also, add 1 Endurance Point to the character's pool for every level in Running (Marathon).

Running (Dash) trains the character to increase speed for short distances. On a dead run, use Constitution and Running (Dash) to increase maximum running speed. Each Success Level acquired adds +1 to the character's Speed Secondary Attribute.

Sciences (Type)

Each science (biology, chemistry, astronomy, mathematics, physics, etc.) counts as a separate Science Skill Type. In some games, the Chronicler may just lump them all into one category, depending on how big a role these skills play in the course of a Story. Alternatively, separation between Sciences Skill Types (and even Specialties) may be important to the storyline, and a variety of penalties may be applied when trying to use a specific Type outside its range. See the description of the Humanities Skill for more information (see p. 92). Most Sciences Tasks use Intelligence or Perception.

Seduction

The ability to make oneself sexually attractive to other people by saying the right things and putting on the right act. Use Intelligence and Seduction, modified by any Charisma or Attractiveness bonuses or penalties the character might have. Other skills may give bonuses to Seduction attempts. For example, previous Tasks using Beautician and Smooth Talking add their Success Levels to the Seduction attempt.

Singing

While everybody can sing, this skill is necessary to do it right. This skill reflects the training of the character's voice. In all circumstances, Success Levels indicate the quality of the performance. Results from these Tasks are subject to the artistic skill limit rule (see p. 87). Use Constitution and Singing for the quality of the song, Intelligence and Singing to remember every verse of a long or complex song, and Perception and Singing to recognize and measure the quality of someone else's singing.

Sleight of Hand

The ability to perform sleight of hand and legerdemain, known mainly by stage magicians. With this skill, a character can fool the audience into looking at one thing while she does something else. Most Sleight of Hand Tasks use Dexterity, resisted by a Perception Test (Simple or Difficult depending on the circumstances) or a Perception and Notice Task. To plan a complex magical trick (e.g., sawing a woman in half) requires an Intelligence and Sleight of Hand Task, often supplemented by assorted Craft Skills to build the contraptions or gadgets needed.

Smooth Talking

This skill allows the character to lie convincingly or to confuse and deceive others. This skill is commonly known by con men, salesmen and politicians. Use Intelligence and Smooth Talking for most Tasks.

Sport (Type)

This skill covers all types of competitive sports, from football to ping pong. Each Sport must be learned as a separate Type. Depending on the Task, use Strength or Dexterity and Sport. For example, a football pass uses Dexterity and Sport (Football); a tackle uses Strength and Sport (Football). To come up with a good strategy or game plan, use Intelligence and Sport; to spot a rules violation, use Perception and Sport.

Stealth

The ability to move quietly and take advantage of cover and concealment. Most Task rolls use Dexterity and Stealth; Perception is used to find good hiding places.

Storytelling

This skill allows a character to sway or influence an audience, be it an individual or a group of people, from one emotion to the next by means of a tale. It can be used for the purpose of educating people, as well as merely for entertainment. In some cultures, storytelling is the means by which knowledge and lore are passed down, and so the skill has uses for some primitive societies, but is also quite useful under certain circumstances when dealing with Myth and Legend or Occult Knowledge.

The character may tell a tale that is true or fictional, although the audience generally doesn't know the difference. The character must constantly be aware of how the listeners react to the tale and thus alter her pacing, volume, or even change the course of the story to elicit a better or greater response. Results from these Tasks are subject to artistic skill limit rule (see p. 87). Storytellers use Willpower and Storytelling Tasks. The Success Level dictates the story's effectiveness or entertainment value. If the people listening to the story are familiar with the tale, they may resist the attempt of the storyteller character to influence them with a Difficult Willpower Test.

Streetwise

The general knowledge of the lore and rules of the streets. A character with this skill knows how to behave in a given situation, knows the names and most of the faces of the more notorious local members of the underworld, and can identify most illegal transactions and operations. Use Intelligence and Streetwise to recognize a local street name, gang color, or criminal, and Perception and Streetwise to spot trouble or detect criminal activities nearby.

Surveillance

This is the ability to follow and keep people under observation. A character with Surveillance can attempt to keep sight of a target while following her through a crowded street, and remain unobserved. By the same token, this skill allows a person to know if she is being followed or observed. Use Surveillance and Perception for either activity.

Survival (Type)

This is the skill of living off the land. Each kind of terrain requires a separate Skill Type. Attempts to use a Survival Skill in the wrong place or type of terrain suffer a -3 penalty. Common Types include Forest, Mountain, Jungle, Desert and Arctic.

Swimming

Swimming is the skill that allows a character to stay afloat and to move in the water without drowning. Floating is an Average difficulty Constitution and Swimming Task when fully clothed; it becomes Easy with little or no clothing (see Modifiers to Tasks and Tests, p. 122). Each pound (kilogram) of equipment or weight effectively reduces a character's Swimming Skill level by one.

If the character fails the Swimming Task, she sinks and drowns in a number of Turns equal to her Constitution. Shedding clothing or equipment (which requires one Turn) allows a character to attempt the Task anew.

If the character succeeds, she stays afloat and may swim at a speed equal to her Swimming Skill in yards (meters) per Turn. Swimming is an exhausting activity. Floating with little clothing uses one Endurance Point per 10 minutes. Floating while fully clothed uses one Endurance

Point per minute. Swimming unclothed takes one Endurance Point per minute at half-speed and five Endurance Points per minute at full speed. Those who swim clothed, or who carry equipment when they swim, use double the Endurance cost and move at half speed. Towing another person while Swimming imposes a -1 modifier, doubles the Endurance cost, and halves the swimmer's speed.

Systems Operations (Type)

This is the skill of operating and understanding complex devices—radar sets, advanced communication systems, sonar devices, and the like. Each Type must be learned separately: Radar, Sonar, Communications, Encryption, and Electronic Warfare. Operation Tasks use Intelligence and the System Operations Skill. Systems that require a fine ear or eye (sonar, for example), use Perception and Systems Operations instead. Using an unfamiliar system (anything the character has not trained with) incurs penalties of –1 to –4, depending on the differences between the systems.

Throwing (Type)

This skill has three basic types, but others may be added as desired. Throwing (Knife) includes all small-sized edged weapons. Throwing (Axe) covers any top-heavy object with a longish handle, like maces, baseball bats, and similar projectiles. Throwing (Sphere) provides expertise in targeting rocks, grenades, or any such hand-sized object. The latter also defaults directly to Sport (Baseball), if that skill is possessed. Note that this skill need not always be applied to weapons (see Throwing Damage and Range, p. 132). If a character throws something besides a weapon, the Chronicler should decide if one of the Skill Types detailed applies, or if another is more appropriate, and what the appropriate modifier should be (see Unskilled Attempts, p. 120). All skill Tasks use Strength and Throwing.

Tracking

The skill used to follow the trail of an animal or person, usually in wilderness terrain, but also in an urban setting if snow or dust are present in enough quantity to leave a trail. Most Tracking Tasks use Perception and Tracking; attempts to hide tracks use Intelligence and Tracking.

Trance (Special)

Trance is often used by those who claim to be shamans and mystics. It enables the character to enter a meditative state transcending physical limitations. Among other things, someone in a trance can withstand pain, hunger, and thirst better than the average human being. A trance is also helpful when sensing the influence of the supernatural.

To enter into a trance, use Willpower and Trance. If successful, the character becomes extremely focused on the task at hand, which gives her a -2 penalty on all non-related Perception Tests. On the other hand, the character is not affected by pain and shock penalties and she gains a +2 bonus on all Tasks and Tests she concentrates on. A character in Trance also regains Essence more rapidly; characters gain double the normal Essence amount per hour of meditation.

Traps

This is the knowledge to detect, disarm, and set traps, snares, and the like. It is commonly known by Special Forces soldiers, guerrillas, hunters, trappers and others. Use Traps and Intelligence to devise a trap, Traps and Perception to detect a trap, and Traps and Dexterity to disarm a trap.

Unconventional Medicine (Type)

This skill covers all methods of healing not widely accepted by Western science, including herbal medicine, acupuncture, crystal healing, etc., each of which is considered a different Skill Type. The effectiveness of each type of unconventional medicine is determined by the Chronicler. If the skill is effective in treating disease and injury, use the same skills and effects as the conventional Medicine Skill (see p. 94).

Veterinary Medicine

Just like the Medicine Skill, but applies to animals. A Veterinarian can treat humans, but suffers a -3 penalty to all Task rolls and, regardless of the result of roll, cannot gain more than two Success Levels.

Weight Lifting

When trying to exceed Strength limits (see Strength Table, p. 59), Weight Lifting is very helpful. Use Strength and Weight Lifting instead of Strength times two, or, if the Strength Attribute is higher than the Weight Lifting Skill, add one-third of the Weight Lifting Skill level (rounded up) to the base number.

Writing (Type)

This skill allows the character to construct and write entertaining and/or meaningful written accounts and narratives. The character can write text in a convincing manner to suit whatever goal or presentation is required. Types of skills include Academic (learned expositions on the arts, humanities or sciences), Advocacy (legal arguments, ad copy or promotional materials), Creative (such as novels, poems, or plays), Journalistic (informative discussions of newsworthy topics), and Technical (precise descriptions using nomenclature specific to a certain technology). In all circumstances, the quality of any work is reflected in the levels of success. Results from these Tasks are subject to artistic skill limit rule (see p. 87).

Using an Intelligence and Writing Task, the character can write documents, items, notes, or whatever his specialization implies. The writing quality depends on the Success Levels obtained. The Success Level of such a work cannot exceed the writer's skill, however. Using a Perception and Writing Task, the character can critique writing of the style with which he is familiar.

Metaphysics

Metaphysics involve supernatural abilities and powers. They are the province of the Gifted and supernatural beings. Although all humans have at least the potential to develop these powers, only a small percentage develop them to any significant degree. Mundane, normal humans, are largely blind to the powers of Essence, the primal force of reality. Only Gifted humans can sense and manipulate these powers, and by doing so they can stand with demons and angels. The Gifted are hated and feared by many supernatural beings; their existence is a reminder that humans were made in the Creator's image, and their potential is infinite. Some Metaphysical powers are primarily the domain of Gifted humans, while others are limited only to a particular supernatural race.

Divine Inspiration

The power of pure, unbridled faith—the belief in a Greater Power and the will to perform great works in the name of that Power. Its wielders claim to serve the Creator directly. Detractors claim the Powers lie within the faithful themselves and have no external source. Whatever the truth, the Inspired can perform incredible feats. These Miracles are special abilities gained through mystical revelation (see pp. 239-243).

Magical Invocations

Magicians manipulate the world through the power of their will, the Expenditure of Essence, and the performance of rituals that help focus the will and give shape to the Essence used. These rituals, or Invocations, must be learned by the Magician (see p. 203-224).

Necromancy

The ability to interact with the dead, this Craft is similar in some ways to both Magic and the Sight, but is a separate ability, one few people (commonly known as Mediums) ever learn, let alone master. Necromantic powers are activated through the Necromancy Skill. There are four basic Powers: Death Lordship, Death Mastery, Death Speech, Death Vessel (see p. 235-239).

Primal Powers

Primal Powers are the province of the Old Gods, their servants, and their offspring—Inheritors, Avatars, and Incarnates. They are determined by the Aspects of the gods the characters are associated with, such as Death, War, or Justice. Primal Powers range from increased Attributes to dominion over the elements (see p. 275-296). In some cases, they work just like Magic or Necromancy.

The Sight

The Sight, or Second Sight, is the term used by occultists to describe the powers of the mind, also known as psychic, psionic, or esper powers. The Sight includes the powers to see into the past and future, to read thoughts, and move objects through sheer force of will. Each power is acquired separately, and has an Art (the skill used to activate the power) and a Strength (the raw power of the psychic ability) (see p. 224-234).

Character Creation Example (Continued)

Jen turns to the Skill selection process. First, since her character has spent most of her time in Ecstasis, she has little experience in the modern world. She knows about cars and airplanes and guns, but she really doesn't know how to use them. She has 40 points for Skills, and she puts her three Drawback points in there as well. Jen decides she is going to list all the Skills she wants, and then spend points as appropriate.

Jen picks up Brawling (in case she needs to punch someone out), Notice, Melee Weapon (Sword) (to wield her Celestial Fire weapon), Acrobatics (to help her flying), Occult Knowledge, Intimidation, and Magic Bolt (to throw Celestial Fire bolts). She also decides Graelle has Singing and Dancing. Realizing that the ability to lie convincingly (and detect lies) may help her character in the intrigues of the Heavenly Host, she also takes Smooth Talking and Interrogation.

Spending her 43 points, she comes with this final Skill List:

Acrobatics 4 (8 points)

Brawling 4 (4 points)

Dancing 3 (3 points)

Interrogation 3 (3 points)

Intimidation 3 (3 points)

Hand Weapon (Sword) 4 (4 points)

Magic Bolt 4 (4 points)

Notice 4 (4 points)

Occult Knowledge 2 (4 points)

Singing 3 (3 points)

Smooth Talking 3 (3 points)

Supernatural Attributes

Supernatural characters can use points from the Metaphysics Category to raise their Attributes. Raising an Attribute with Metaphysics Points costs a sum equal to the new level. For example, raising Dexterity from level five to six would cost six points. Raising it to level seven would could cost an additional seven points, for a total of 13 points, and so on. Also, these Metaphysics Points may be spent only after all other modifiers (like racial bonuses) to the Attribute have been taken into account.

Spirit Patrons

Some characters forge a relationship with a supernatural entity. This is treated as a Supernatural Quality (see pp. 84, 243-247)

Theophanies

Angels and demons have a number of special abilities, linked to their particular function in the celestial or infernal ranks. Most have no more than one Theophany/Maleficia; a few have two of them, and only the most powerful and experienced have three or more. Characters with these powers have a Theophany/Maleficia Skill, and one or more Theophany/Maleficia powers (see pp. 258-261, 264-266).

Possessions

This is what the character owns. To determine a character's possessions, check her Resources level (see p. 77), which determines how much money she has in property. Then, distribute that money among all the things the character wants. Some things, like a car, could be partially owned (i.e., loan payments are still being paid on it). Prices in the early 21st century are only somewhat higher for most things than in the "real" world; the Final War may cause prices to shoot up for some things soon, however. Some changes include the following.

Cars: A gasoline vehicle costs over five times as much as it does today, and most models tend to be smaller (two-door compact or sub-compact). Luxury gas models cost as much as $100,000. Electrical cars and propane-electrical hybrids cost the same as today's gas-powered vehicles.

Computers: A computer with an independent memory, processor, and read-write CD disks costs between $1,000 to $4,000, depending on its power. Obsolescence is less of a problem; computer technology for civilian uses has slowed down as most new developments are classified "Secret" by the military. Most people use a "Netbox" with minimal processing and memory capabilities, which connects to the Internet and gets its operating system and programs from it. Netboxes cost between $300 and $600, are less reliable than computers (if the local network is down, so is the box) and can be more easily monitored by outside forces (if e-mail is floating in cyberspace, bet that somebody other than its addressee is reading it).

Weapons: Most weapons in the civilian market cost about the same as the "real" world. Caseless weapons are mainly used by the military; the common people make do with the old cartridge guns in use for a century and a half. Some states have very strict laws concerning handgun ownership. Throughout the East Coast, buying a gun takes weeks of processing and a special permit. In the Midwest and South, the danger of invasion has made everyone anxious to have a gun, and gun laws are the most relaxed since frontier times. Also, some regions that have more or less "seceded" pretty much do as they please, and run around with stolen military equipment.

More information on weapons and equipment can be found in **Chapter Five: Tools** (see p. 148).

Finishing Touches

After a player has determined all the basic elements, the character is almost done. All that is left is a few touches that make the character come alive and seem like more than a collection of numbers on a piece of paper. Note that these finishing touches can be done just as easily at the beginning as at the end of the character creation process. Still, sometimes the last touches are best left until the start of the Story. A player may need to start playing to get a solid feel for the role. Do whatever works best.

Name: First, of course, is the character's name. This simple touch can add a number of roleplaying elements. The character's first and last name may give ideas as to the character's ethnic background (an Italian name conjures images of growing up in an ethnic neighborhood in New York, for example) and the kind of family that raised the character (a Biblical name might be the result of a strict Christian background, while a name like "Moonlight" might indicate the character's parents were Hippies). Some characters may adopt nicknames or "street names" in addition to their given names; maybe they hate the name their parents gave them. It is easy to come up with any old name, but having it mean something can add to the fun.

Appearance: The character's appearance and demeanor are also important. Whether or not a character is attractive and charismatic is determined by any Qualities or Drawbacks purchased during character creation, but the description makes the numbers come to life. Beyond obvious things like hair and eye color and general physique, there are other, subtler elements that can help the Chronicler and the other players get a better "handle" on the character. Does the character walk in a timid, stooped position, or does she swagger around like he owns the world? Does she have any nervous ticks or other habitual behaviors? Does she smile a lot or does she have a grim demeanor? The character's appearance should take into account her Attributes, Qualities, and Drawbacks—a character with Paranoia may have tendency to look behind her every once in a while, or maybe she always insists on being the last one to enter any room.

Speech Pattern: Not everybody is an actor, but it can be fun to have a character with a different speech pattern. Maybe the character uses slang heavily, or she affects a cultured vocabulary. Even something as simple as a word the character uses a great deal makes her stand out and memorable to the rest of the cast. Always keep in mind that making an interesting character does not mean she will try to steal the spotlight all the time, however.

After these finishing touches, the character is set, and ready for the world of *Armageddon.*

Character Creation Example (Continued)

Graelle is almost completed. Jen now has to spend the remaining 15 points of Metaphysics on Theophanies, the only power commonly available to the Seraphim (she decides not to raise any Attributes with Metaphysics Points). Being a member of the Heavenly Host, she gets one free level of the Theophany Skill. She raises it up to level three, for four points (two per level, one level free). She decides to take two Theophanies: Binder and Healer (six and five points, respectively), which cost 11 points, and exhaust her character points. The Cast Member is ready to go, except for details like appearance and name, which Jen had already figured out.

SOLDIER

Character Type: Potential Hero
Character Concept: Warrior
Association: Lone Wolf

Attributes

Str 3 (3)
Dex 3 (3)
Con 3 (2 + 3 from Drawbacks)
Int 3 (3)
Per 2 (1 + 2 from Drawbacks)
Will 3 (3)

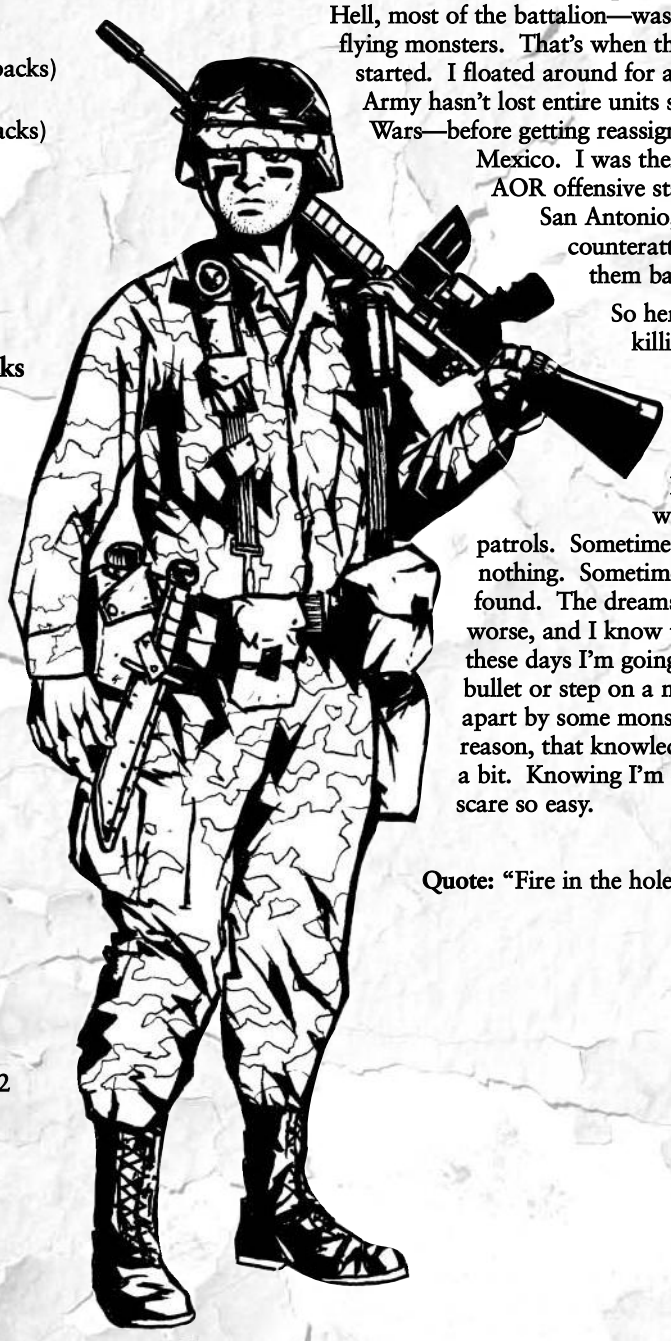
LPs 43
EPs 33
Speed 10
Essence 17

Qualities and Drawbacks

Adversary (Army of Revelations) (-2)
Attractiveness -1 (-1)
Hard to Kill 3 (3)
Humorless (-1)
Good Luck 2 (free)
Military Rank (Corporal) (-1)
Nerves of Steel (3)
Recurring Nightmares (-1)

Skills

Brawling 2
Bureaucracy 2
Climbing 2
Dodge 4
Driving (Car) 3
Driving (Motorcycle) 3
Driving (Tracked Vehicle) 3
Guns (Rifle) 3
Guns (Machine Gun) 2
Guns (Rocket Launcher) 2
Language (Spanish) 2
Swimming 2



Background

Yup, I was in the Reserves when the shit hit the fan. My unit got shipped to Europe. It wasn't pretty. I took a shell fragment in my arm early on, got shipped home to recover—and before I was out of the hospital, my company—Hell, most of the battalion—was wiped out by flying monsters. That's when the nightmares started. I floated around for a while—the Army hasn't lost entire units since the Indian Wars—before getting reassigned, this time to Mexico. I was there when the last AOR offensive stalled outside San Antonio, and in the counterattack that sent them back to Mexico.

So here I am, on the killing side of the front line. We're dug in somewhere near Tijuana. Every few days, we send out patrols. Sometimes they find nothing. Sometimes they're never found. The dreams are getting worse, and I know that one of these days I'm going to run into a bullet or step on a mine or get torn apart by some monster. For some reason, that knowledge comforts me a bit. Knowing I'm dead, I don't scare so easy.

Quote: "Fire in the hole!"

HEAVENLY HOST AGENT

Character Type: Beginning Gifted
Character Concept: Seeker of Knowledge
Association: Heavenly Host

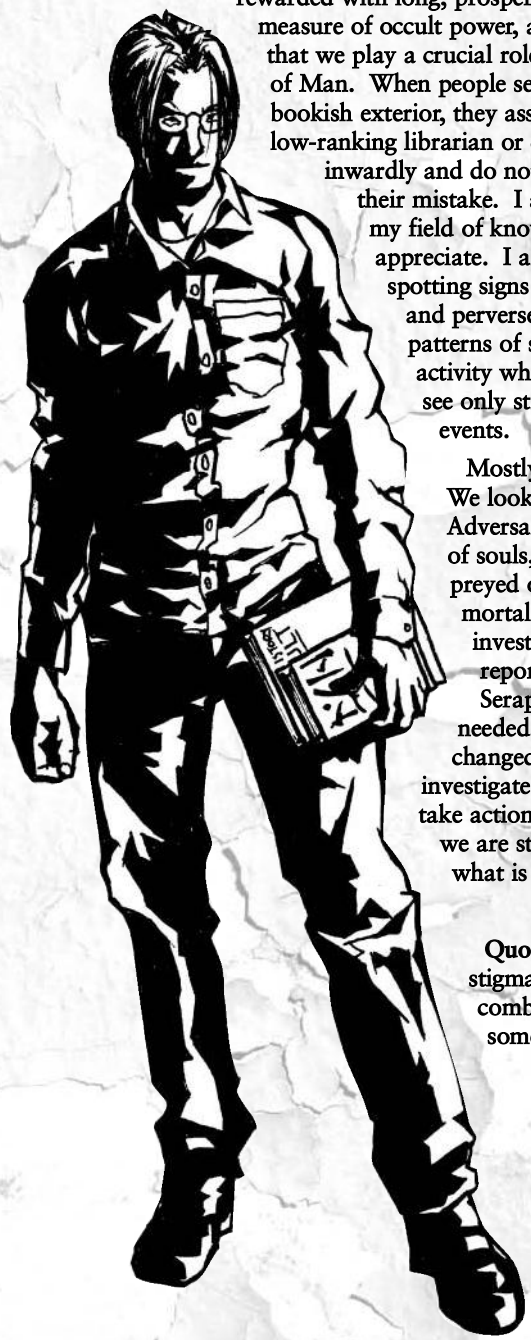
Attributes
Str 2 (2)
Dex 2 (2)
Con 2 (2)
Int 3 (3)
Per 3 (3)
Will 3 (3)

LPs 34
EPs 26
Speed 8
Essence 25

Qualities and Drawbacks
Adversary (Church of Revelations) (-3)
Adversary (Infernal Legion) (-1)
Charisma -2 (-2)
Emotional Problems (Fear of Rejection) (-1)
Gift (5)
Impaired Senses (Sight) (-1)
Increased Essence Pool +10 (free)
Resources (Well-off) (4)

Skills
Dodge 2
Driving (Car) 2
Magic Bolt 4
Notice 3
Occult Knowledge (Seraphim) 4
Research/Investigation 4
Stealth 2

Metaphysics
Spirit Patron (Seraphim)
Beholden (-3)
Cleansing Invocation 2 (4)
Essence Channeling 2 (4)
Farsight Invocation 2 (4)
Oath of Duty (-4)
Soulfire Invocation 2 (4)



Background

I wasn't hired for this job. I was born into it—as was my father, and his father before him. Our family has given faithful service to the Seraphim for centuries now. We have been rewarded with long, prosperous lives, a measure of occult power, and the knowledge that we play a crucial role in the salvation of Man. When people see my drab, frail, bookish exterior, they assume I am some low-ranking librarian or clerk. I smile inwardly and do nothing to correct their mistake. I am a scholar, but my field of knowledge is one few appreciate. I am adept at spotting signs of the unnatural and perverse, and seeing patterns of supernatural activity where the mundane see only strings of unrelated events.

Mostly we kept watch. We looked for signs of the Adversary—the corrupters of souls, or those who preyed on us mere mortals. We observed, investigated, and reported, and the Seraphs did what was needed. Things have changed. We still investigate, but now we often take action as well. I hope we are strong enough to do what is needed.

Quote: "Two cases of stigmata, one of human combustion. Clearly, something is afoot."

HOLY MILITIAMAN

Character Type: Gifted
Character Concept: Warrior
Association: Alliance

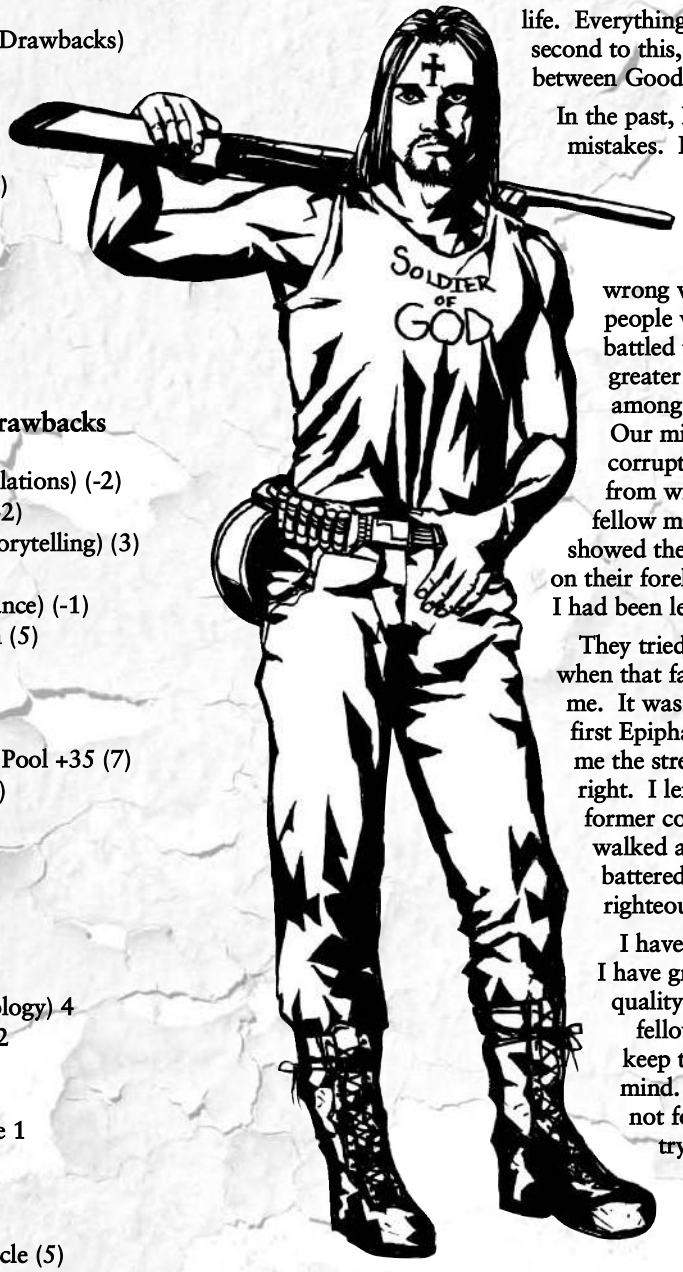
Attributes
Str 3 (2 + 3 from Drawbacks)
Dex 3 (3)
Con 3 (3)
Int 2 (2)
Per 2 (1 + 2 from Drawbacks)
Will 4 (4)

LPs 40
EPs 35
Speed 12
Essence 64

Qualities and Drawbacks
Adversary (Church of Revelations) (-2)
Adversary (FBI) (-2)
Artistic Talent (Storytelling) (3)
Charisma +2 (2)
Delusion (Intolerance) (-1)
Divine Inspiration (5)
Gift (5)
Hard to Kill 2 (2)
Honorable (-2)
Increased Essence Pool +35 (7)
Nerves of Steel (3)
Zealot (-3)

Skills
Brawling 4
Dodge 3
Driving (Car) 2
Humanities (Theology) 4
Guns (Handgun) 2
Guns (Rifle) 2
Notice 3
Occult Knowledge 1
Storytelling 4

Metaphysics
Divine Sight Miracle (5)
Holy Fire Miracle (5)
Strength of Ten Miracle (5)
Touch of Healing Miracle (5)



Background

Those who have ears, listen. The Kingdom of God is at hand, but first we must make our stand against the Unrighteous. We must smite the demons that threaten our way of life. Everything else must come second to this, the Final War between Good and Evil.

In the past, I made grievous mistakes. I thought the Federal Government was the evil force that should be fought. I fought in the wrong war, and innocent people were hurt. While I battled the lesser evil, the greater one grew strong among my fellow warriors. Our militia movement was corrupted and subverted from within. One day, my fellow militia members showed the Mark of the Beast on their foreheads, and I realized I had been led into darkness.

They tried to convert me, and when that failed, they tried to kill me. It was then that I had my first Epiphany, and God gave me the strength to do what was right. I left the bodies of my former comrades behind, and walked away, bloodied and battered but filled with righteous purpose.

I have joined a new army. I have grave doubts about the quality of some of my fellow soldiers, but I must keep the greater evil in mind. So far, the Lord has not forsaken me. I must try not to let my doubts forsake Him.

Quote: "The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want."

SPECIAL FORCES SOLDIER

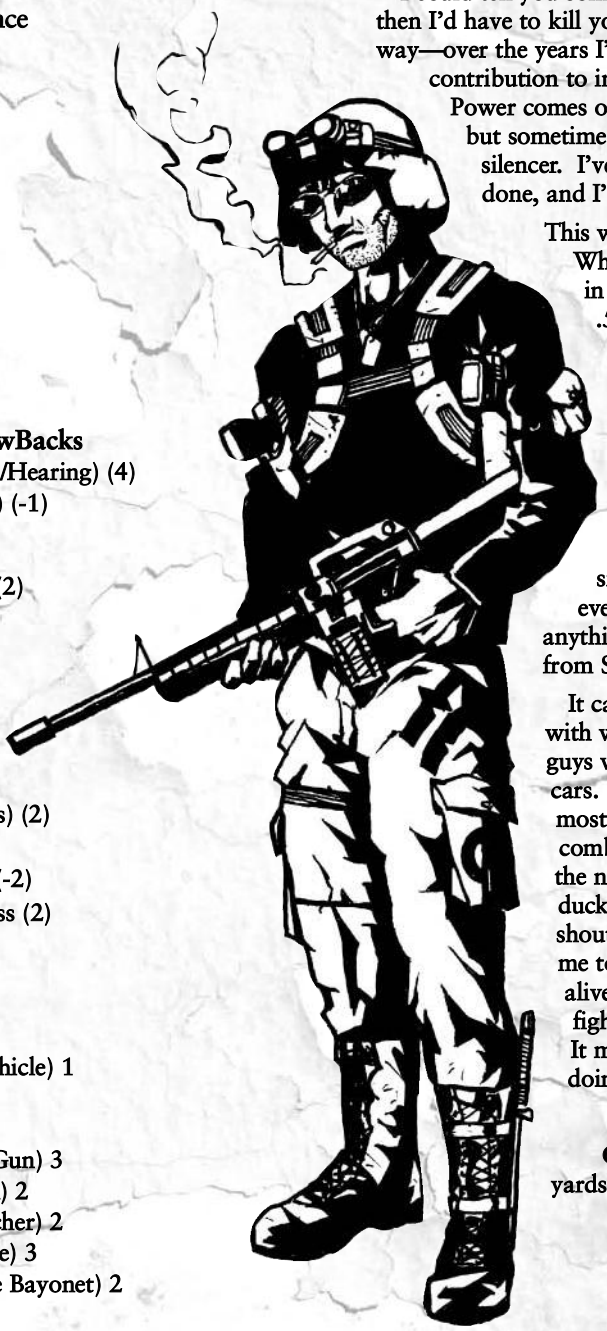
Character Type: Mundane
Character Concept: Warrior
Association: Alliance

Attributes
Str 5
Dex 5
Con 4
Int 3
Per 3
Will 5

LPs 61
EPs 47
Speed 18
Essence 25

Qualities and DrawBacks
Acute Senses (Vision/Hearing) (4)
Addiction (Smoking) (-1)
Adversary (Army of Revelations) (-3)
Contacts (Military) (2)
Cruel (-1)
Fast Reaction Time (2)
Good Luck 2 (free)
Hard to Kill 5 (5)
Honorable (-2)
Military Rank (Sergeant, First Class) (2)
Nerves of Steel (3)
Obligation (Major) (-2)
Situational Awareness (2)

Skills
Dodge 3
Driving (Car) 3
Driving (Tracked Vehicle) 1
Guns (Handgun) 4
Guns (Rifle) 4
Guns (Submachine Gun) 3
Guns (Machine Gun) 2
Guns (Rocket Launcher) 2
Hand Weapon (Knife) 3
Hand Weapon (Rifle Bayonet) 2
Intimidation 2
Language (Spanish) 1
Language (Arabic) 1
Martial Arts 3
Notice 2
Smooth Talking 2
Throwing (Sphere) 3



Background

I could tell you some damn good stories, but then I'd have to kill you. Let me put it this way—over the years I've made a significant contribution to international relations. Power comes out of the barrel of a gun, but sometimes, that gun has to use a silencer. I've done what needed to be done, and I've done it well.

This war is something else. When you shoot your target in the head with a Barretta .50 cal, and it gets up, you know that things have changed. When they asked for volunteers for detached duty with "paranormal organizations," I was first in line. It's interesting, being on the side of the angels for real, even if the angels aren't anything like what I remember from Sunday school.

It can be weird, running ops with witches and psychics and guys who can bench press small cars. But I've got something most of 'em don't have: combat experience. Many of the newbies don't know to duck for cover when someone shouts "Incoming!" It's up to me to teach them how to stay alive. And this time, we are fighting a real Evil Empire. It makes me feel better about doing what needs to be done.

Quote: "Five hundred yards? Easy shot."

IMMORTAL STUNT MAN

Character Type: Gifted
Character Concept: Reluctant Hero
Association: Lodge of the Undying

Attributes

Str 4 (3 +1 from True Immortal)
Dex 4 (3 +1 from True Immortal)
Con 4 (3 +1 from True Immortal)
Int 3 (2 +3 from Drawbacks)
Per 3 (2 +3 from Drawbacks)
Will 3 (2 +3 from Drawbacks)

LPs 58
EPs 38
Speed 16
Essence 96

Qualities and Drawbacks

Addiction (Smoking) (-1)
Adversary (Church of Revelations) (-1)
Charisma +1 (1)
Clown (-1)
Covetous (Lecherous) 2 (-2)
Fast Reaction Time (2)
Hard to Kill 1 (1)
Increased Essence Pool +50 (10)
Recklessness (-2)
Resources (Wealthy) (6)
Showoff (-2)
Status 1 (free)
True Immortal (15)

Skills

Acting 2
Acrobatics 3
Brawling 3
Climbing 3
Disguise 2
Driving (Car) 4
Notice 2
Occult Knowledge (Immortals) 1 (free)
Seduction 2
Smooth Talking 1

Metaphysics

Battle Boost (5)

Background

I used to think I was pretty special. Best stunt man in the industry. Even then, I knew it wasn't skill, but I thought I was the luckiest sumbitch that ever leaped off a second story window. I couldn't break my falls worth shit, but I never got hurt. Well, I got hurt, but I got better real quick, so I figured I was damn lucky. Then my "luck" fixed an arm broken in three places in less than a minute. That's when I realized there was something more than met the eye about me.

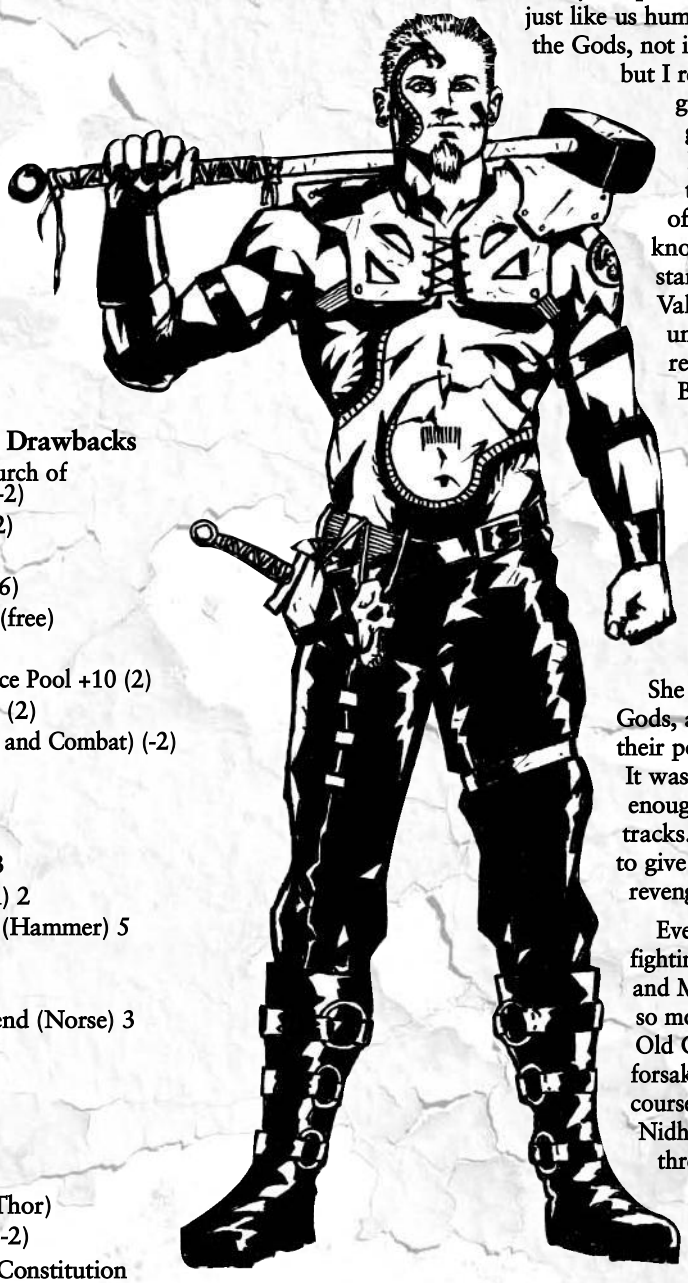
Not too long after the big accident, a weird woman paid me a visit. She told me I was an Immortal, and invited me to the Immortal club. I figured it might be a good idea so I joined their Lodge. I learned a lot about Immortality, but for the most part, I tried not to think about it. I had money, fame, and women—what else was there?

Now we've got this war going on. I don't mind driving a car into a four-way head-on collision—but only when it's a staged four-way head-on collision. Wars aren't staged, and even Immortals, I'm told, can get killed. But it seems I've got no choice. It's off to the trenches. And I was looking forward to living forever.

Quote: "Jumping off an airplane without a parachute is fun the first time; the second time, it just hurts."

NEO-PAGAN WARRIOR

Character Type: Lesser Gifted
Character Concept: Avenger/Warrior
Association: The Pantheons



Attributes
Str 3
Dex 4
Con 3
Int 3
Per 3
Will 4

LPs 40
EPs 35
Speed 14
Essence 30

Qualities and Drawbacks
Adversary (Church of Revelations) (-2)
Charisma -2 (-2)
Gift (5)
Good Luck 6 (6)
Hard to Kill 2 (free)
Honorable (-2)
Increased Essence Pool +10 (2)
Nerves of Steel (2)
Obsession (War and Combat) (-2)

Skills
Dodge 3
Driving (Car) 3
Gun (Handgun) 2
Hand Weapon (Hammer) 5
Intimidation 3
Martial Arts 5
Myth and Legend (Norse) 3
Notice 3
Stealth 2
Surveillance 2

Metaphysics
Spirit Patron (Thor)
Oath of Duty (-2)
Regeneration (Constitution Points/Turn) (6)
Vigor (+5 Strength, +3 Dexterity, +5 Constitution) (13)

Background

We all are branches of Yggdrasil, the Cosmic Tree. The Old Gods are higher up than we are, but they are part of the greater whole, just like us humans. I do not worship the Gods, not in the Christian sense, but I respect them. They grant me power, and I grant them obedience. It works much better than the vague promises of reward after death. I know that after I die, I will stand on the plains of Valhalla to fight and party until I choose to be reborn on this world. Beats playing a harp up on a cloud, if you ask me.

When I was in college, somebody murdered the one I loved. No cop or priest was able to help. Then a strange woman came to me. She told me of the Old Gods, and that she had used their power to find the killer. It was a professor, and smart enough not to leave any tracks. I asked the Old Gods to give me the strength to get revenge, and they did.

Even before the War, I was fighting in defense of Asgard and Midgard. Now, I can do so more openly. Soon, the Old Gods will reclaim their forsaken glories. First, of course, we have to take care of Nidhoggr, the worm that threatens Yggdrasil, and all that dwell there. It's going to be a glorious battle.

Quote: "Thor, give me the strength to open a can of whupass on these losers."

HOMELESS SERAPHIM EXILE

Character Type: Supernatural
Character Concept: Forsaken
Association: Watchers

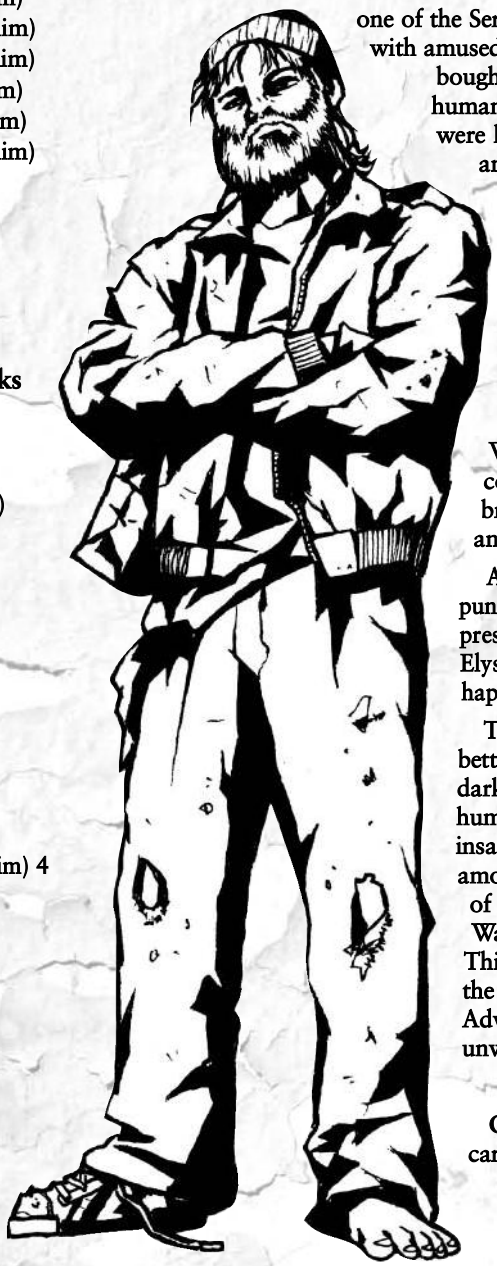
Attributes
Str 8 (5 + 3 from Seraphim)
Dex 7 (4 + 3 from Seraphim)
Con 7 (4 + 3 from Seraphim)
Int 7 (5 + 2 from Seraphim)
Per 6 (4 + 2 from Seraphim)
Will 8 (8 + 2 from Seraphim)

LPs 175
EPs 215
Speed 28
Essence 108

Qualities and Drawbacks
Adversary (Seraphim) (-2)
Attractiveness +2 (2)
Charisma -1 (-1)
Contacts (Streetwise) 5 (5)
Exile (Seraphim) (30)
Nerves of Steel (3)
Resources (Below Average) (-2)
Status (Homeless) (-5)

Skills
Acrobatics 4
Brawling 4
Hand Weapon (Sword) 4
Intimidation 4
Occult Knowledge (Seraphim) 4
Rituals 5
Smooth Talking 3
Streetwise 4

Metaphysics
Blessing Invocation 3 (3)
Symbols of Protection Invocation 3 (6)
Shielding Invocation 4 (8)



Background

I'd rather live in the gutter than in Elysium. In the gutter, it's easier to tell who the scumbags are. Humans can be evil, twisted, insane—but even the worst of them aren't as self-deluded as the so-called angels. I should know. I was one of the Seraphim, watching humanity with amused contempt from Elysium. I bought the whole party line—that humans couldn't be trusted, that they were like children playing with guns and explosives, and that we needed to make sure they didn't blow themselves up. Then I was sent down to Earth, to stop a Demon plot. The Fallen were corrupting a singer, using her talent to darken the souls of her audience. So down I went, and I fell in love with her. When the mission was over, I couldn't bear to leave her. So I broke my bonds with Elysium and became Flesh.

And the bastards killed her to punish me. A tragic accident, the press called it, but I knew better. Elysium couldn't bear to see me happy, and they took her from me.

That's when I knew we were no better than humans. I fled into the darkest pits of the world, among humanity's poor, criminal, and insane, and I felt more at home among them than in the company of angels. Even after I joined the Watchers, I stayed in the streets. This is where I belong. Now that the War has started, I can see the Adversary's plots among the unwanted and unwashed.

Quote: "Touch my shopping cart and I'll rip your head off."

QLIPHONIM MILITARY ADVISOR

Character Type: Supernatural
Character Concept: Scoundrel
Association: Infernal Legion

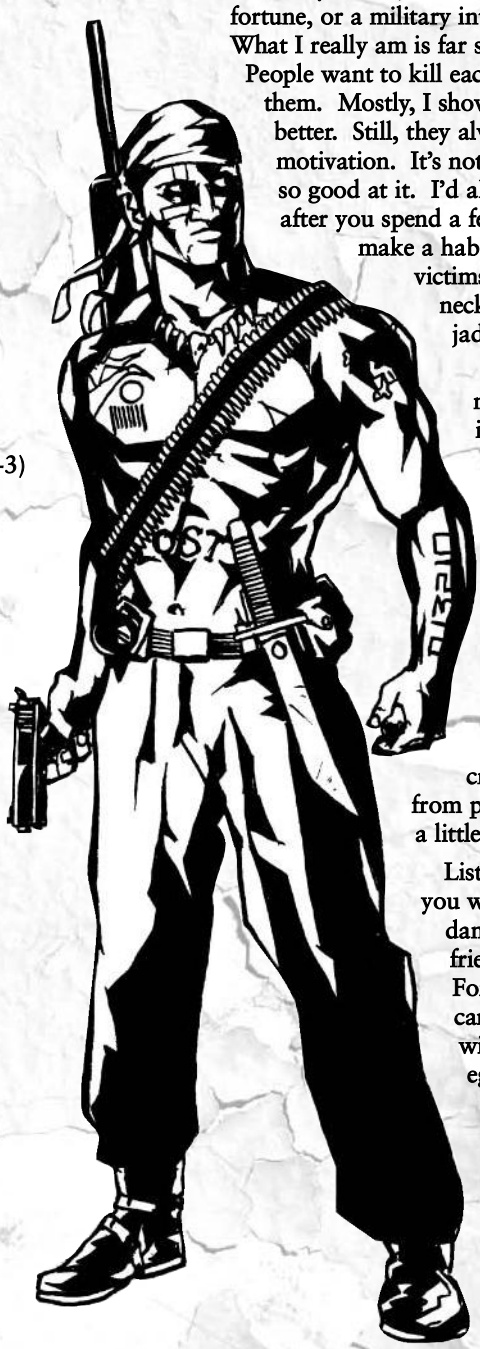
Attributes
Str 7 (4 + 3 from Qliphonim)
Dex 6 (4 + 2 from Qliphonim)
Con 7 (4 + 3 from Qliphonim)
Int 5 (5)
Per 6 (5 + 1 from Qliphonim)
Will 7 (8 + 1 from Qliphonim)

LPs 120
EPs 135
Speed 26
Essence 103

Qualities and Drawbacks
Adversary (Heavenly Host) (-1)
Adversary (Army of Revelations) (-3)
Charisma +2 (2)
Contacts (Military) (4)
Covetous (Power) (-2)
Cruel (-1)
Increased Essence Pool +15 (3)
Obligation (Major) (-2)
Qliphonim (30)

Skills
Brawling 4
Bureaucracy 2
Demolitions 3
Dodge 4
Driving (Car) 3
Guns (Rifle) 3
Guns (Rocket Launcher) 2
Haggling 3
Hand Weapon (Knife) 3
Instruction 3
Intimidation 3
Piloting (Helicopter) 3
Seduction 3
Smooth Talking 3
Surveillance 2
Stealth 3
Traps 2

Metaphysics
Maleficia Skill 3 (6)
Concealer (5)



Background

I've been places. Viet-Nam, Cambodia, El Salvador, just to drop a few names. Depending on who you ask, I'm a CIA agent, a soldier of fortune, or a military intelligence operative. What I really am is far simpler. I'm a facilitator. People want to kill each other, and I help them. Mostly, I show them how to do it better. Still, they always have the motivation. It's not my fault they become so good at it. I'd almost pity them, but after you spend a few years with guys who make a habit of carrying their victims' severed ears on necklaces, you get a bit jaded.

Things are different now, though. This war is not just humans killing each other for fun and profit. This time, somebody is going to win. Humans are wonderful weapons, and I'm the guy to get them primed and ready and aimed at the right target. So I'm still moving around, using fake credentials to get me from place to place, and doing a little wet work myself.

Listen to me and I'll help you win the war. Collateral damage? Inevitable, my friend. Innocent victims? Fortunes of war. You can't make an omelet without breaking some eggs, right?

Quote: "No prisoners!"

SORCERER

Character Type: Greater Gifted
Character Concept: Seeker of Knowledge
Association: Alliance

Attributes

Str 2
Dex 2
Con 3
Int 4
Per 4
Will 5

LPs 33
EPs 35
Speed 10
Essence 70

Qualities and Drawbacks

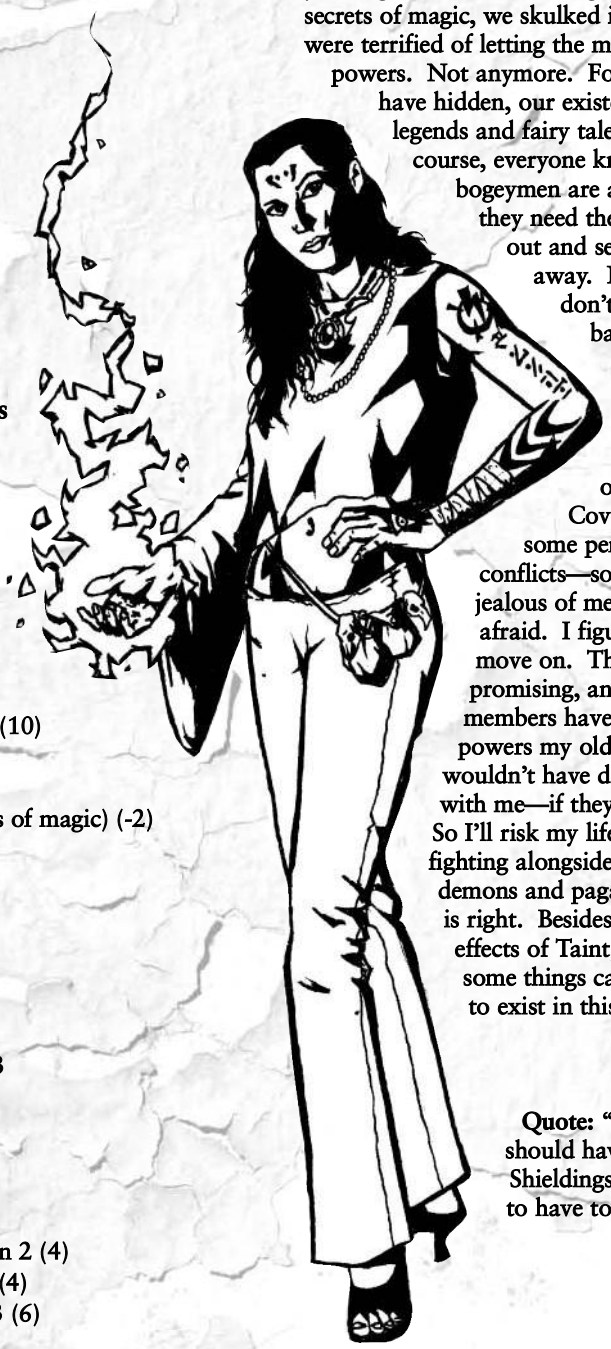
Adversary (Church of Revelations) (-5)
Adversary (Rival Magician) (-2)
Covetous (Power) (-2)
Delusion ("I'm invincible") (-2)
Essence Channeling 8 (25)
Honorable (-1)
Increased Essence Pool+50 (10)
Gift (5)
Hard to Kill 1 (1)
Obsession (Learn all secrets of magic) (-2)

Skills

Dodge 3
Driving (Car) 3
Guns (Handgun) 3
Magic Bolt 5
Notice 4
Occult Knowledge (Taint) 3
Research 4
Rituals (Alliance) 5
Stealth 2

Metaphysics

Affect the Psyche Invocation 2 (4)
Consecration Invocation 2 (4)
Elemental Fire Invocation 3 (6)
Farsight Invocation 2 (4)
Lesser Healing Invocation 2 (4)
Shielding Invocation 4 (8)
Soulfire Invocation 3 (6)
Warding Invocation 4 (8)



Background

Things have changed a great deal. Fifteen years ago, when I was being initiated into the secrets of magic, we skulked in the shadows and were terrified of letting the mundane see our powers. Not anymore. For centuries, we have hidden, our existence the stuff of legends and fairy tales. Now, of course, everyone knows the bogeymen are all too real, and they need the wizards to come out and send the monsters away. No problem. Just don't think we'll go back into the shadows after the dust settles.

False modesty aside, I was one of the best of my Covenant. There were some personality conflicts—some people were jealous of me, others were afraid. I figured it was time to move on. This Alliance is promising, and some of its members have access to secret powers my old Covenant wouldn't have dreamed of sharing with me—if they knew them at all. So I'll risk my life and sanity fighting alongside angels and demons and pagan gods. The price is right. Besides, after seeing the effects of Taint, I realize that some things cannot be allowed to exist in this world.

Quote: "Nice try, but you should have known about Shieldings. Now I'm going to have to burn you a little."

DEATH INHERITOR

Character Type: Supernatural
Character Concept: Weird One
Association: Lone Wolf

Attributes
Str 5 (2 + 3 from Inheritor)
Dex 4 (4)
Con 8 (5 + 3 from Inheritor)
Int 4
Per 4
Will 8 (11 + 1 from Inheritor)

LPs 105 EPs 93
Speed 24 Essence 75

Qualities and Drawbacks
Adversary (Believer Cult) (-4)
Attractiveness +2 (2)
Artistic Talent (Music) (3)
Cruel (-1)
Charisma -3 (-3)
Delusion ("I am Death") (-2)
Increased Essence Pool +10 (2)
Inheritor (20)
Nerves of Steel (3)
Paranoia (-2)
Recklessness (-2)
Resources 2 (4)

Skills
Brawling 3
Dancing 3
Dodge 3
Driving (Motorcycle) 3
Driving (Car) 2
Intimidation 3
Hand Weapon (Knife) 3
Musical Instrument (Guitar) 3
Notice 3
Singing 4
Smooth Talking 2
Streetwise 2
Writing (Poetry) 3
Writing (Song-writing) 3

Metaphysics
Aspect: Death
Primal Skill 5 (10)
Agony Primal Power (8)
Death Senses Primal Power (2)
Death Gaze Primal Power (10)

Background

All good things must come to an end. I am part of the natural order. Why do you fear me? Do you truly think death is the end of everything? And if it is, do you think running is going to change anything?

People always thought I was weird. Maybe it was the pale skin or the dark clothing, or the way I knew when people were going to die. During my freshman year in college, my boyfriend got a little too frisky. He punched me when I told him to stop. They wheeled him out in a covered stretcher. The Medical Examiner ruled it a heart attack. I knew better. I realized then that I was Death incarnate. I wrote my first poem that night, and my first song the following week. I started performing in nightclubs, did well enough for a while. You may have a copy of my single, A Fine and Private Place.

I let some guy buy me a drink. He was even darker than me, and was full of stories about Leviathan, a being more powerful than Death itself. He started getting a little too frisky when I laughed in his face. They wheeled him out in a covered stretcher. But he had friends, and they are trying to get me. Then the War started, and Death was everywhere. This is Death's time, a time of ending and destruction. This is my time.

Quote: "You were dead the moment you pulled a gun on me. How you die is now up to you."

CHAPTER FOUR: RULES

Chapter Four

"Loader! Sabot!"

"On the way!"

The M-1A2 tank shuddered as it spat death downhill.

"Hit!"

The Holy Fist tank rolled gently to a halt, some two thousand meters away. Smoke poured from it, but it did not explode. The Fist's fire suppression systems were as good as the M-1's, if not better. A man crawled out of the crippled tank. Lieutenant Brady stretched him on the ground with a burst from his cupola machine gun. "See you Hell, Churchie!"

"Loader, HEAT!"

The Holy Fist had been the only heavy tank that had made it to Brady's position. The rest of the attackers were a motley array of funny-looking Brazilian tankettes and APCs. High explosive rounds would smash them easily; no need to spend the more expensive depleted uranium armor-piercing rounds.

"Fire!"

This time the target went up in a ball of flame.

The attack was lagging, Brady decided. Several staggered lines of burning and smoking vehicles showed the success of Captain Suarez's ambush. The reinforced tank platoon had gutted a mechanized company. One of the four M-1 tanks was a smoking ruin itself, however, its turret half-torn away by the only shot the Holy Fist had fired. Captain Suarez had been inside. Brady was now in command.

No more intact targets were in range. More vehicles advanced through the smoke, however. Vehicles and . . .

"Oh, shit."

Winged shapes floated over the battlefield. Some looked like snakes with bat wings and human faces. Others looked like mutated versions of the gargoyles that decorate old buildings, or demons from the most colorful descriptions of Hell.

"Churchie's deploying parabiologicals," Brady announced through the open channel. The Vulcan anti-aircraft gun behind the lines opened up. Its 20mm gun was woefully ineffective against modern jet aircraft, but it was great to shoot down flying monsters. The dug-in infantry, the Bradleys, and M-113s that had carried them to the lines, and the M-1's three machine guns added their fire to it.

Most of the flying creatures—"parabiologicals" was the euphemism given to them by the U.S. Army—were shredded in flight. A few managed to reach the lines. Brady knocked one away with a point-blank burst, and saw how huge and savage it looked. It stank of open grave sites and old human blood and excrement.

He had never been so terrified in his life. A hundred meters to his left, two of the creatures pounced on Minelli's tank. Minelli got one with his machine gun, but the other one caught him before he could slam the hatch shut. It tore him apart. Nearby infantrymen shot it off the tank before it could crawl inside, but that did not do much for Minelli.

Meanwhile, the second wave of the Churchie attack got close enough to fire light guns and missiles. One of the Bradleys got splashed by an anti-tank missile. It looked like they were going to get flanked if they stayed. Brady ordered a retreat to the next prepared position.

Looking behind his platoon as they retreated, Brady saw four of the flying monsters put a flag with the Church's Circle on the hill he'd vacated, almost like a mockery of that old picture with the Marines on it. He ordered them blown apart with an explosive round, out of sheer spite. It did not change anything.

In this corner of the battle, the Churchies were winning.

Introduction

Like all games, the **Unisystem** has rules. They help the Chronicler determine what happens at certain points of the Story. No one game system can satisfy every gamer or gaming group, however. The **Unisystem** is designed to offer several options to Chroniclers and players, but the main rule is that each gaming group should do what works for them. If a rule does not satisfy, is too complicated or requires more detail, or is just plain unpopular, change it. Be sure that the entire game group knows of any changes beforehand, however. This minimizes complaints and arguments that detract from the enjoyment of the game.

Running A Game

Usually, roleplaying games unfold in this way: the Chronicler describes the situation, and then asks the players what their Cast Members are doing. Dialogue is conducted normally. A typical descriptive set-up might go as follows.

Chronicler: *You are driving your car down a lonely country road. It's dark outside, and your car's headlights are barely enough to break the darkness in front of you. It feels almost like you are the only people on Earth. As you go around a bend in the road, you notice a pickup truck stopped by the roadside, a couple of hundred feet away. A person—it's too dark to see the gender—stands by the vehicle. He or she notices your vehicle and starts waving. What do you do?*

In this example, three Cast Members are in a car, each controlled by a separate player. Each character has a chance to do something, although the driver has the most choices—he could stop the car, slow down and see what is happening, speed up and avoid the accident entirely, or anything else. The other Cast Members could talk to the driver, or look around for anything suspicious, for example.

In this case, and throughout most games, the Chronicler presents a situation. When he asks "What do you do?" it is the Cast Members' turn to start contributing to the story. Sometimes the players take the initiative, informing the Chronicler of their plans or intentions. In that case, the Chronicler describes the consequences of those actions. Through this interaction, the Story that is the game's end result is crafted.

Using the Rules

In most *Armageddon* games, a great deal of the characters' actions do not require rules, rolling dice, consulting charts, or determining Success Levels. Common examples of such "ruleless" actions are discussed below.

Talking: Unless the character is gagged, mute, or trying to speak in a language he does not know very well, speech is always possible. A player need only recite the character's "lines."

Routine Actions: These include anything that any person can do, such as picking up objects, walking from one place to another, opening and closing unlocked doors. Any action that a normal person can perform with little or no effort requires only that the player announce his character is going to do it.

Traveling: Getting there is not always half the fun. Just like in movies and books, the Chronicler can "cut" any long, tedious actions. For example, if the characters are traveling to Europe by plane, and the real action awaits them there, the Chronicler can sum up their trip in a few sentences:

You bought tickets for the first available flight; subtract the cost from your funds. The plane was half-empty, and it took off late at night, so most of the passengers were asleep for most of the trip. You enjoyed a few hours of rest, and now you are at the airport, going through Customs.

In general, if the rules are not required, do not use them. The feeling of the players telling a Story should be disrupted as little as possible.

Only when the outcome of an action is in doubt, and the results of that action are important, should the rules come into play. The rules answer the question "What happened?"

Generally, the outcome of an action depends on the Attributes or skills of the characters (all those numbers on the character sheet), the circumstances (which may impose bonuses and penalties), and good old luck (determined by the result of a dice roll or card draw, unless the Story-Driven Method is used).

Chapter Four

Dice

Dice are the most commonly used tools in gaming and, in this author's opinion, the best method to determine random outcomes. Regardless of which method a Chronicler chooses, the dice system is considered the default method in the bulk of the rules presented in *Armageddon.* If the card method is used, for example, simply replace the words "roll" or "dice" with "draw" or "card."

When dice are used, the **Unisystem** relies on four different kinds: ten-sided, eight-sided, six-sided, and four-sided. Such dice can be found in any good hobby or gaming store, and in many comic books stores. Dice are denoted by placing a "D" in front of their numerical value. So, a D4 indicates a four-sided die.

Ten-sided dice (D10s): Used for Task/Test determination and to determine the damage weapons inflict, D10s are the most commonly used dice. Entire game sessions can come and go without using any dice other than D10s. They can be replaced in a very rough sense by using two six-sided dice and subtracting two from the roll (treat a result of "0" as a "1").

Eight- and four-sided dice (D8s and D4s): In the **Unisystem,** these dice are only used to determine damage. Different damage types represent different weapon types. It stands to reason, for example, that a bigger weapon (like an axe) will cause more damage than a smaller weapon (like a switchblade) when wielded by someone with the same strength. So, the smaller weapon uses a smaller damage die.

Six-sided dice (D6s): These are the most common dice available, easily borrowed from any number of board games. D6s are usually used for damage results, although they can replace D10s in a pinch.

Eliminating Some Dice

The "default" **Unisystem** relies on two types of dice rolls: outcome rolls, which use a D10 and add modifiers, skills, and Attributes, and damage and armor rolls, which usually require rolling a die and multiplying it by a set value. The second type of roll is used only in combat situations. Some gamers may prefer to reduce the randomness of combat, or simply reduce the number of dice rolled. The quickie way of eliminating damage and armor rolls is to use the "average" value of a die roll (actually, a little below average). This value is listed in parentheses next to each damage or armor formula. Instead of rolling damage or armor dice, simply apply the set number each time a hit is scored.

When to Roll

Sometimes Chroniclers and players fall into "roll-playing" mode—rolling dice for all kinds of actions, even those that really do not matter. When a player wants to roll to see how nicely his Cast Member can park a car (unless there is some storyline reason why this is important), roll-playing has crept in. Rolls should be made when the outcome of an action has an impact on the Story, especially if success is doubtful. Rolls can add to the excitement and tension of the game, because nobody, including the Chronicler, knows what the final outcome will be. Will the Gifted finish his Invocation before the zombie can bite him? This is the type of situation where a roll may help heighten the mood.

Rolls Do Not Rule

There is another type of situation to consider: it was supposed to be a minor encounter—a single Churchie surprised two Cast Members. A fight ensued, and the Chronicler got lucky, rolling several 10s in a row for the fanatic's attack. All of a sudden, enough damage has been inflicted on a Cast Member to kill him—thus ruining the main storyline.

Chroniclers should sometimes consider "altering" roll results, if those results are both unlikely and disruptive to the basic plot. In the example above, perhaps the outcome rolls could be "adjusted" to represent minor wounds or just a scary near miss. It helps if the Chronicler makes his rolls out of sight of the players.

If it becomes common knowledge that the Chronicler ignores roll results to keep the Story going however, a great deal of the uncertainty and thrill of the roleplaying game is lost. The Chronicler should keep this practice to a minimum—so that when he needs to use it his players do not catch on.

Using Cards

For gamers who want to keep randomness when determining results, but for some reason want to avoid dice, cards can be used. Each player should start the game with a standard deck of 54 playing cards. The cards should be shuffled at the beginning of each game. When determining an action, draw a card instead of rolling dice.

Numbered cards use their value. If a face card is drawn, consider the result to be a "5" and draw again. If the next card is another face card, the final result is considered to be a "10". Otherwise, the draw result is considered to be a five. If an Ace is drawn, use the Rule of 1. If a natural 10 (but not two face cards) is drawn, use the Rule of 10 (see p. 121).

Jokers are generally discarded. However, if the Chronicler wants to add an unexpected element, the following rule can be used. If a Joker is drawn, draw another card. If the new card is black, a mishap has occurred. The attempted Task or Test fails in some unexpected and spectacular way, which is left to the Chronicler's imagination. If the second card is red, the action is automatically successful, usually owing to luck rather than skill (again, the Chronicler can use his imagination to give the result an interesting and creative meaning).

Those are the only differences from the basic game. All the other rules described in this book apply normally. Damage rolls are either replaced with the set damage numbers written in parentheses, or the dice are kept for that part of the game.

Player-Controlled Outcomes

With card-based gaming, the Chronicler can allow the players more control over their "luck" when performing Tasks or Tests. This is a special subsystem that can only be used with cards.

At the beginning of the game, each player draws a "hand" of six cards from the deck. The player decides which card he will use on a given Task or Test. If the player thinks the attempt is important and really wants to succeed at it, he plays the best card in his hand. The player, however, cannot draw new cards until his entire hand is "played."

Unless the player's hand is downright terrible, he will be able to choose which Tasks are successful, simply by using his highest value cards on a specific Task or Test. Of course, if the player uses up his best cards too quickly, he may be stuck with a couple of aces at a critical point in the Story!

When the Rule of 10, the Rule of 1, or face cards come into play, the second card is drawn from the deck, not the hand. Also, if the player initiates an action, the Chronicler may require him to draw from the deck. This eliminates players using up low cards in meaningless actions.

This subsystem is particularly appropriate for dramatic moments. Nobody wants to "fumble" when trying to cast the Invocation that might decide the fate of an entire city, for example. It also encourages strategic thinking—the player must decide when to play his best cards, and when to accept failure with good grace. By taking into account the needs of the Story, the player may decide his character should fail at certain points, adding to the drama of the game.

This optional rule requires that players spend some time deciding what cards to use in a given situation—they still do not know how difficult the situation may be, or what the opposition may draw against them. It usually helps move the Story along in a dramatically appropriate way, as the Cast Member tends to have "good luck" when the Story calls for it more often than not. On the other hand, this method cuts down on the uncertainty of the moment, and may end up having the players think more about strategy than the flow of the Story.

Story-Driven Roleplaying

For Chroniclers and players who want to avoid randomness, the Story-Driven Method may be used. The Chronicler assigns outcomes dependent on the Story's flow and the player's basic abilities.

Task Resolution

Story-Driven Method games use a straight number comparison. If the character's appropriate Attributes and skills are equal to or greater than the Difficulty Number (see Difficulty Number Table), the Task or Test succeeds. The Chronicler determines the Difficulty Number based on the needs of the Story, and how detailed and creative the player is in describing his Cast Member's action. If the roleplaying part of the action is good enough, the numbers involved should not be a factor, and the action should be successful automatically.

For example, Bertha, played by Holly, wants to talk (using her Smooth Talking Skill) a security guard into letting her sneak into a private party. Holly gives a great performance as Bertha, vamping it up and weaving a wild but believable tale. The Chronicler does not bother comparing numbers or results, but simply plays the guard, who, with a stunned smile on his face, lets her pass.

In another example, Boris, a desperate lone wolf, is played by Louise. He is trying to break into a warehouse to secure some supplies. The Chronicler decides that this is a Difficult Task, and asks Louise to tell her Boris' combined Dexterity and Lock Picking Skill. Boris' Dexterity is a 4; his Lock Picking is a 5. The total of 9 is better than what is required for a Difficult Task (usually a 6 to 8), so Boris is successful.

When two characters are using skills against each other, the higher combination of Attribute and skill wins. Only special circumstances alter this. A weaker fighter who goes on the defensive and is extra careful may last for a while before being defeated by his stronger enemy. A player who comes up with a good "dirty trick" or tactic may prevail against superior odds. Again, it is description, narrative skills, and the Chronicler's judgment that are the final determinants of most outcomes.

Diceless Damage

Using the Story-Driven Method, damage can be applied using the fixed values (listed in damage or armor descriptions). Alternatively, damage can be adjusted to suit the game's dramatic needs. Here, a light wound is a cut on a limb, a nasty bruise, a cracked rib. It is not immediately incapacitating, but requires medical or supernatural help or it may worsen in time. Most weapons that inflict an average of less than 10 points of damage cause light wounds.

A serious wound can do a number of things. It can drop the target immediately (the victim may or may not survive the ordeal) or it can kill the victim if no medical help is available (the victim may still continue to move and act for several minutes or even hours, however). Being shot or stabbed in the torso area is the most common serious wound. The Chronicler decides if the victim falls down, either as the result of physical shock, or just the psychological realization that he has been injured, or whether the victim carries on with his actions (people have been known to continue fighting or running even after sustaining mortal wounds). As a rule of thumb, any weapon whose average damage is 10-20 points inflicts serious wounds on a direct hit. Consider most handguns, regardless of their average damage, to inflict serious wounds in the torso area. Even small caliber bullets can do a lot of damage by bouncing around the victim's body.

A critical wound instantly drops the victim, and most likely kills him immediately. Critical wounds include beheading, a large caliber bullet hit to the head, being cut in half by a train, and similar mass trauma.

Difficulty Numbers Table

Type of Task	Difficulty Number
Easy	1-2
Challenging	3-5
Difficult	6-8
Very Difficult	9-10
Heroic	11-12
Impossible	13-15

The Basic Rule

Unless the Story-Driven Method (see p. 118) is employed, all actions are resolved by rolling a ten-sided die (D10) and add the Attribute and/or skill numbers the Chronicler deems applicable. Tell the result to the Chronicler, who adds or subtracts any modifiers (for example, noticing something is more difficult in darkness than in broad daylight). If the final result is a nine or higher, the action succeeds. Otherwise, the attempt fails. The higher the total value, the more successful the action is (in some cases, just being successful is enough; in others, the degree of success may have some significance). This basic rule applies when using skills, engaging in combat, working magic, and so forth.

Tasks

Most actions, from sneaking around in the dark to writing the Great American Novel, are considered Tasks. A Task uses one Attribute and one skill. The Chronicler decides which ones are appropriate to the action at hand. The die is rolled, and the applicable Attribute, skill, and modifiers (if any) are added to the result.

For example, Tracy is playing Sergeant Julie, Special Forces. She wants her character to identify the strange noises coming from the darkness outside the trenches. The Chronicler tells Tracy to use Julie's Perception (to see how well Julie's hearing is picking up the noises) and Notice Skill (the character's practice in picking up things that slip by most people). Julie's Perception is four; her Notice is two. Tracy rolls a D10, getting a result of six. This result, added to her skill and Attribute levels, produces a total of 12. Since the result is over a nine, it is enough to be successful. The Chronicler says, "Julie, you identify the sound—someone out there is cutting the razor wire around your position. That means the enemy is infiltrating your position—a prelude to an attack. What do you do now?"

Tests

Some actions use only a character's Attributes; no skills are applicable. Examples include lifting things (using Strength) and remembering something (using Intelligence). These situations are known as Attribute Tests, or just Tests.

There are two types of Tests: Simple and Difficult. Simple Tests are relatively easy things—lifting an object using the entire body, for example. To resolve a Simple Attribute Test, roll and add one Attribute doubled, or two different Attributes.

Difficult Tests are more challenging. Lifting something with only one hand, for example, makes for a Difficult Strength Test. In those cases, only one Attribute involved (not doubled) is added.

For example, Ashe is wandering through a forest at night, alone. What Ashe does not know is that a Risen creature is prowling these selfsame woods and is closing in on him. The Chronicler tells Ashe to roll a D10 and add his Perception Attribute, doubled. The woods are pretty quiet and the Tainted dead are not known for their subtlety. The creature is not even trying to be quiet, making this a Simple Attribute Test. Ashe's Perception is 4, which doubled adds a total of 8 to the die roll. Ashe rolls the die and comes up with a 7, for a total of 15. The Chronicler says, "Ashe, you hear a guttural growling noise behind you. Something is rushing through the forest toward you. It should reach you in less than a minute. It's so loud you heard from it some distance away. What do you do?"

Determining What Attributes to Use

The Chronicler often has to quickly decide what Attribute to use for a given Task or Test. For most situations, the relevant Attribute is described in the skill description, the Story write-up, or somewhere else in the book. For tense, dramatic situations, however, the Chronicler should avoid slowing the game down by thumbing through all that material. Simply let common sense guide the choice. The following rules of thumb should be enough to judge what Attribute should be used for a given Task or Test.

Strength: Strength works when something requiring brute force is involved. Physical skills like Sports, Climbing, or Swimming sometimes require Strength.

Dexterity: This is one of the most commonly used Attributes. Dexterity applies to any Task or Test requiring accuracy, physical balance, quickness, and hand-eye coordination. In combat, most rolls rely on Dexterity.

Constitution: Constitution is used in physical Tasks involving long-term endurance and vitality, or in Tests against diseases and toxins.

Intelligence: Anything that primarily involves memory and reasoning uses Intelligence. Remembering a name, understanding a difficult concept or idea, solving a mathematics problem or a puzzle—all use Intelligence.

Perception: Generally, Perception is used to spot, recognize, or identify things. Some overlap with Intelligence arises because memory is used to recognize and identify things. In general, if the Task or Test involves any of the five senses, use Perception.

Willpower: This Attribute is most commonly used defensively—to resist other skills, powers or abilities. It is also used for Tasks or Tests when a character tries to intimidate another. Willpower helps a person maintain eye contact during a staring contest, for example.

Unskilled Attempts

Sometimes, a character must attempt something he is not trained to do. Unskilled attempts always have a hefty penalty, but very talented people may be able to succeed even on the first attempt. Use the appropriate Attribute (do not double it) with a minimum -2 penalty (in addition to any other modifiers). Furthermore, the Task's level of success can never be higher than Decent (see p. 123).

Some skills require so much training and preparation that untrained people have no chance of performing them. A penalty of -6 to -10 can be applied if the character ties to perform very complex skills. For example, attempting surgery with no help other than a few medical manuals incurs a -10 penalty. Alternatively, the Chronicler may rule that the attempt automatically fails (or, to keep the players in suspense, he may let them make rolls—who knows, they might get lucky).

For example, Eric is playing the part of Nick, a 14-year old. Nick is riding with his father in a car. Suddenly, his father slumps over the steering wheel, unconscious (unknown to Eric/Nick, he has been struck down by a magical curse). The terrified 14-year old tries to stop the car before it crashes off the road. This Task would normally be resolved by using the the Dexterity Attribute and the Driving Skill, but Nick has no Driving Skill! A penalty of -2 is assigned for the lack of a skill. Nick has a Dexterity of four, so he only adds two (given the -2 penalty) to the roll of a D10. If the total is nine or higher (which would require the die roll to be a seven or higher), Nick manages to hit the brakes and stop the car without causing an accident. Otherwise, his panicked attempts cause the car to swerve, go into a spin, or worse. If Nick's father were piloting an airplane, the Chronicler would be justified ruling that Nick automatically fails any unskilled Piloting Task. Nick better think of something else, and fast . . .

Resisted Tasks/Tests

Sometimes, a character tries to do something and another character (either a Cast Member or one of the Supporting Cast) tries to stop or hinder him. Similarly, an attempted action may be noticed or foiled by the target or victim of the action. When this happens, a Resisted Task or Test must be resolved.

In a Resisted Task or Test, both sides roll a D10 and add the appropriate Attribute and skill. If both fail (no one rolls over nine), neither side accomplishes the effect desired. If one fails and the other succeeds, the successful character prevails. If both succeed, the results are compared, and the higher total result, after adding and subtracting all modifiers, is the winner of the contest. Some examples of Resisted Tasks and Tests follow.

Arm Wrestling: Both sides make Simple Strength Tests; the higher successful result wins the contest. For dramatic purposes, the contest might be spread over more than one roll (two out of three, or three out of five, for example).

Pursuit on Foot: Both sides use Dexterity and Constitution. If one person started running first, he gets to add a +2 to the roll. Also, the side with the higher Speed gets to add the difference between the two Speeds. Just subtract the lower Speed from the higher one, and add the result to the faster character's roll. The winner manages to either catch up with or lose the pursuer, depending on his intention.

Sneaking: The person sneaking uses Dexterity and Stealth. The target uses either Perception and Notice or a Simple Perception Test.

Combat: Combat is described in more detail later (see p. 120). Many combat actions use Resisted Tasks or Tests.

Role of Luck Table

Result After Second Roll

Second Roll	Rule of 10	Rule of 1
1	10	-5, roll again
2	10	-3
3	10	-2
4	10	-1
5	10	1
6	11	1
7	12	1
8	13	1
9	14	1
10	15, roll again	1

Alternative Luck Rule

For those desiring something a bit simpler, the second roll in a Rule of 1 or Rule of 10 situation should be D6-1. If the first roll was 10, add the result. If the first roll was 1, subtract the result. If the second roll is a 6, add or subtract 5, and roll again. This option requires the use of a different die, and increases the chance of a higher or lower final result, but the change is not so significant that it is unbalancing.

The Role of Luck

Sometimes, people perform feats they should normally be unable to accomplish. By the same token, even the most accomplished person occasionally fumbles or screws up relatively simple Tasks. When a roll (before adding or subtracting any modifiers) comes out as a one or 10, there is a chance that something really good or bad is about happen.

The Rule of 10

On a roll of 10, roll again, subtract five, and add the result (if higher than zero) to 10. If the second roll is six, seven, eight, or nine, the final result is 11, 12, 13, or 14, respectively (see Role of Luck Table). If the second roll is five or less, nothing is added and the final roll remains 10. If another 10 is rolled, add five to the roll (for a total of 15), and roll again. If a player rolls a string of 10s, he keeps adding five to the result and rolling again.

For example, Malcolm, played by Jason, is trying to leap between two buildings. Because the buildings are so far apart, the Chronicler calls for a Simple Strength Test to see if Malcolm can push his limits (see p. 59). Knowing his Cast Member is almost certainly doomed, Jason rolls the bones. He gets a 10. "Roll again," the Chronicler says. Jason rolls a second time, getting a 10! His total roll is a 15 so far, but he gets to roll a third time. This time the roll is a three—no effect. The 15, plus Malcolm's Strength doubled, gives Malcolm an 18, an Excellent Success (see p. 123). "You leap further than you could have imagined," the Chronicler explains. "For a few moments, you actually feel like you are flying, and then you land well past the building's edge. You feel shaky and weak-kneed, and you know deep in your heart that you may not duplicate this feat in a hundred years."

The Rule of 1

On a roll of one, roll again. If the second roll is between five and 10, the final result remains one. If the second roll is two, three, or four, the final result is -3, -2, or -1, respectively (see Role of Luck Table) If the second roll is one, the prior roll is replaced with -5, and the player must roll again (applying the same rule).

For example, Robin the police officer, played by Jennifer, is wrestling with a Fiend-possessed human. Robin's Strength is 5. The possessed human is relatively weak even with the Fiend's bonus, Strength 3. Robin tries to overpower the unfortunate. Both sides use their Strength, doubled, in the Resisted Test. Confident of her Cast Member's abilities (a 10 against a 6 before the dice hit the table), Jennifer rolls her D10—and rolls a 1. Her second roll is a 3, resulting in a replacement roll of -2, which gives her a total of 6 (her base 8, minus 2). The Chronicler rolls for the "bad guy." The die roll is a 7, which produces a total of 13. "Your grip slips. The creature breaks free and tosses you across the room," the Chronicler describes. "Grinning gleefully, the possessed lunges at you. What do you do?"

Base Modifiers Table

Routine: No roll needed

Easy: +5 or more to the roll

Moderate: +3 to +4 to the roll

Average: +1 to +2 to the roll

Challenging (includes most combat rolls): No modifier

Difficult: -1 to -2 to the roll

Very Difficult: -3 to -5 to the roll

Heroic: -6 to -9 to the roll

Near-Impossible: -10 or worse

Modifiers

Most of the time, Tasks and Tests only account for the appropriate skills and Attributes. Sometimes, however, circumstances make some Tasks or Tests easier or more difficult. A ladder is a lot easier to climb than a greased pole. Shooting at a target in the dark is a lot harder than at high noon. If the Chronicler feels that a Task or Test is made easier or more difficult because of circumstances, he can add modifiers, positive or negative, to any result. Assigning modifiers is something that should be done only when absolutely necessary, as it may slow down the game. The Chronicler determines what circumstances are important enough to create modifiers, and decides how they affect an outcome.

The Outcome Table

Sometimes, just being successful at a Test or Task is not enough. The degree of success may have an impact on the game or on future actions. This is particularly true in social interaction rolls, where a high level of success may impact future interactions with people previously impressed. It also applies to artistic endeavors, where the Success Level determines how good a work is produced. Furthermore, in combat, a particularly good or lucky blow or shot may end a fight right then and there.

When the degree or level of success of a Task is important, the Chronicler may consult the Outcome Table (see p. 123). This table serves as a guideline of how good a total roll is and how impressive the character's actions were. An imaginative Chronicler can use the results to add to the drama of the Story. For example, a highly successful display of combat skill may cause enemies to surrender or flee, too intimidated to continue fighting. A particularly successful performance may gain a character new friends and admirers, perhaps even a new business offer. The Outcome Table is meant as a playing aid, not a restrictive law. The Table can be used as often or seldom as the Chronicler desires.

Chronicler's Discretion

The Chronicler is the final arbiter of what a roll means. Some Chroniclers apply the rules to the letter and always consult the Outcome Table. Others simply decide on the spot what a roll means. Most use some combination of the two. Remember, maintaining the flow of the game is always more important than the rules. Slowing down the game to look up rules for a relatively minor action is not worth it. Wing it, and keep the game alive, immediate, and interesting.

Encumbrance

It is tempting to try and bring every item that might be needed into dangerous situations, or just carry it around in case things get nasty. This is not possible due the deleterious effects of encumbrance. The encumbrance of items is measured by their Encumbrance Value (EV). This includes weight, plus an additional factor to represent bulk. EV is expressed in two numbers separated by a slash: the first number is for those using US measurements, the second for those using the metric system.

A character may carry up to half his carrying capacity (see p. 59) in EV without penalty. Above that point, to 75% of carrying capacity, the character is lightly encumbered, and suffers a -1 penalty to Speed and to all Tests or Tasks involving movement (such as Stealth or initiative rolls). Further, at that weight level, D4(2) Endurance Points are lost per ten minutes. Medium encumbrance runs between 76% and 100% of that weight, imposes a -2 penalty to movement, and costs D4(2) Endurance Points per five minutes. Heavy encumbrance arises at between 101% and 125%, imposes a -3 penalty to movement, and costs D4(2) Endurance Points per two minutes. Extra heavy encumbrance is from 126% of carrying capacity up to maximum weight allowance, imposes a -5 penalty to movement, and costs D4(2) Endurance Points per minute. These ratios apply only for extended travel and are general guidelines. Chroniclers may vary these numbers as they wish.

Outcome Table

A roll result of nine generally means the attempt was accomplished (that is good enough in most cases). When the degree of the success needs to be measured, however, Success Levels depend on the final result (a roll including all positive and negative modifiers).

9-10: First Level (Adequate): The Task or Test got done. If an artistic endeavor, it is just adequate, and critics/audiences are likely to give it "ho-hum" responses. A complex and involved Task takes the maximum required time to complete. An attempted maneuver was barely accomplished, and might appear to be the result of luck rather than skill. Social skills produce minimal benefits for the character.

Combat: Attack inflicts normal damage.

11-12: Second Level (Decent): The Task or Test was accomplished with relative ease and even some flair. Artistic results are above average, resulting in a warm reaction from many, but not most. Complex and involved Tasks take 10% less than the maximum required time. Attempted maneuvers are skillfully accomplished. Social skills manage to gain some benefits for the character (including a +1 to further attempts on the same people under similar situations).

Combat: Attack inflicts normal damage.

13-14: Third Level (Good): The Task or Test was completed with ease. Artistic results are largely appreciated by connoisseurs and well liked by the public (although some critics will be able to find something wrong). Complex and involved Tasks take 25% less time than normally required. Attempted maneuvers are done with seeming effortlessness, apparently the result of great skill. Social skills are not only successful, the character receives a +2 on future attempts on the same people (this is not cumulative with subsequent high rolls—use the highest bonus only).

Combat: Attack inflicts normal damage.

15-16: Fourth Level (Very Good): The Task or Test was extremely successful. Artistic endeavors are rewarded with a great deal of appreciation from the intended audience. Complex and involved Tasks can be finished in half the time. Social skills produce a lasting impression on the people involved, resulting in a bonus of +3 on all future attempts in that skill involving the same people.

Combat: Increase the damage rolled by one before applying the Multiplier.

17-20: Fifth Level (Excellent): The Task or Test produced excellent results. Any artistic endeavor impresses the audience greatly, leading to a great deal of recognition and fame. Social skills have a future bonus of +4, as above.

Combat: Increase the damage rolled by two before applying the Multiplier.

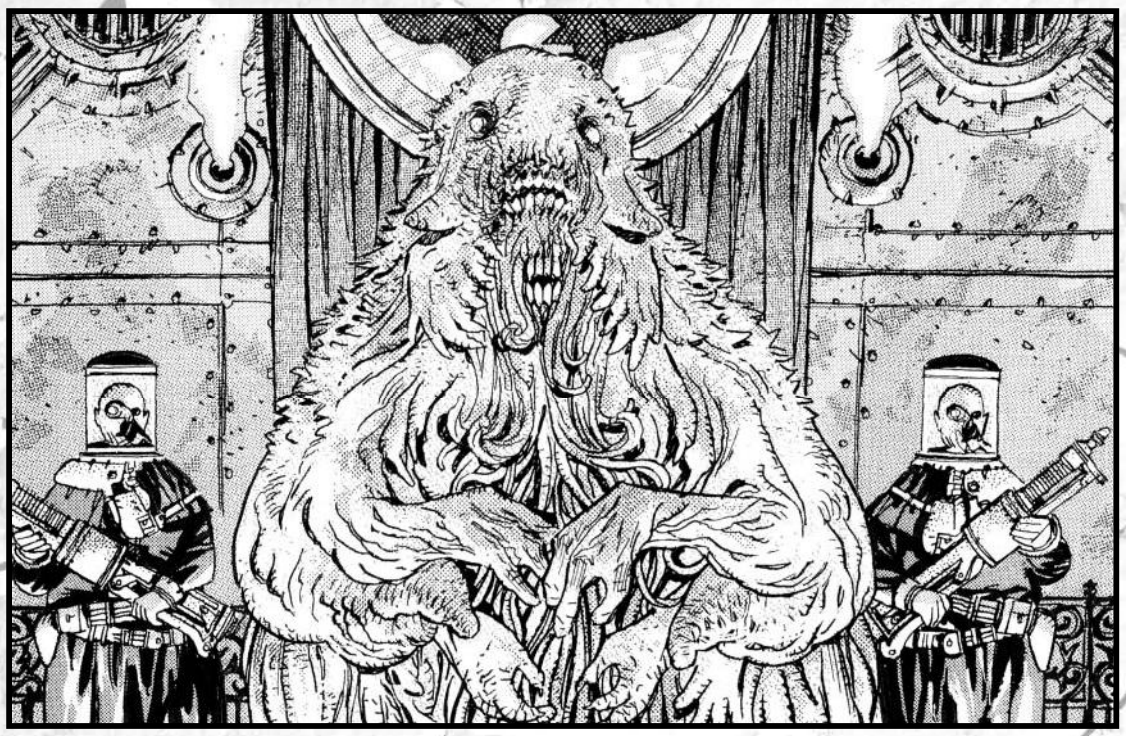
21-23: Sixth Level (Extraordinary): The Task or Test produced amazing results, accomplishing far more than was intended. Artists gain fame after one such roll, but their future accomplishments will be measured against this one, which may lead to the "one-shot wonder" label. Social skills gain a future bonus of +5, as above.

Combat: Increase the damage rolled by three before applying the Multiplier.

24+: Further Levels (Mind-boggling): For every +3 to the total above 23, increase the Success Level by one, and the Social skills future bonus by one.

Combat: Add +1 to the damage rolled, before applying the Multiplier, for every additional Success Level.

Damage Modification Example: Luigi punches an opponent and his attack roll is a 17 (fifth level of success: +2 damage bonus). Luigi's normal punch damage is D4 x 3. Given his Success Levels, the damage is modified to (D4+2) x 3, or 9 to 18 points. Even on a bad damage roll, the attack inflicts a decent amount of damage.



Fear Table

Success Level	Effect
1	**Shakes:** All the character's actions suffer a -2 penalty for two Turns. Lose one Essence Point.
2	**Flight:** Victim runs away screaming for one Turn. If cornered, the victim may fight or react in a more rational way. Lose two Essence Points.
3	**Physical reaction:** Fear causes a messy physical reaction (often involving bodily functions best left to the imagination). Not only is this embarrassing, but it imposes a -1 penalty to all actions for D4(2) Turns. Lose D4(2) Essence Points.
4	**Paralyzed:** The character cannot move for D4(2) Turns. Only intervention by other characters (who may shake him, slap him, or otherwise force him to act) allows him to take any action. Lose D6(3) Essence Points.
5	**Faint:** The shock and fear are so severe that the character collapses, unconscious. A Difficult Constitution Test is required to recover consciousness. This can be attempted every minute, or whenever somebody tries to stir the character. Lose D10 x 4 (20) Endurance Points and D8(4) Essence Points.
6	**Total Hysterics:** The victim becomes a screaming, babbling, totally useless maniac for D8(4) Turns. Lose D10(5) Essence Points.
7+	**It Gets Worse:** Higher results are left to the Chronicler's imagination. They may include life-threatening effects like heart attacks or comas, or a bout of temporary insanity lasting hours, or worse . . .

Getting Scared

In the dark and dangerous world of *Armageddon*, characters often experience frightful events. In such a world, even the strong-hearted get scared once in a while.

Fear Tests

When facing a fearsome creature or otherwise experiencing fright first-hand, Mundane characters must pass a Difficult Willpower Test. Gifted and Supernatural characters require only a Simple Willpower Test. If the victim fails her Fear Test, she succumbs to panic. Most of the time, the character "freezes up" for at least a Turn. Alternatively, she may run away. Chroniclers who want to add more detail can consult the Fear Table (see p. 124).

Fear Modifiers

Certain circumstances make it easier for characters to feel afraid. Very gory and gruesome events add penalties of -1 to -4, depending on how graphic the violence is. Hideous creatures may bring penalties of -1 to -5. Some beings have alien or thoroughly evil auras that inspire a deep, instinctual fear in people. Such creatures may bring penalties of -2 to -8 to all Fear Tests! Some creature descriptions include modifiers to Fear Tests.

Essence Loss Because of Fear

Losing one's nerve often results in a temporary Essence loss. If Essence is reduced below zero because of a terrifying experience, the character is mentally scarred by the ordeal. Maybe seeing the same creature again will drive the character into screaming hysterics—or maybe he will be come obsessed with finding and killing it and all its kind. See the rules for Essence loss for more information (see p. 141), or consult the Fear Table.

Using the Fear Table

The Fear Table can be used when a character fails a Fear Test. Roll a D10, subtract the character's Willpower, and apply any Fear Test penalties as bonuses. So, a -4 penalty to a Fear Test counts as +4 bonus to the Fear Table roll.

If the result is less than nine, the victim was simply scared for a few seconds but was able to recover (one Turn's action lost). If the total is equal to a nine or higher, consult the Fear Table. The table uses Success Levels to determine how badly the character suffered as the result of the terrible shock.

The Chronicler can use the Fear Table for guidance and inspiration, but he should not let dice rolls rule the game. If a result seems inappropriate at the moment or to the character, the Chronicler should devise his own outcome or result of the fear.

Time

Like any other story, a roleplaying game is a narrative that occurs over a specific length of time. Some games have detailed breakdowns of game turns, rounds, or phases. The **Unisystem** uses everyday measures of time (seconds, minutes, hours, and days), saving the more arbitrary Turn measure (1-5 seconds) for combat and similar tense situations.

Additionally, a distinction must be made between Game Time and Real Time. "Game Time" is the "fictional time" of the story. "Real Time" is what the players and Chronicler spend playing the game. Game Time is as fluid as the Chronicler decides it to be. A decisive event taking only a few minutes of Game Time may require the players to spend several hours of Real Time to resolve. For example, a combat with multiple participants may take seconds in Game Time, but many minutes in Real Time because character's lives are at stake. By the same token, a period of hours, days or even years can be made to "flash by" in Real Time if the story demands it. "Well, after four days of continual rituals, you are ready for the final ceremony." Most of the **Unisystem** rules use Game Time, and are designed to take as little Real Time as possible.

Combat

Combat actions are handled just like any other Tasks. A character attempts to do what he wants (usually entails inflicting bodily harm on others). Whether he is successful depends on his skill, what the target is doing to stop him (if anything), and the luck of the dice.

Chapter Four

Turns

Combat can be as formal or as informal as the Chronicler desires. To simplify things, action is broken down into Turns. A Turn is a short length of time, about one to five seconds of Game Time in length. Basically, this is enough time for a normal person to perform one combat Task, like slashing at an enemy, firing a handgun, or diving for cover. The main reason for using Turns is to keep things organized. In a Turn, every character gets a chance to do something, and may have something happen to her in return.

The Chronicler determines what action or actions are possible in a Turn. While people can theoretically do a lot of things in just a couple of seconds, combat situations are highly stressful times. Something as simple as reloading a pistol can be delayed by adrenaline-induced trembling. It is easy to swing a baseball bat around, but actually delivering an aimed blow at a target requires concentration and deliberation. Remember, this applies both to the Cast Members and the Supporting Cast. Many opponents should also suffer from fear, "buck fever," and other combat impairments. Remember that an extended action (emptying a gun at a target, for example) may prevent the character from doing anything else (like diving for cover if somebody shoots back) during a given combat Turn.

Turn Steps

1. Intentions: Asks each player what his character plans to do during the next Turn.

2. Initiative: Determines who gets to attack first, or allows it to be determined randomly (see p. 127).

3. Performance: Attack, defense and non-combat Tasks or Tests are performed, starting with the character with the highest Initiative (see pp. 128-133).

4. Damage: Any damage inflicted by the results of the Performance step is applied to the target or targets (this can end the fight right then and there) (see pp. 137).

5. Repeat: Further Tasks are resolved and damage inflicted until each character has had a chance to act during the Turn.

6. End: The Turn ends and the process starts again back at the Intentions step.

Running Combats

Each Turn gives enough time for all characters involved to perform a desired action (within limits; some actions may take several Turns). The Turn may be broken down into six steps.

Ideally, an entire combat Turn should take no more than a couple of minutes of Real Time (very large groups engaging in combat will, of course, stretch the length of time). The Chronicler should eliminate any step he feels will needlessly slow down a combat situation. Determining initiative is often a matter of common sense. Intentions can be summed up in a sentence or two, unless the Chronicler and the players enjoy a detailed description of action scenes. The actual dice-rolling is meant to be fairly quick; an attack-defense sequence can be done in two rolls.

It is the Chronicler's job to describe the action. Rather than just say, "You hit, and inflicted ten points of damage," descriptions should be more like "You slashed the guy in the arm. From the way the blood spurts out, you cut him deeply—the man yelps in pain and backpedals away." Keep the imagery lively; make the players feel that their Cast Members are in a dangerous situation.

Intentions

At the beginning of each Turn, the Chronicler asks the players what their Cast Members intentions are. Each player gets to state actions. This could be something as simple as "I duck for cover" or "I hit him with my baseball bat" or as complex as "I aim at the demon's head" or "I jump behind a crate, toss a grenade, and pray."

The Chronicler decides if the intention is possible, if it takes one Turn or less, and what skills are necessary. The Chronicler can point out to the player any risks or problems the action may bring about—if the player's Cast Member would know or understand those risks. Some Chroniclers let a player's intentions stand even if they are stupid or suicidal; others try to "coach" their players through every action. Both extremes are bad. There is nothing wrong with reminding a player of something he may have forgotten in the "heat of battle" (again, if it is something that his Cast Member would have noticed). On the other hand, some players may resent being told what to do all the time.

Surprise Attacks

If an attacker achieves complete surprise (i.e., sneaking up on someone without being spotted, or a sniper firing from a concealed position), the target has no chance to defend against the attack. In cinematic games, the Chronicler may allow characters with Situational Awareness or Fast Reaction Time to defend even against a surprise attack, albeit with a -4 penalty (reduced to -2 if the character has both Qualities).

Initiative

Most of the time, Initiative should be a matter of common sense. The party or person who initiates the violence usually goes first at the beginning of a fight. After the first Turn of fighting, Initiative depends on what happened in the previous Turn. Typically, the combatant who actually managed to land a blow or hurt his target gets to go first. The Chronicler can always decide who attacks first based on the particular circumstances at the time. Sometimes, actions happen simultaneously, or close enough that it does not matter.

Initiative can be determined randomly. To do so, each player with a Cast Member in the situation rolls a D10 and adds the character's Dexterity Attribute. The highest result wins the Initiative for that Turn, and makes the first move. The remaining characters act in descending order of Initiative.

Note that certain Qualities and abilities can affect a character's Initiative.

As noted, some circumstances may also determine Initiative. Characters with ranged weapons usually get to attack before those

Chronicling Initiative

Described here are some examples of non-random Initiative determinations.

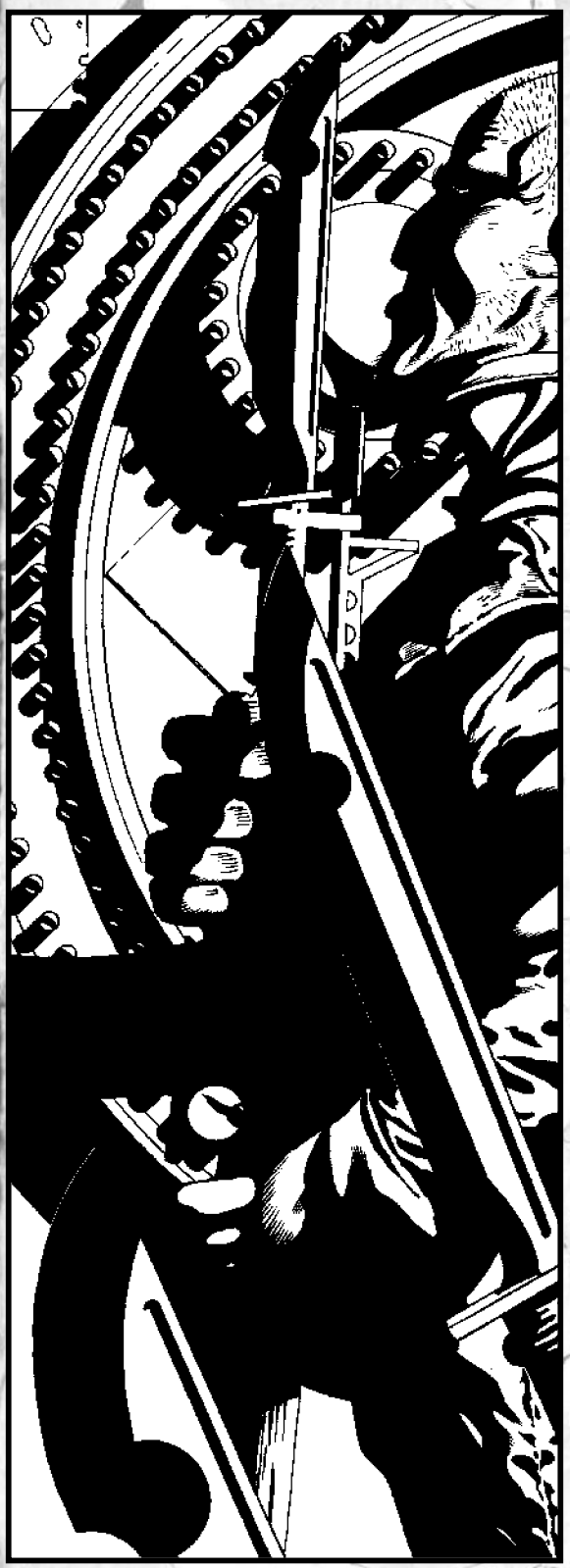
Meeting Engagement: Two armed groups (or individuals) come upon one another at the same time. If both sides decide to shoot, the Chronicler can determine that, unless one side possesses some significant advantage (Fast Reaction Time on one side but not the other, for example), the exchange of fire is simultaneous: attacks and damage rolls are determined for both sides at the same time. If both sides are equally good, they might wound or kill each other.

Multiple Shots: With ranged weapons, multiple shots can be fired in a Turn. That does not mean that the first to attack gets to empty his gun before anyone else replies. Instead, the first person to attack may fire once (or, for semi-automatic weapons, twice) at one target. Then the next person shoots, and so on. If the initial attack did not kill or disable the target, and he retains his composure long enough to shoot back, he may do so. The same is true of any multiple actions—before the second action can be taken, the opposite side gets to act.

Changing Intentions: The side that loses initiative may change intentions under some circumstances, forgoing their previously declared actions. For example, if a player announces his character will shoot that turn, but he loses the initiative, the Chronicler may give him the chance to Dodge for cover instead. "As you take aim, you see your foe has the drop on you. You have a split second decision: take the shot, and hope he misses, or duck?" If the Cast Member chooses to Dodge, he loses his chance to fire that Turn (unless the Cinematic Combat Rules on p. 132 are used).

Group Initiative

To speed up play, the Chronicler may decide to allow each discrete side of a combat or tense situation to roll for Initiative instead of each character. Generally, this means only two rolls are made (one for the Cast Members and one for the Supporting Cast). The character on each side with the highest Dexterity provides the roll bonus. This method, while faster, is less realistic. Furthermore, it allows all members of one side to attack or act before anyone on the other side attacks or acts. If the "bad guys" outnumber the Cast Members and gain Initiative, it could prove very deadly.



holding hand weapons or no weapons at all. A magical or psychic attack, which requires only a thought to activate, goes before hand-to-hand or ranged attacks under most circumstances. Also, a guy who sucker punches somebody gets to go first. A sniper firing on an unaware target half a mile away automatically gets Initiative. As always, the Chronicler has the last word.

Performance

The Performance step lumps together any Tasks or Tests required to complete the actions declared during the Intentions step. As such, a great many things can happen during this step. Several are discussed below. For all others, the Chronicler should determine which Task or Test must be performed (if any), and interpret the results of those attempts.

Multiple Actions

In general, each character may take one action without penalty in a Turn. More than one action may be performed, however. The main limitation is skill: dividing concentration is difficult. Each additional action taken in a Turn has a cumulative -2 penalty. In other words, taking one extra action occurs at a -2 penalty, a third action is at -4, and so on.

In close combat, things work slightly differently. Characters may perform one attack and one defense Task or Test each Turn at no penalty. Any actions beyond this attack and defense suffer a cumulative -2 penalty.

For example, Jin the Kung Fu expert, played by Dan, is facing three Fiends. The ugly monsters all attack him at almost the same time. Jin punches one of them, and tries to evade their attacks. His attack and one defensive move are free. The second defensive move is at -2, and the last one is at -4. Not surprisingly, the last attack strikes home, and the Fiend inflicts a nasty wound on the martial artist.

Limits on Multiple Actions: In *Armageddon*, highly skilled characters are fairly common, and even the –2 cumulative penalty may not deter them from making multiple attacks. If desired, a Chronicler may impose a maximum of three attack actions in one Turn. No limit should be placed on defensive actions, however. Also, consider the Cinematic Combat Rules options (see p. 132).

Close Combat

Close combat is conducted somewhere around arm's length using fists, feet, or hand weapons (such as knives, swords, and sticks). In close combat, the character with Initiative gets to strike first. The target may attempt a defensive maneuver, like blocking the attack with a hand weapon of his own, dodging or jumping out of the way, and the like.

Striking at an enemy is a Task: use the character's appropriate skill (Brawling, Martial Arts, Hand Weapon) and Dexterity. If the enemy has a hand weapon of his own, he can try to parry the attack, using his own Weapon Skill and Dexterity. Characters with Martial Arts can parry hand weapons with their bare hands; those with Brawling or no close combat skills can only parry other hand-to-hand attacks. Instead of parrying, the defender may dodge out of the way, using Dexterity and the Dodge Skill (if the character has it), or must be resolved as a Difficult Dexterity Test (if not). So, even an unarmed, unskilled person may try to get out of the way of an attack by passing a Difficult Dexterity Test.

An attack and defense set is resolved as a Resisted Task. Note that lighting conditions modify both close and ranged combat, see Ranged Combat Modifiers Table, p. 131. The Chronicler may apply circumstantial modifiers as well. If the successful attacker gets a higher result than the defender, his blow lands and inflicts damage. If the defender ties or gets a higher result, he manages to deflect or dodge the attack. Otherwise, that's all there is to it.

Detailed Close Combat Rules

Some players want more detail to their fights than simple attack and defense rolls. These optional rules are meant to accommodate this element. Chroniclers should reward good intention descriptions with a few bonuses to the appropriate Task rolls.

Defensive Posture: The character remains on the defensive, forsaking any chance to attack in favor of protection. A character using this tactic gets a +3 bonus on all defensive Tasks or Tests he performs in that Turn. This is a good tactic for trying to keep a superior enemy busy while waiting for reinforcements to arrive, or to gauge an opponent's skill before making a move (judging the opponent's skill may require a Task involving Perception and the appropriate Weapon Skill—although if the attacker manages to hit despite the defensive posture, no Task roll is necessary).

Aggressive Posture: The character goes all-out in his attack, abandoning any hope of defense to smash the enemy. This gives a +2 bonus on all attack Tasks performed that Turn, but no defensive Tasks may be made. This is a good tactic if the enemy is unarmed or if the character thinks he can take any damage inflicted by his opponent. Most of the time, though, it is too risky.

Feinting: A feint is a false attack meant to distract the enemy and lower her defenses against the real strike. The feint is resolved as a Resisted Task—the attacker's Intelligence and close combat skill against the opponent's Perception and close combat skill. The attacker's and defender's close combat skill need not be the same. The attacker might attempt the feint using Brawling Skill, while the defender attempts to read the feint using a Martial Arts Skill, for example. If the attacker wins the contest, he gets a +1 bonus on her next attack Task for each Success Level in the feint Task.

Counter-strike: This maneuver involves waiting for an attack, forgoing defense, and attacking at the same time. The advantage is the opponent cannot defend—in effect, both attacks hit if the Tasks are successful. The disadvantage is that the character launching the Counter-strike must survive his enemy's attack, which automatically hits first. The person using the Counter-strike automatically forgoes initiative; his attack only goes into effect if he is not disabled by his opponent's attack. This is usually a desperate, last-ditch attempt to fight a superior opponent.

Improvised Weapons

Sometimes, a weapon is not at hand during a dangerous situation, and an improvised weapon (a broken bottle, a table leg, chair, etc.) must be used. Clearly, this is less effective than using a real, balanced weapon.

When using an improvised weapon, the character uses the closest Weapon Skill he has. Anything involving thrusting sharp objects (broken bottles, forks, icepicks, etc.) uses the Hand Weapon (Knife) skill (or Sword skill, but at a -2 penalty due to the shorter reach). A longer, swung object could use Hand Weapon (Club or Sword or similar weapon) skill. If no related Hand Weapon skill is available, use a Difficult Dexterity Test to strike or defend. Used defensively, a chair or similar large object actually acts like a shield, giving the character a +1 to +2 bonus to her parry roll. The Chronicler should assign penalties for large, heavy, and clumsy improvised weapons (-1 to -3 in most cases).

Ranged Combat

Ranged combat involves any sort of missile weapon, from a thrown stone to a bow and arrow to a machine gun. The attacker with Initiative gets to fire at the target; this Task involves the attacker's appropriate ranged combat skill and Dexterity. Range, lighting, and other modifiers affect the Task.

Defenses: In ranged combat, the target has precious few choices. He can stand his ground and fire back, hoping the attacker will miss, or he can duck for cover. Ducking for cover uses Dodge and Dexterity. If the result is greater than or equal to the attacker's Task result, the target was able to hit the ground or jump behind cover in time to avoid the shot. This is the only type of action the target can take in the Turn. Further, once a character has acted on his Initiative in a Turn, subsequent ranged attacks that Turn may not be dodged. This is why most firefights are dominated by the group that fires first; the targets are pinned down and cannot fight back.

Aiming: A character who wishes to shoot can also take some time to aim his weapon. This delays his attack to the end of the Turn (giving the target a chance to fire first, move behind cover, or perform other actions), but it makes the attack more likely to hit. Aiming is a Task using Perception and a weapon skill; each Success Level adds a +1 bonus to his attempt to strike. Only one shot can be fired on the Turn in which the character aimed his weapon.

Modifiers: Modifiers to ranged weapon attacks are listed on the table nearby. Note that range affects the Task. Ranges for various weapons are listed in the weapon tables (see pp. 153, 154, 157). If looking for modifiers takes too long, the Chronicler should dispense with them, or determine them on the spot.

Dodging Ranged Fire

Although dodging a ranged attack is the only type of action allowed during a Turn, more than one ranged attack may be dodged. To keep things simple, use one Dodge roll for all attacks directed at the target. If more detail is desired, allow for multiple rolls. Multi-action penalties apply only if the circumstances warrant them—if the character is ducking for cover from a volley of fire coming from the same direction, no penalties should apply—the character is effectively dodging once. If the character is "dancing" around multiple shots, a la Matrix, then penalties should apply. Alternatively, a single roll could be granted, and penalties applied to the result, rather than forcing multiple rolls.

Firing Multiple Shots

One to five seconds is a lot of time for modern automatic and semi-automatic firearms. An average submachine gun has a cyclic rate (the number of bullets fired if the trigger is kept pressed) of over 600 rounds per minute—meaning it shoots up to 10 shots in one second! Even a semi-automatic pistol or double-action revolver (which fire as fast as the trigger is pulled) can be emptied in under five seconds. The main drawback of firing multiple shots is most rounds miss the target. While rapid-firing, most automatic weapons experience "muzzle climb" as the gun bucks and starts firing higher and higher up. Semi-automatics also experience recoil, often ruining the character's aim. The rules below take this factor into account.

Ranged Combat Modifiers Table

Point-Blank Range: +1 to Strike Tasks, and add 1 to the Damage Multiplier.

Short Range: No modifier.

Medium Range: -1 to Strike Tasks.

Long Range: -3 to Strike Tasks, and reduce Damage Multiplier by 1.

Extreme Range: -6 to Strike Tasks, and reduce Damage Multiplier by 2.

Poor Lighting Conditions (A dark alley, candlelight, moonlight): -1 to Strike Tasks.*

Bad Lighting Conditions (Moonless night): -4 to Strike Tasks.*

Total Darkness: Use a D10 roll with no other modifiers; only a natural roll of 9 or higher strikes the target. If a character makes a Difficult Perception Test, he can add each Success Level to the D10 roll, accounting for the use of senses other than sight to spot the target.*

Multiple Shots: -1 for each additional shot, or -2 if the weapon has heavy recoil. -3 cummulative per burst after the first. -4 cummulative per 10-shot spray after the first.

Gun Scopes: A telescopic scope adds +2 to +5 to any Aiming Tasks.

* Lighting modifiers also apply to close combat attacks.

Semi-Automatic Multiple Shots: Any weapon that fires a shot every time the trigger is pulled can fire multiple times in a Turn. Each successive shot gains a cumulative -1 penalty (i.e., the second shot is at -1 to hit, the third shot is at -2, and so on). If the gun has a heavy recoil (a .44 magnum, for example), the penalty is a cumulative -2. As in all Multiple Actions, all parties involved get to fire or act once before successive shots are resolved.

Automatic Fire—Bursts: The most efficient way to fire an automatic weapon is to shoot short bursts of three to five shots. This allows the shooter to keep control of his weapon. A burst fires at no penalty. Each Success Level in the Task means the attacker scores a hit, up to the total number of bullets in the burst. For example, a shooter firing a three-shot burst who scores two Success Levels hits with two bullets, each doing damage separately. If he racks up three Success Levels or more, all three rounds strike the target. Success Levels only affect the number of hits, not the damage (Outcome Table Multiplier modifications do not apply). If firing multiple bursts, each successive burst suffers a cumulative -3 penalty.

Automatic Fire—Rock 'n Roll: A favorite in the movies, the shooter keeps the trigger depressed and "hoses" the target with a stream of bullets. In reality, most of the bullets fired go high as the gun's muzzle is forced up by the constant recoil. Each group of ten shots counts as a "group;" make a strike Task for each group. Each Success Level means one bullet of the group hits (again, Success Levels only affect the number of hits, not the damage). Each group of shots after the first is at a cumulative -4 penalty to hit.

Automatic Fire—Suppressive Fire: Automatic fire can be used to "sweep" an area, suppressing any targets there (i.e., making them kiss the ground and pray for deliverance) and hitting anybody stupid enough to stick their head into the "beaten zone" (the area the shots are spraying). No roll is made. The player simply announces an intention to spray an area with gunfire. Rather than using "cones of fire" or complicated formulas to determine the area covered, assume that most automatic small arms sweep an area the size of a doorway or two. Anybody straying into the area is struck by D4(2) shots.

Shotguns

For the most part, shotguns use two types of missiles: shot (small pellets contained in a cartridge), and slugs (solid shot). Shot scatters, creating a "cone" of bullets that spreads over distance. It is thus easier to hit a target with shot than with a normal bullet. Characters using a shotgun loaded with birdshot (the smallest pellets) gain a +2 bonus to strike targets at any range; those with buckshot (larger pellets) apply a +1 bonus. Slugs are treated like normal bullets. Shotgun damage is discussed later (see p. 153).

Cinematic Combat Rules

Armageddon can be played in a cinematic fashion—possible characters include beings with superhuman powers already, so why not go all the way and allow actions possible only on the silver screen? Cinematic Combat is meant to be fast and furious, with the protagonists able to mow down large numbers of inferior foes. The Chronicler should decide beforehand which of these rules (if any) will be used in the game, and let the players know.

Reduced Rolls: This rule uses rolls only for the actions of important characters. Cannon fodder Adversaries use instead flat Attack and Defense Values. To determine these numbers, take the Adversaries' Dexterity and appropriate skill (weapon skill for attack, close combat or Dodge skill for defense) and add six to it. For example, a Soul Police Agent (see p. 334) would have an Attack Value of 13 (his Dexterity of 3 and his Guns (Handgun) Skill of 4, plus 6), and a Defense Value of 12 (his Dodge Skill of 3, his Dexterity 3, plus 6). When characters attack, a total result (after all modifiers) greater than 13 would hit the Soul Police Agent. To defend, all they need to generate a result of 14 or greater.

The Adversaries also use the flat damage value for their weapons, rather than rolling them. This method reduces combat rolls by half. On the other hand, the role of luck is also halved. This method can help speed up combat a great deal, however, and is recommended when several characters are involved in a firefight or melee.

Two-gun Shooting: In real life, shooting a gun in each hand just makes noise and spends ammo. In cinematic games, however, a character can shoot with both hands, with a -1 penalty for the off-hand. Recoil penalties accumulate separately for each pistol.

Shoot and Dodge: Characters who shoot while making acrobatic leaps (in the John Woo tradition) can use Acrobatics or Dodge while they fire. Both the shooting and the Acrobatics or Dodge Tasks incur a -2 penalty. The Acrobatics or Dodge result is used in a Resisted Task against any and all ranged fire attacks directed against the character that Turn. Only ranged attack results higher than the Acrobatics or Dodge result hit.

Healing Luck: Characters with the Good Luck Quality (see p. 82) can use one of their +1 luck bonuses when they receive an injury. Doing this reduces damage by D10(5) points or by half, whichever is greater, before any damage modifiers are applied. It becomes a "lucky break"—just a flesh wound, the bullet hit the character's lucky coin, the character rolled with the punch, and so on.

Throwing Damage and Range

Ranged combat is not always about guns. Every so often someone wants to throw something to cause harm. For humans throwing rocks or grenades, regular ranged combat rules cover things nicely. Supernaturals throwing cars and such is a different story, however.

To determine the maximum range a large object can be thrown, first determine the minimum Strength needed to lift the object easily (see Strength Table, p. 59). Subtract this number from the character's Strength to get a modified Strength value. The range intervals in yards (meters) are derived from that value.

For example, Ursus has Strength 15. He grabs a 2,000 lbs. car and lifts it over his head. The minimum Strength needed to lift 2,000 points is 11, so Ursus's modified Strength is four. This creates the following range intervals: Point-Blank—two yards; Short—three yards; Medium—eight yards; Long—12 yards; and Extreme—20 yards.

The damage caused by such a thrown object depends on its size and weight (see Thrown Object Damage Table, p. 133).

Thrown Object Range Table

Point Blank: Modified Strength-2
Short: Modified Strength
Medium: Modified Strength x 2
Long: Modified Strength x 3
Extreme: Modified Strength x 5

Targeting Specific Body Parts Chart

These rules can be used for dramatic purposes, but add more complexity to combat. The following chart determines the penalty to the attack, and the modifier to the damage inflicted. Damage bonuses occur after penetration (if the target is not wearing armor, all damage is modified accordingly).

Head: -4 to hit. Blunt damage is doubled; slashing/piercing is tripled. Bullet type damage is modified by two levels (i.e., armor-piercing bullets inflict triple damage, normal bullets inflict four times damage, etc.). Endurance Point damage (in non-lethal combat) is quadrupled.

Neck/Throat: -5 to hit. Blunt damage is doubled; slashing/piercing damage is quadrupled. A slashing attack on this area that does enough damage to kill the victim results in decapitation. Bullet damage is modified by one level (armor-piercing bullets inflict double damage, and so on).

Arms/Legs: -2 to hit. Damage in excess of Life Points/3 cripples the limb; extra damage is lost.

Hand/Wrist/Foot/Ankle: -3 to hit. Damage in excess of Life Points/4 cripples the area. Extra damage is lost.

Vital Points (heart, lungs, spine, kidneys, etc.): -2 to hit. Blunt damage is doubled; slashing/piercing damage is tripled. Bullet damage is modified by one level (see Neck/Throat bullet damage).

Keeping Your Cool

A factor rarely taken into account in most games is the ability (or lack thereof) of people to remain controlled and calm while under fire. Most people who are shot at tend to freeze or panic. Only the very brave, the very stupid, and combat veterans are likely to keep their cool and do the right thing when every instinct in their bodies is telling them to start running—NOW! Chroniclers wishing to run a heroic game are free to dispense with this factor, although its use may discourage hotheaded players from getting their Cast Members into firefights at the drop of a hat.

When being shot at, a character must pass a Simple Willpower Test to continue carrying out his original intention. A failed result means the character freezes or hesitates, and loses any chance to act in that Turn (the character can still defend normally, however). This rule also applies to the Supporting Cast and Adversaries, so sometimes it is a good idea to fire blindly in the general direction of one's enemies, if only to make them keep their heads down.

Damage

Once a character hits a target (or the enemy hits a Cast Member), damage is determined. Damage works differently than Task resolution. Damage is measured in points, which are marked off the character's Life Points. If Life Points are reduced to zero or below, the character suffers critical injury and risks dying. The effects of damage are explained later in this chapter (see p. 138).

Most forms of damage in the **Unisystem** are determined by rolling a die; the result is then multiplied by a set number called, for obvious reasons, the Multiplier. For example, a .22 pistol causes D4 x 2 points of damage. In this case, determine damage by rolling a four-sided die and multiplying the result by two (the Multiplier).

Why express damage in this manner? First, the Multiplier can get modified in a number of situations. In the case of a pistol, a bullet hitting at point-blank range inflicts more damage than one fired from a hundred yards away. At point-blank, the Multiplier is increased; at longer ranges, it drops (see Ranged Combat Modifiers Table, p. 131). Also, some weapons have a

Thrown Object Damage Table

Small Object (less than 5 pounds/2 kg): D4 x Strength

Medium Object (up to 25 pounds/10 kg): D6 x Strength

Large Objects (up to 200 pounds/40 kg): D8 x Strength

Very Large Objects (up to 1 ton): D10 x Strength

Huge Objects (over a ton): D12 x Strength

Oh, God—I've Been Shot!

When people are injured (and they realize it—some people may be unaware of even mortal wounds for some time), their first reaction is usually shock and fear. Even if the wound is not lethal, the typical person collapses, screams and does a number of other useless things. Only people driven by rage, drugs or pure determination (or too stupid to know better) carry on with a fight despite their wounds. To simulate this, the Chronicler may require characters who have been injured in combat to pass a Simple Willpower Test before continuing their fight. A penalty equal to the damage taken by the character may be applied to the Test. This penalty is left to the discretion of the Chronicler—a dramatic fight should not be slowed down because the protagonist was wounded. In such cases, the Chronicler can rule that the character is so determined (and pumped full of adrenaline) that he ignores any wound that does not kill him.

variable Multiplier. Most hand weapons, for example, cause damage based on the Strength of the wielder. A baseball bat wielded by a ten-year-old does not inflict as much damage as the same bat in the hands of a champion weightlifter. To figure the bat damage, the base damage (D8) uses the Strength of the wielder as a Multiplier.

Finally, although multiple dice could be rolled and the results added together, using a Multiplier increases the chances that maximum and minimum damage are inflicted. When rolling several dice, low rolls tend to cancel out high rolls, usually resulting in an average damage roll. This is not necessarily realistic. Bullets hitting a person often go through without causing any appreciable damage, but in other cases they kill the person on the spot; the wide variation of damage in the single-die and multiplier system reflects this randomness.

Damage values for normal punches, kicks, and a number of different weapons are presented in **Chapter Five: Tools.**

Poison

Poisons are foreign substances that, when introduced into a person's body, cause harm, injury or death. They include manufactured chemicals and substances secreted or injected by animals or supernatural creatures. In the real world, some poisons kill instantly, while others have varying degrees of lethality. As a weapon, poison is often unreliable and can be as dangerous to the wielder as to the intended victim.

Poisons all have a Delivery Method (how the poison is applied) and a Strength Rating (its lethality). The Delivery Method is either ingested (eaten), injected, or contact. Some poisons may be applied in more than one way, but their effectiveness may vary according to how they are delivered.

The Strength Rating determines how much damage the poison inflicts, or how difficult it is to resist its effects. The Strength Rating of a poison depends on the type of toxin. There are three basic kinds of poisons: corrosive, irritant, and narcotic (also known as nerve poisons). Each kind has its own characteristics.

Corrosive poisons include a number of acids, and several common cleaning fluids. They can burn the skin directly, inflicting a number of points of damage (see the Corrosive Damage Table) every Turn the person is exposed (being splashed with the liquid means the victim is exposed until the corrosive is washed off with water). If ingested, they cause the same damage until the poison is neutralized with an antidote, or ejected by vomiting.

Irritants include such poisons as arsenic. They are more slow-acting, and require multiple doses. Instead of direct damage, the poison slowly drains Life Points, typically one point for every two Strength of the poison, per dose ingested. For example, if the poison has a Strength Rating of one, damage occurs after two doses. This Life

Corrosive Damage Table

Poison Strength Rating	Damage
1	1 point
2	D4(2)
3	D6(3)
4	D8(4)
5	D10(5)
6	D6 x 2(6)

Point damage can only be healed if the poison is purged from the system. When the victim's Life Points are reduced to zero, the victim may die (a Survival Test, see p. 139, postpones death).

Narcotic or nerve poisons include curare, chloroform, and strychnine. They directly depress the victim's nervous system and body functions such as breathing. They can induce unconsciousness, paralysis, or death. These poisons do not inflict damage directly. Instead, they use a Simple Strength Test against a Simple Constitution Test by the victim. If the poison's Strength wins the contest, the victim suffers the poison's specific effects. Typically, they include drowsiness or unconsciousness (for weak narcotics) to heart or respiratory arrest (resulting in death by suffocation unless first aid or medical care are immediately provided).

Some sample poisons are discussed below. Chroniclers can devise game mechanics for other poisons based on these examples.

Cobra Venom: This powerful corrosive neurotoxin has an average fatality rate. The Delivery Method is injection. Depending on the species, this venom has a Strength of 3 to 6. Each bite injects one dose, and inflicts Corrosive damage based on its Strength for 5 turns. For example, the bite of a relatively weak cobra (Strength 4 venom) inflicts D8(4) points of damage for five Turns. If the bite is drained, the venom does half damage. After administration, an antitoxin prevents further damage. A cobra can bite more than once in a 24-hour period, but the strength of the venom drops one level per subsequent bite, as the dosage is reduced. In the example above, the cobra's next bite causes D6(3) points of damage. On the other hand, if the cobra bit the same person twice or more, the damage is cumulative.

Some cobras can spit venom. It is treated as a Strength 1 Corrosive (one point). If the venom hits a victim's eyes, he must pass a Difficult Constitution Test or be blinded for one hour. After that, a Simple Constitution Test at +4 must be passed, or the blindness becomes permanent.

Arsenic: This irritant poison can be found in some insecticides and weed killers. In the ancient world, arsenic oxide, which is colorless and flavorless, was a favored poison, although its effects take a long time, and people can actually develop an immunity by ingesting small doses.

The Delivery Method is ingestion. A large dose of arsenic has a Strength 6, and inflicts three points of damage per hour until the poison is removed (usually by inducing vomiting, although a full stomach pump in a hospital is preferred). Smaller doses have a Strength 2, and inflict one point of damage per day. Symptoms of gradual poisoning (ingesting one small dose daily for five or more days) include weakness (reduce Strength by one and Endurance Points by 10), stomach problems, slight disorientation (reduce Intelligence by one) and a greenish pigmentation of the skin. Each dose adds to the daily damage (after five days of gradual poisoning, the victim suffers from five points of damage per day). Medical attention quickly eliminates all traces of arsenic from a person's system, however.

Curare is a nerve poison that paralyzes and may kill. The natives of the Amazon use it to bring down large game, often dropping small deer in their tracks with one arrow or blowgun hit.

Curare may be administered through poisoned darts or other injection, with each application having a Strength 4 dose. Additional darts or doses increase this Strength by one level (i.e., three hits with darts have a combined Strength 6). If the victim fails a Resisted Simple Constitution Test against the poison's Simple Strength Test, the victim's Dexterity is reduced by one per Success Level of the poison's Strength Test. If Dexterity is reduced to zero, the victim is totally paralyzed and unable to move. If the Success Levels of the poison are greater than the victim's Constitution +1 (three Success Levels for the average Constitution 2 person), the victim's heart stops, and he dies in 20 minutes unless medical or magical healing is applied. Even if the victim wins the Resisted Test, his Dexterity is reduced by one level per dose. The effects of curare (if the victim survives) last for 6 minus Constitution hours (minimum one hour).

Supernatural Healing and Poisons

Any Gifted or supernatural power that heals injuries can undo the damage inflicted by corrosive and irritant poisons. If the poison is still in the victim's system, it must be removed or the damage or effect continues even if the previous damage was cured.

Mindheal (see p. 229) can cause the body of the victim to expel the poison; this requires a Resisted Task using Mindheal Strength and the

Willpower of the Seer against a Simple Strength Test using the poison's rating. The Touch of Healing Miracle (see p. 242) undoes the effects of any poison and removes them from the body of the victim, at the cost of 10 Essence Points.

Disease

Diseases have three major game characteristics: Vector (how the disease is transmitted), Strength (how easy it is to catch it), and Severity (how much damage it inflicts).

Vectors include airborne (the virus or bacteria can survive in the air for some time, infecting anyone who breathes it), vermin (an insect, like lice or mosquito, transmits the disease), body contact (the person must be in some form of casual contact, touching, for example, or sharing sleeping quarters), waste (drinking or eating things contaminated with the waste products of the diseased; this may also be caused by insects who contaminate food or drink), and bodily fluids (transmitted through intimate contact, blood transfusions, and so on).

If the character is exposed to the disease, Strength is used in a Resisted Test (Strength doubled versus the victim's Constitution doubled) to see if he catches the disease. Prolonged exposure, weakness (from wounds or exhaustion), and so on may produce penalties of -1 to -6 to the Constitution Test.

The Severity (Mild, Moderate, Serious, or Terminal) determines how much damage the disease inflicts. Many diseases simply produce weakness and are not fatal except under very bad circumstances, while others are invariably fatal. Severity effects include Task penalties (due to the debilitating effect of the disease), as well as Endurance and Life Point loss. Mild diseases inflict no permanent damage. Moderate diseases incapacitate the character and may inflict damage, especially if not treated. Serious diseases inflict damage and may have lethal effects. Terminal diseases kill. There are simply too many types of diseases with different symptoms and effects to cover them adequately here. Chroniclers wishing to introduce disease into their game may want to do some research and then use the guidelines here to put them in gaming terms.

Some sample diseases are discussed below.

The Common Cold: This disease is typically airborne, has a Strength 6 (very easy to catch), and relatively mild Severity (-1 to -2 to all Tasks for a day or two). Reduce Endurance by one-third while the person is sick.

Ebola: Transmitted through body contact (although an airborne version might be concocted by some germ warfare lab some day), and has an incubation period of a few days. Strength is four to six, and the Severity is Terminal. When the symptoms appear, the patient suffers a -1 penalty to all Attributes; a further -1 is imposed per day (cumulative). Symptoms include fever, pain, and aches similar to the flu. In a day or two, internal bleeding begins (lose 6 Life Points on the first day, and an additional D10+6 points per day thereafter). Survival requires a Difficult Constitution Task at -4 (one roll allowed).

Other Sources of Injury

Drowning and Suffocation: Without preparation, a human being can hold his breath for 1.5 minutes (2.5 minutes if the character has time to take a couple deep breaths first) plus D10(5) x Constitution seconds. After that, the person passes out and dies in a couple of minutes. Strangling cuts off a character's air supply and inflicts damage directly to the victim's throat and windpipe. Manual strangulation causes one point of damage per two levels of Strength (rounded down). A strangling rope inflicts one point of damage per Strength level; a wire garrote causes D4 x (Strength-1) slashing damage (damage is tripled).

Falls: A falling character takes D6(3) points of damage for every yard (meter) drop, to a maximum of D6(3) x 50 (terminal velocity). Note that a few people have survived falls from great heights. This damage usually results in bruises and broken bones.

Fire: Being exposed to fire inflicts D4(2) points of damage per Turn. Being engulfed in fire does D6(3) points of damage every Turn. A character who suffers more than one-fifth of her Life Points in fire damage experiences severe second-degree burns or one third-degree burn. One who suffers more than one-half of her Life Points in fire damage has second- and third-degree burns over a large area of her body; this may cause permanent or crippling injuries. Absent mystical healing, the character will never heal fully.

Breaking Things

All objects (doors, bottles, cars, tanks) have a Damage Capacity, Armor Value, and a Barrier Value. The Damage Capacity is how many points of damage it takes to either destroy the item or simply render it useless. The Damage Capacity of an object fulfills the same role as Life Points for living beings. Armor Value is how much damage can be absorbed by the object before taking damage. Barrier Value indicates how much protection it affords someone hiding behind it. In effect, the Barrier Value acts as "armor" that an attack must punch through in order to hurt whatever is behind that object.

Be careful to distinguish Damage Capacity from Barrier Value. It takes more damage to destroy a door than to fire a bullet through it (and injure whoever is behind it), for example. For the most part, the Damage Capacity measures how much it takes to make the object stop functioning, or to blast a large hole (a yard/meter radius in the case of a wall) in it.

Generally, the Chronicler should only worry about the Damage Capacity of objects when the Story absolutely demands it. If characters want to smash a plate glass window, they should simply do it without rolling damage. On the other hand, if a Cast Member is using an axe to break down a door while a raging fire consumes the house he is in, a few rolls to see how long it takes him to escape can heighten the tension.

For example, Lucas is a cop, with Strength 4, attempting to kick open a door just like on TV. His Kick Damage is D4 x 5(10). He makes a Strike Task (with a +5 bonus, since the door is not exactly dodging away), and gets a +2 bonus to damage. Lucas' player rolls a three, raised to five because of the bonus, for a total of 25 points. The door lock has an Armor Value 6 and 15 damage points, so it is broken, and the door swings open. If he had kicked a reinforced lock (AV 20; DC 30), not only would he not have broken the door, the Chronicler would have been well within his rights to have Lucas take the damage he inflicted—promptly breaking every bone in his foot!

Now suppose that the perp inside the room sees Lucas through the peephole and decides to shoot him through the door! The perp fires a .45 pistol at point-blank range (only the door and some two yards of air stand between him and Lucas). Total damage rolled is 32 points. The door has a Barrier Value of 12, so 20 points get

Common Objects Table

Object	Armor Value	Damage Capacity	Barrier Value
Wine Glass	0	1	0
Glass Bottle	1	5	0
Window	1	3-5	1
Dresser	3	5-10	6
Desk	5	30	6
Personal Computer	4	10-20	5
Door	5	30	10-12
Door Lock	6-8	10-20	—
Reinforced Door	10-15	40-60	20-30
Reinforced Lock	20-25	30-50	—
Wood Wall	5 + 1 per inch	20 per inch	8 + 1 per inch
Brick Wall	9 + 1 per inch	30 per inch	12 + 2 per inch
Concrete Wall	18 + 2 per inch	50 per inch	20 + 5 per inch
Ferroconcrete Wall	20 +5 per inch	75 per inch	50 + 10 per inch
Steel Wall	30 +5 per inch	100 per inch	60 + 20 per inch

Note: Inches may be multiplied by 2.5 to get an equivalent measurement in centimeters.

through and Lucas (who was not wearing body armor) takes a total of 40 points (normal bullets double damage once through armor, see p. 152). He drops to the ground, unconscious but still alive. If the door had not been in the way, he would have taken a total of 64 points (32 points doubled), and he would probably be taking a dirtnap. Of course, if the thug had tried to shoot through one inch (2.5cm) of steel (Barrier Value of 80), his shot would have bounced off, with a decent chance of ricocheting right back at him.

Injury

Damage in the **Unisystem** is measured in Life Points, representing the character's vitality and toughness. As Life Points are depleted, the ability of the character to continue moving and performing actions becomes impaired. If they are reduced to below zero, the victim is incapacitated and in danger of dying.

The Effects of Injury

During combat or other tense situations, adrenaline keeps all but the most serious wounds from affecting the character's performance.

A character reduced to less than five Life Points is severely hurt. It is difficult to do anything unless the character is driven by adrenaline into pushing himself. Actions suffer a -1 to -5 penalty due to pain and shock.

At zero points or below, the character is knocked down, stunned, and semi-conscious. A Willpower and Constitution Test is necessary for the character to get back on her feet. Such a Test is penalized by the amount by which she is reduced below zero. When reaching -10 points or worse, there is a chance the character will die (see Survival Tests, p. 139).

Knocking People Out

Hitting people over the head or punching them in the face to knock them out or stun them is never as easy as it appears in the movies. Hitting someone on the head is as likely to kill them as knock them out—loss of consciousness is often a sign of a severe, life-threatening injury. A punch on the jaw may knock somebody out, or may just break the person's jaw (and, incidentally, the knuckles of the person doing the punching).

However, some Chronicler's may apply "cinematic" rules to their games, allowing characters to engage in non-lethal brawls and attempts to capture people without harming them (or, by the same token, allowing the Chronicler's minions to capture Cast Members without inflicting permanent damage). The Non-lethal Brawls Optional Rule can be used.

Non-lethal Brawls Optional Rule

To make a non-lethal attack, the character must use a blunt instrument. In that case, any damage inflicted is applied to the Endurance Points of the victim, instead of his Life Points. Characters can get punched repeatedly, pass out, and be fine in a few hours. If the Chronicler wants to make a minimal concession to reality, he may rule that every four points of Endurance Damage inflicted in this manner imposes one Life Point of actual injury. Thus, a character who gets knocked out still nurses some bruises and cracked ribs after the fight.

Survival and Consciousness Tests

When a (human) character has been reduced to -10 Life Points, he is killed instantly unless he makes a Survival Test. Survival Tests are a special form of Attribute Test, using Willpower and Constitution, at a penalty of -1 for every 10 Life Points below zero (rounded down) the character currently suffers.

As in most things, supernatural beings have different survival thresholds than humans. Use The Racial Survival Tests Table.

Racial Survival Test Chart

Avatars, Inheritors, Nephilim: As normal humans.

Exiles, Incarnates, Kerubim, and all Seraphim: Threshold is -30 points. Penalty is -1 per 10 points below -30.

True Immortals: Threshold is -300 points. Penalty is –1 per 10 points below -300.

The Survival Test only determines whether or not the character drops dead immediately. Passing the Test does not mean the character is out of the woods. Unless medical attention is available, the character may still die in a few minutes. For every minute spent without receiving medical help, a new Survival Test is required, at a cumulative -1 penalty.

Characters with First Aid or medical skills can stabilize the victim with a successful Task. Characters without First Aid or other medical skills can try to help by bandaging any visible wounds. Whether this works under the circumstances is left entirely up to the Chronicler.

If the character survives the Survival Test, he must still check to see if he remains conscious. A Consciousness Test is run exactly as a Survival Test is, except the modifier is equal to the amount of negative points imposed.

For example, Tiny (46 Life Points) is hit by a burst of submachine gun fire. After all damage is accounted for, he is at -24 points. He has Constitution 5 and Willpower 3, for a base Survival Test score of eight. This is reduced by -2 because he is at over 20 points below zero, to a total of six. Tiny must roll a three or higher on a D10 for the required total of nine. He rolls a six (for a total result of 12), and survives. To stay conscious, however, Tiny needs to make a similar Test, but at a -24 penalty! Not surprisingly, he fails and collapses, unconscious. Every minute, he needs to roll his Survival Test again, first at a -3 penalty (the original -2 plus an additional -1), then at -4, and so on, until he finally dies or receives medical help.

Recuperation

Medical care and time are needed to recover from any injury. Unless seriously injured, however, time is the most important factor.

Regaining Consciousness

Characters can be knocked unconscious when their Life or Endurance Pools are depleted through injury, fatigue or disease. Generally, the character remains unconscious until the depleted pool is restored above zero through healing, rest, or regeneration. Under some circumstances, the Chronicler may allow unconscious characters to be semi-conscious or awake but unable to do anything more strenuous than speaking for brief periods of time. Supernatural beings with regenerative powers recover consciousness very rapidly. Those who require an act of will to heal themselves (like the Seraphim) remain in a coma until their natural healing restores them, unless their friends and allies heal them.

Resuscitation

Even if the character is dying, modern medicine and supernatural powers can try to bring the victim back from the threshold of death. Once again, common sense is the rule. A multiple gunshot victim might survive if no major brain damage was inflicted, but somebody who was decapitated or burned to a crisp in a gasoline explosion is not likely to benefit from any help in this world.

A character who fails a Survival Test can be brought back to life if extensive medical help (like that available in a modern Emergency Room) is made available within Constitution x 2 minutes. If paramedics are present, this length of time may be extended by an additional minute for each Success Level the paramedic gets on a First Aid Task.

The medical team in the hospital tries to revive the patient (anybody who's watched the TV show ER knows the drill). The doctor in charge performs a Medicine Task (typical doctors at an Emergency Room have a Medicine Skill 4 and an Intelligence 3). Each Success Level gives the patient a +1 bonus on a new Survival Test. The advanced life-saving techniques of the hospital add an additional +3 bonus. The recently dead character must now pass a new Survival Test, at a penalty of -1 for every five points he is below zero, plus all the bonuses described above. If he passes the Test, he lives.

Regaining Life Points

Without medical care, a character risks complications such as infection and blood loss. He must pass a Survival Test every day to recover one Life Point per level of success (to a maximum of one Life Point per Constitution Level). If he fails the Test, he loses one Life Point instead!

Supernatural types heal according to the Racial Life Point Recovery Chart.

Medical Healing

A First Aid and Intelligence Task restores one Life Point per Success Level. Performing First Aid on oneself is possible, but suffers a -2 modifier. One Task is allowed for each wound inflicted, but this requires players to keep track of the number of wounds their characters suffer. If the bookkeeping slows the game down, ditch it, and just allow one First Aid Task per combat.

Racial Life Point Recovery Chart

Avatars and Inheritors: One point per Willpower level per Turn.

Exiles and all Seraphim: D10(5) points per Essence Point spent; as normal human if not using Essence.

Incarnate: One point per Willpower and Constitution level per Turn.

Kerubim: D8(4) points per Essence Point spent; as normal human if not using Essence.

Nephilim: Five points per Turn.

True Immortals: One point per Constitution level per Turn.

A character recovers one Life Point per Constitution level per day of rest under medical care until he reaches zero points or higher. After that point, he regains a fixed two Life Points per day. Following on the example discussed previously, Tiny Tim (46 Life Points normally; -24 after injury) would recover five points per day in a hospital until reaching zero Life Points (this would take five days of intensive care). Then he would have to spend another 23 days in bed to fully recover. In total, this is almost a month of bed rest (and that only because he has such a high Constitution; a normal person reduced to -24 points, provided he survived at all, would spend well over a month in the hospital).

Endurance Point Loss

Endurance Points measure the character's ability to resist fatigue after extended exertions. Hard work, like jogging for long periods of time, drains one Endurance Point every ten minutes. Very hard labor (running at top speed while carrying a sack of rocks) drains D4(2) Endurance Points per minute. Bursts of frenzied activity, like intense close combat, drain Endurance at a higher rate, burning as much as D4(2) points in one Turn.

Endurance "damage" may also occur due to carrying/wearing heavy loads (see p. 122) and "non-lethal" attacks (see p. 139).

Endurance Loss Table

Hard Work	1 per 10 minutes
Very Hard Work	D4(2) per minutes
Frenzied Activity	D4(2) per Turn

Characters must get at least seven hours of sleep in a 24-hour period. Anything less and they lose one Endurance Point per hour of missed sleep. For example, if the character regularly sleeps five hours a night she loses two points each day—points that require some extra sleep to regain. Further, for each hour past 24 that a character stays awake, one more Endurance Point is lost. So, a character who stays awake for 36 straight hours loses 19 Endurance Points.

Effects of Endurance Loss

At five Endurance Points or less, the character feels groggy and dizzy. All actions incur a -2 penalty. If a character's Endurance is reduced to zero or below for any reason, he is in danger of falling unconscious. A Survival Test is necessary to remain on his feet, at a -1 penalty for every five points below zero (round up). This Test is repeated every Turn—eventually, the character falls unconscious.

Racial Endurance Point Recovery Chart

Avatars and Inheritors: One point per Willpower level per Turn.

Exiles and all Seraphim: D10(5) points per Essence Point spent; as normal human if not using Essence.

Incarnate: One point per Willpower and Constitution level per Turn.

Kerubim: D8(4) points per Essence Point spent; as normal human if not using Essence.

Nephilim: Five points per Turn.

True Immortals: Two points per Constitution level per half-hour of sleep, or one point per Constitution level per hour of rest.

Racial Essence Point Recovery Chart

Avatars and Inheritors: Two points per Willpower level per minute.

Exiles, Kerubim and all Seraphim: One point per Constitution and Willpower level per minute.

Incarnate: Two points per Willpower level per minute.

Nephilim: Two points per Willpower level per minute.

True Immortals: Two points per Willpower level per minute.

Regaining Endurance Points

Characters recover one Endurance Point per Constitution level per half hour of sleep, or per every hour of rest (talking, sitting, or riding in a vehicle). Endurance Points lost due to lack of sleep can only be regained by sleeping.

Again, certain supernaturals have their own rates of recovery (see Racial Endurance Point Recovery Chart).

Essence Pool Loss

Gifted and supernatural types are the only ones who usually worry about Essence Point loss. Voluntary Essence loss, such as Essence Channeling, cannot lower a character's Essence Pool below zero. Still, severe emotional stress and some supernatural attacks drain Essence and no limit exists for involuntary Essence loss.

Effects of Essence Loss

A character reduced to half his Essence Pool feels numb, and it may be hard to elicit any strong emotional reactions from him. Also, mental Tasks are performed at a -1 penalty until the Essence Pool is restored to half capacity.

At one Essence, the victim falls into a deep depression. All Tasks and Tests suffer a -3 penalty, and it is difficult to concentrate or care about anything. If Essence is reduced below zero, the victim must pass a Difficult Willpower Test at -1 for every five Essence Points below zero. If he fails, he temporarily loses one level in one mental Attribute (the Chronicler may let the player choose), or he temporarily gains a Mental Drawback worth at least two points.

If Essence is reduced below -30, the character must pass a Survival Test, with a -1 penalty for every 10 points below -30. Characters killed by Essence drain have no apparent cause of death. Medical science diagnoses only "heart failure."

Regaining Essence Points

Characters regain Essence equal to their Essence Channeling level per minute. Non-channelers are limited to one Essence Point for each Willpower level every hour.

Again, certain supernaturals have their own rates of recovery (see Racial Essence Point Recovery Chart).

Chapter Four

Vehicle Rules

Vehicle combat (i.e., any combat where one or more vehicles are involved) is handled like normal combat, with a few modifications. Since the **Unisystem** is not a wargame, the rules do not concern themselves with complex movement and range modifiers. Instead, vehicle combat is handled in a more cinematic nature—think Star Wars, not Harpoon. As with all rules, the set below should only be used when the Story calls for it.

Vehicle Attributes

Vehicles have a number of Attributes, comparable to a character's Attributes, that determine its capabilities. Most of the time, they are only used in combat or other action-oriented events (the ubiquitous car chase, for example). Worrying about Handling during a routine trip to work is a waste of time.

Dimensions: The average weight, height, width, and length of the vehicle. For cargo vehicles, a separate weight entry indicates its cargo capacity.

Speed: This Attribute is maximum speed. Halve Speed to get yards (meters) per second.

Range: How far a vehicle may travel is a function of how many miles per gallon it gets, and how much fuel it can carry. For aircraft, effective range is often half its maximum range, with half the range being the "point of no return." At that point, the aircraft does not have enough fuel to return to base (assuming it needs to return to its point of origin, of course). Range can vary enormously from those averages, though. Aircraft in particular can burn a lot of fuel just performing complex acrobatics or going at maximum speed.

Acceleration: The number of miles per hour (kph) the vehicle can increase its speed per Turn. All vehicles can safely brake 30 mph (45 kph) per Turn. More serious braking requires a Task with a modifier of -1 per five mph (7.5 kph) of braking over the safe maximum.

Toughness: A general measure of the vehicle's ruggedness, redundant systems and damage control systems. It determines how long a vehicle can continue to function even after being heavily damaged. Most vehicles are relatively delicate machines; break enough parts and they stop working. Others, like high-tech tanks, can survive a great deal of punishment. This attribute is roughly equivalent to a character's Constitution Attribute. Toughness is rated from one to six, with extraordinary vehicles having values of seven or higher.

Handling: A measure of the vehicle's maneuverability and responsiveness to the driver/pilot—within the vehicle's capabilities, of course. A tank or other heavy vehicle, no matter how good its Handling, is unable to maneuver in close quarters as well as even the clumsiest motorcycle. Handling is comparable to a character's Dexterity. For some driving and piloting Tasks, Handling replaces or modifies the pilot's Dexterity.

Crew: The number of personnel needed to operate the vehicle and their general descriptions.

Damage Capacity (DC): A rough estimate of how much damage a vehicle can take before it is destroyed or inoperable. Obviously, damage to a critical component disables a vehicle long before its Damage Capacity is depleted. Still, for general purposes, most civilian vehicles have a DC of 30 plus three for every 500 pounds (250 kg) of weight, rounded down. Military vehicles have a base Damage Capacity of 50 plus five for every 500 pounds (250 kg) of weight. So, a 2,000-pound car would have a damage capacity of 42 points, and a 30-ton tank would have a Damage Capacity of 650. Some large components like turrets, wings, and the like have their own Damage Capacity, typically ranging from 20% to 100% of the DC of the main body. Generally, damage modifiers (like slashing or stabbing or bullet damage, see pp. 151-152) do not apply to vehicles, which sustain only the basic damage rolled or generated.

If a vehicle powered by an internal combustion engine is heavily damaged or destroyed, there is a chance it may explode. Explosions are rare in real life—cars are designed not to explode, after all. When a vehicle is reduced to 10% or less of its Damage Capacity, make a Simple Toughness Test with a +3 bonus. On a failure, the vehicle explodes. The damage of the explosion is equivalent to a mortar shell's (see p. 155).

Armor Value (AV): Almost all vehicles are somewhat harder to hurt than normal people. The metal, wood, or plastic of their hulls is strong enough to deflect some attacks, and, in the case of armored vehicles, armor plating is added for increased protection. Most cars have

an AV of two to 10, depending on how sturdy their hulls are. Cars can be made "bullet-proof" by adding layers of Kevlar and other materials.

Vehicle Armament Attributes

Vehicle weapons are larger and more powerful than portable ones. They have the following features.

Accuracy: Each weapon system has an Accuracy. This Attribute measures such things as radar, laser, or other range-finding and targeting systems. Accuracy sometimes replaces or modifies Dexterity when firing vehicle-mounted weapons. Many primitive or simple weapon systems have no specific sights or aiming mechanisms; in those cases, the character uses Dexterity and Weapon Skill, often with a penalty.

Shots: Each weapon system has a number of Shots. This is the number of rounds available when fully loaded.

RoF: Each weapon system has a Rate of Fire (RoF), or how many rounds may be discharged in a given period of time.

Ammunition: Some weapon systems list Ammunition. If the armed forces using the vehicle have a standard mix of munitions, it is presented here.

Damage: Each type of munition has a Damage code. This is just like smaller weapons—a formula for calculating the damage caused by the weapon.

Armor-piercing Factor: Each type of munition has an Armor-piercing Factor. Divide the armor of a target by this factor. Two types of Armor-piercing heavy weapons exist: kinetic (a solid slug or bullet traveling at very high speeds) or shaped-charge (an explosion channeled into a narrow jet). Some types of armor offer different protection levels against each type of munition.

Damage Modifier: Each type of munition has a Damage Modifier. When striking a vehicle, multiply the damage inflicted (after subtracting any Armor or Barrier Values) by the Damage Modifier. This represents the ability of the weapon to ignite fires, damage critical components, or otherwise cause damage to modern vehicles.

Range: Each type of munition has a Range. This is also just like smaller weapons, but the distances are much farther.

Vehicles In Action

Most of the time, using a vehicle involves no Tasks or Tests. The character, provided he has the appropriate Driving or Piloting skill, gets in and goes wherever he wants. During stressful moments (pursuing an enemy, or realizing that the car's brakes have been cut), Dexterity and Driving/Piloting Tasks are needed. For the most part, this should be dictated by the Chronicler as the individual situation demands, but some possibilities are discussed below.

Driving at High Speed: Speed kills, as the saying goes. Going at high speeds in a lone, straight stretch of highway is no problem. Problems only occur when the character has to do something besides go in a straight line. Maneuvering at speeds over 50 mph (75 kph) requires a Dexterity and Driving Task (if the character's Dexterity exceeds the Handling rating of the vehicle, use the Handling rating instead). Potential modifiers include -1 per 10 miles an hour over 50; -2 for attempting to swerve or taking a sharp curve; -1 to -3 for sudden attempts to maneuver (avoiding a deer jumping right in front of a car would be at a -3 penalty). Fast Reaction Time gives characters a +2 bonus to these maneuvers. The results of failure can range from a partial spin to rolling the car over, crashing against an obstacle, or worse, depending on the circumstances (see Collisions, p. 144).

Chases: These work largely like normal foot chases (see p. 120). Make Resisted Dexterity and Driving/Piloting Tasks (if the character's Dexterity exceeds the Handling rating of the vehicle, use the Handling rating instead). The first person/vehicle to start moving gains a +1 to the Task. The faster vehicle receives a +1 bonus for every five mph it moves above the other vehicle's speed. If going at high speeds, both sides also need to succeed at a couple of Tasks using the High Speed modifiers above, to ensure nothing happened to them during the chase. A chase should last at least a minute or two. To make things dramatic, the Chronicler can dictate that the pursuer needs to accumulate a number of Success Levels above the pursued's own Success Levels, with Tasks being rolled every minute of the chase. The Chronicler should describe the chase, and if it takes place in a crowded highway or city streets, should throw in a number of complications (pedestrians, other cars, highway patrolmen) to spice things up.

Collisions: When a vehicle hits something, it damages both the target and itself. Base damage equals D10(5) times a factor equal to the vehicle's weight (in tons, round up) and 1/10 the vehicle's speed (or the differential in speeds if a vehicle hits a moving object) in miles per hour (or 1/15 the speed in kph), rounding up. For example, a two-ton truck going at 50 mph inflicts D10 x 7 (2 for the weight plus 5 for the speed) points of damage. Very large vehicles (over 10 tons in weight) use their weight in tons, divided by 20 (rounded up), and add 10 to the total, in addition to speed modifiers.

If the target is far lighter than the vehicle (car versus pedestrian), the vehicle takes only a third of the damage rolled. If the target is somewhat smaller (truck versus car), the heavier vehicle takes half damage. If the impact is against a much heavier object (a tank or a concrete wall), the vehicle takes D10+2 multiplied by (Speed/10), as above.

All collision damage subtracts the Armor Value of the vehicle before being applied to its Damage Capacity. Additional damage from a collision may occur if one of the vehicles catches on fire or explodes (see p. 136, 142).

Passengers inside a vehicle involved in a collision sustain half damage if not wearing seat belts, and 1/5 damage if they are. Air bags provide an additional AV of 20 against the collision damage, except for small children and small people, who may take an additional D6 x two points of damage from the air bag itself.

Sample Vehicle Armor Values

Civilian cars: AV 2-5

Heavy Trucks: AV 4-6

Bank Armored Cars, Armored Personnel Carriers: AV 20-75

Light Tanks, Infantry Fighting Vehicles: AV 80-100, usually in the front; the sides and rear have between 50% and 20% of the frontal armor.

Medium Tanks: AV 120-200, modified as above for sides and rear.

Main Battle Tanks: AV 200+, modified as above for sides and rear.

Malfunctioning Vehicles: If the vehicle is damaged somehow, has been sabotaged, or suffers some dangerous or catastrophic malfunction (loses its brakes, loses all four aircraft engines, and so on), a Dexterity and Driving/Piloting roll is needed to try to stop or bring down the vehicle before any mishaps occur. Modifiers range from -1 (one flat tire) to -6 (all engines off-line on an aircraft). In some cases, a severe malfunction is an issue—a malfunctioning car can be stopped fairly easily, unless it was going very fast (in which case, apply the High Speed modifiers).

Ground Vehicle Combat

Most vehicle combat (with the rare exception of ramming attacks) involves ranged weapons. These attacks range from people with guns firing from the inside of a vehicle to complex weapon systems like missiles or laser-aimed cannon.

Shooting From Vehicle: Firing from a moving platform with hand weapons has a base penalty of -3, with another -2 if the vehicle is moving faster than 30 mph (45 kph).

Using Vehicle-Mounted Weapons: Early vehicle weapons were not stabilized, and had fairly primitive aiming mechanisms. World War II tanks, for example, had to stop and fire to have any hope of hitting the target. For those vehicles, penalties are as above, with the additional complication that the gunner's Dexterity cannot exceed the weapon's Accuracy rating. For stabilized vehicles, the penalties are limited to -2 if the vehicle is moving over 30 mph (45 kph).

Dodging: Most military vehicles cannot dodge attacks; they are too big and too slow. Lighter vehicles such as motorcycles and car-sized targets may attempt to drive fast enough to avoid an attack. This is treated like a Resisted Task, with the target's Dexterity and Driving/Piloting skill versus the attacker's Dexterity and weapon skill, or Accuracy, depending on the weapon.

Air Combat

Air combat involves a highly complex set of maneuvers, where the ability to see or sense the target is as important as the ability to destroy it. To reflect air combat accurately would require so many rules as to make the game pretty much impossible to play. Instead, we present a few cinematic rules for fast and furious air combat.

Dogfighting: This type of combat was a lot more common in the days before guided missiles, when pilots were able to see the enemy through their gun sights. In the age of smart weapons and fire-and-forget missiles, aerobatics at close range is pretty much a lost art.

Dogfighting combat is a Resisted Task, using the Dexterity and Piloting Skill of the two combatants. If one aircraft has a higher Handling rating than the other, add the difference between the two to the more maneuverable vessel. Situational Awareness adds +2 to the Task; Fast Reaction Time adds +1. The winner manages to get on the target's "six" (six o'clock, right behind it) and can shoot it.

Playing Chicken: This occurs when two aircraft fly at each other, firing and seeing who turns away (or is destroyed) first. The two aircraft can fire at each other for one or two Turns, depending on their speed and weapon range. If neither ship is destroyed, the two characters engage in a Resisted Willpower Test; Nerves of Steel bonuses apply. The loser turns away, and the winner can now engage him with impunity for one Turn.

No Vehicle: Flying creatures and characters use Dexterity and Acrobatics, or Simple Dexterity Tests for Dogfighting purposes. Seraphim and other flying creatures cannot be targeted by heat-seeking missiles, but their radar signature is larger than that of most modern fighter aircraft (many modern fighters are designed to have a smaller radar return than a large bird), and they can be easily detected and targeted in that fashion. Revelationist fighter pilots typically engage Seraphim and their ilk with their machine guns (typically 20mm autocannon); the Seraphim can return fire, of course.

Experience

People change with time. In the **Unisystem**, characters live and learn and become more experienced as they participate in the Stories created in the course of the game. After several Stories, the character will be more skilled and powerful than he was when he began. This is also borne out in fiction: the Hobbits from the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy were much tougher, stronger and experienced at the end of their heroic quest than when they began.

Character improvement is represented by experience points. Experience points are awarded to each player at the end of every gaming session. The better the game and the player's performance were, the more points should be awarded. With these points, the players can improve their Cast Members' Attributes, skills, and other elements.

This experience point system is used for all **Unisystem** games, both dice-driven or diceless.

Awarding Experience

During or at the end of each roleplaying session, the Chronicler awards each player with experience points. The Experience Point Awards Chart outlines some guidelines for how many points should be awarded for a playing session: average awards range from two to six points, with the higher awards going to the best roleplayers.

Experience Point Awards Chart

Being There: All characters who participated in the game session receive one point.

Good Roleplaying: One point per instance.

Advancing the Storyline While Remaining in Character: One to three points. This rewards players whose roleplaying and character actions helped develop the story.

Heroic Roleplaying: One to three points. Given to players whose characters remained true to themselves even when it meant they would suffer for it. The heroic type who risks his life for others, or even the coward who runs or surrenders when the wise course would be to fight are good examples of this.

Ingenuity Award: One to three points. Given to players who used impressive and unexpected tactics and problem solving to deal with a plot device. This, however, only applies if the devious plan or tactics were true to the character (not the player). If the village idiot suddenly starts having spurts of Machiavellian brilliance for no good reason, then no award should be given.

Optional Experience Point Allotments

Some Chroniclers may dislike players over-specializing their characters in one skill or power, especially when they did not use the skill or power during the game session. This rule curtails that tendency, at the cost of bookkeeping and complexity.

Under this rule, the Chronicler assigns experience to each of the following categories. Characters can then use those points only in the appropriate skills, Qualities, or Metaphysics/powers. The experience point awards should be based on what the characters did and accomplished during the game session.

Combat Points: Awarded when the characters used any combat skills, such as weapon skills, dodge, martial arts, and so on. These points can be used to raise combat skills, as well as Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution.

Non-Combat Points: Assigned when scholastic, investigative, or non-violent activities, from scientific skills to Smooth Talking, were employed. These points can be used to raise the appropriate intellectual skills, as well as any mental Attribute.

Metaphysics Points: Assigned whenever any Supernatural or Gifted power was used, whether in combat or non-combat situations. These points can be used to advance any Supernatural/Metaphysical power or acquire new ones. They can also be used to increase mental Attributes.

Chroniclers may also grant characters "freebie" experience points that can be used for any purpose, especially when the characters perform some great feat or reached the conclusion of a Story.

Example: During a game session, Lukas, an Alliance troubleshooter, successfully followed an alleged cultist, broke into his house, opened his safe, was surprised in the act, and summoned a fire elemental to cover his escape by starting a minor conflagration in the cultist's home. The Chronicler awards Lukas two non-combat points and one metaphysics point. Although there was some combat (Lukas was shot at during his escape), he only used magic, not any actual combat skills, so he gets no points for this category.

Improving Characters

Experience points work much like the character points used to create Cast Members. They can be used to raise Attribute and skill levels, to acquire new Qualities or reduce or eliminate Drawbacks, or to increase Metaphysical abilities. The cost of these improvements differs from the cost of acquiring them during character creation, however. After a Cast Member has been defined, it is a lot harder to advance in some areas. To determine how to improve characteristics, refer to the Character Improvement Table (see p. 146).

Improving Attributes

Unlike skills and powers, Attributes represent relatively fixed qualities for human Cast Members. As a result, after character generation, humans may improve Attributes no more than one level. The improvement ability of the supernatural races is greater, however. Immortals can improve any Attribute by up to three levels (as limited by their racial maxima). Other beings can improve their Attributes up to their racial limits.

If the Attribute was five or less before improvement, the one level increase costs five experience points. If the Attribute was six or greater before improvement, the one level increase costs 10 experience points.

Reasons For Improvement

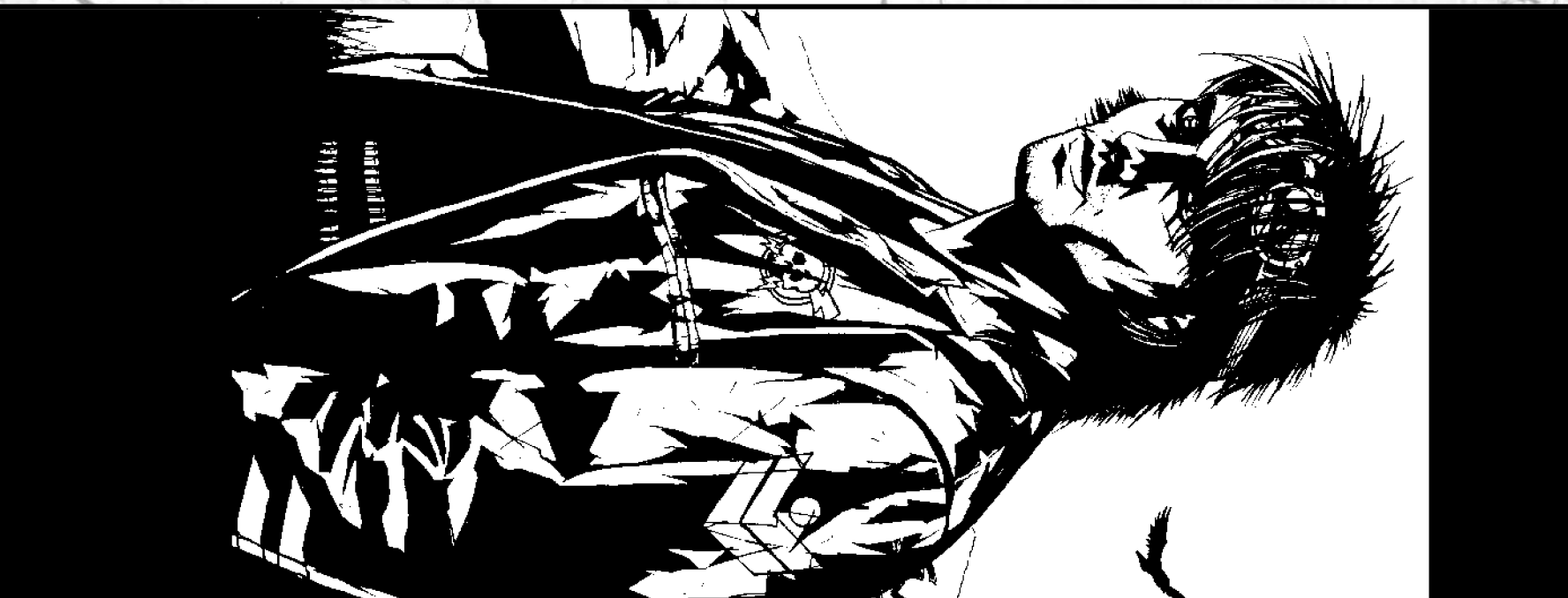
Having enough experience points to raise a characteristic is usually not enough. There must also be an explanation for why the Cast Member improved in that area, and usually those reasons are determined in the course of the game. If the Cast Member used a skill or Attribute repeatedly in the previous few game sessions, it would make sense for the skill or Attribute to get better. To learn a brand-new skill, the Cast Member must have spent some time working on that skill before being allowed to spend the points to acquire it. To acquire a Quality, eliminate a Drawback, or gain new Metaphysical powers, a series of events or circumstances must be present that make it sensible for the characteristic to arise or disappear.

Character Improvement Table

Improvement	Point Cost
Attribute	See text on p. 146
Existing Skill	The cost of the next level (e.g., to go from level 3 to 4 costs 4 points)
Existing Special Skill	The cost of the next level + 1 (e.g., to go from level 3 to 4 costs 5 points)
New Skill	Six points for first level
New Specialty	Six points
New Special Skill	Eight points for first level
Quality	Same as per character creation, unless otherwise indicated
Essence Channeling	Four points per level until level five; seven points per level thereafter
Remove Drawback	Pay off the original value of the Drawback
New Invocation	10 points for the first level
Existing Invocations	Five points per level until level five; eight points per level thereafter
Seer Powers (Strength)	Six points per level
Seer Powers (Art)	Five points per level until level five; eight points per level thereafter
Necromancy, Theophany or Primal Skills	Five points per level until level five; eight points per level thereafter
New Necromantic Powers	10 points per new Power
Existing Necromantic Powers	Six points per level until level five; 10 points per level thereafter
Inspired Miracles	10 points per new Miracle
New Theophany or Primal Power	Double the original cost of the ability

Metaphysical Powers are discussed in detail in **Chapter Seven: Metaphysics** and **Chapter Eight: Inhumans.**

CHAPTER FIVE: TOOLS



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WARNING

Chapter Five

Ryadh, Saudi Arabia
0400 hours

Colonel Dufresne contemplated the motley formation passing his observation post with a sense of wonderment. There they were—Merkava Mk3 Israeli tanks flanked by Russian-made BTR-80 Iranian armored personnel carriers, and Saudi-owned M-1 tanks. A company of American XM8 light tanks led the way. A squadron of Comanche attack helicopters floated above the formation. The American vehicles had been air dropped, along with Dufresne and the rest of the division, almost two years ago. Back then, having the putative allies not shoot at each other was the most you could ask for. To see the ragtag remains of the armies of half a dozen countries actually working together with a minimum of bickering was a miracle of sorts.

"Not a sight I would have expected, or welcomed, ten years ago," said Captain Ari Ben Medi behind Dufresne. The Israeli soldier was the liaison between Dufresne's forces and the allied units.

Dufresne nodded in agreement. "It's amazing. I cannot . . ." he paused for a second. "I don't want to offend, but how can you stand working side-by-side with the Iranians, with people who wanted you and your people dead?" And not just working together, but doing so with incredible effectiveness, he did not add. After the allies had weeded out radical elements from all sides, they worked with a harmony that astounded the American, used to news reports of rabid hatred and sectionalism.

"It wasn't easy, my friend," Ben Medi replied. "One third of my command is made up of Palestinians and Lebanese, mostly Muslims. Almost to a man, they have relatives who were killed in uprisings or revolts or battles. On the other side, most of my people can name parents and grandparents, uncles and cousins who were likewise killed. But now we all have fresher memories of what this Kirche der Offenbarung has done to both of our peoples. The last time something like this happened, it was my people who were branded sub-humans, infidels. Now, it is all of us, and you and the Muslims now have learned what it is like to be persecuted, to be imprisoned and killed for no other reason than who you are. This Church has managed to remind us that we all are People of the Book—that, after you remove all the trappings and silly dogma, we all believe in the same God. And, there are, of course, other signs." He cast his glance towards the skies.

As if summoned by Ari's words, a trio of winged forms, glowing faintly, trailed past the observation post. They followed the helicopters and the armored formations towards the battlefront, where Jews, Muslims, and Christians were locked in battle against the Army of Revelations. Even in the distance, the figures were clearly human-shaped, except for the wings. Each bore a flaming sword, an anachronism that would have made Dufrene laugh if he hadn't seen the footage of those blades slicing the wings off jet aircraft, or hadn't examined the burnt-out shells of tanks which had been carved open like so many sardine cans.

Dufresne had never been much of a religious man. Raised a Catholic, he had all but jettisoned his parents' beliefs. Very few could remain skeptical in the face of sights such as this, however. He crossed himself. Ari murmured a prayer.

Overhead, the angels continued to follow the human army towards the sound of the guns.

Introduction

There are literally thousands of items that a Cast Member might like to possess as she attempts to survive the world of *Armageddon*. Space limits prohibit the listing of all, or even a number, of these items. As this is a game about war, the most important of these possessions are those found on a battlefield. Thus, this chapter presents some sample items that may be used to bring the fight to the Adversary—in sum, weapons, battle gear, and vehicles.

Most items include a description, game stats, an Encumbrance Value (EV) and cost (where applicable). Weapons and armor present additional features, such as range, damage imposed, or Armor Value. Vehicle entries are even more expansive.

Range: These numbers are expressed in yards (meters) and are divided into point-blank, short, medium, long, and extreme ranges. The ranges listed are the limits: anything below the limit is considered to be in that range, anything beyond it goes to the next range level. Note that projectiles may continue to travel some distance after going past extreme range. They may even still be lethal, but the chance of hitting the designated target is basically nil. The Chronicler should designate damage to unintended targets as he feels is appropriate, or as needed by the storyline being played.

Damage: The damage range normally imposed by the weapon is given. This is expressed by a die designation and a modifier.

Cap: The magazine capacity indicates how many bullets are contained in a fully loaded gun. There is a lot of variation out there, however. At almost any given caliber, for example, a rifle can be a single-shot bolt action or break-open action, or a semi-automatic with a 30-bullet clip. Revolvers have five to six shots, while semi-automatics can have as many as 15 to 17 rounds (laws restricting magazine size to 10 rounds are still in effect, but few free governments or police forces have the spare resources to enforce those regulations). For this reason, a range is often given, from the smaller magazines and revolvers to the biggest available on the market.

Encumbrance Value (EV): This measures an item's weight, plus an additional factor to represent bulk. Both interfere with movement, and drain an equipped person physically over time. EV is expressed in two numbers separated by a slash; the first number is for those using U.S. measurements, the second is for those using the metric system. Further details on Encumbrance and its effect on movement and Endurance Points can be found in **Chapter Three: Rules** (see p. 122).

Cost: This is expressed in early-21th Century dollars. The amount given is average for the Free Territories, and reflects serious shortages in materials due to the war effort. Many weapons are simply unavailable for purchase (aside from black market rates that can double or triple "list" price, or be set by the Chronicler as high as desired). These weapons may be given to the Cast as part of the mission, but otherwise must be "requisitioned" in some other manner.

Close Combat Weapons

From hand-to-hand, to melee weapons, to chainsaws, close combat weapons are not for the faint of heart. Most were unusual until the war broke out. Now, anachronistic melee weapons are much more prevalent—wielded by superhuman beings, they are also decidedly more dangerous. These weapons use Dexterity and the appropriate Brawling, Martial Arts, or Hand Weapon Skill.

Two-Handed Weapons: Close combat weapons used with two hands raise the effective Strength of the wielder by one. For example, a Strength 3 character wielding a two-handed axe has an effective Strength 4 for purposes of damage calculations.

Slashing/Stabbing Weapons: Edged or pointed weapons have a better chance of inflicting permanent damage on their victims. An edge can slice muscle tissue and even chop through bone. A point can reach deep into a target's vital organs. To simulate this, any stabbing or slashing damage that is applied to a target (after taking into account any reduction due to Armor Value) is doubled. Blunt weapons (from punches to kicks to sledgehammers to dropping safes) do not enjoy this benefit, although they often cause more general damage.

Close Combat Weapon Table

Weapon Type	Damage	EV	Cost
Punch	D4(2) x Strength*	n/a	n/a
Kick	D4(2) x (Strength + 1)*	n/a	n/a
Small Knife	D4(2) x (Strength - 1)**	1/1	$20
Large Knife	D4(2) x Strength**	1/1	$50
Short Sword/Huge Knife	D6(3) x Strength**	2/1	$100
Fencing Foil	D6(3) x Strength**	2/1	$150
Broadsword	D8(4) x Strength**&	4/2	$300
Bastard Sword	D10(5) x Strength**&	4/2	$400
Greatsword	D12(6) x (Strength + 1)**@#	8/4	$500
Rapier, Edge	D6(3) x Strength**&	2/1	$300
Rapier, Point	D8(4) x Strength**&	2/1	$300
Katana	D10(5) x Strength**&	2/1	$1000
Spear	D6(3) x Strength**&	4/2	$300
Spear Charge	D8(4) x (Strength + 1)**	4/2	$300
Staff (Short Punch)	D6(3) x Strength	4/2	$150
Staff (Swing)	D8(4) x (Strength + 1)@	4/2	$150
Small Mace	D8(4) x Strength	2/1	$100
Mace	D10(5) x Strength&	4/2	$200
Large Mace	D12(6) x (Strength + 1)#	6/3	$300
Wood Axe	D8(4) x Strength**&	1/1	$50
Battle Axe	(D8 + 1)(5) x Strength**&	4/2	$200
Greataxe	D12(6) x (Strength + 1)**@#	6/3	$400
Halberd	D12(6) x (Strength + 2)**@#	10/5	$500
Small Club/Stick	D6(3) x (Strength - 1)	1/1	n/a
Police Baton/Large Stick	D6(3) x Strength	2/1	$20
Baseball Bat/Large Club/Pipe/Chair	D8(4) x Strength&	2/1	$50
Chainsaw	D10(5) x Strength**&	20/10	$200
Broken Bottle	(D4 - 1)(1) x Strength**	n/a	n/a

* Causes Life Point damage, unless Endurance damage rules are used (see p. 139)
** Slashing/stabbing weapon
& Weapon may be used two-handed
@ Weapon must be used two-handed (damage modifiers accounted in formula)
# If no D12 is available, replace it with (D10+2)

Ranged Weapons

For all ranged weapons statistics, ballpark figures have been used. Weapons experts should feel free to pencil in any more accurate ranges, or plug in numbers derived from the latest Guns and Ammo statistics, depending on the specific weapon employed.

Bullet Type

Bullet type modifies the damage of a ranged weapon.

Normal Bullets: A normal jacketed bullet tends to corkscrew and ricochet inside the human body, shattering bone, piercing vital organs and inflicting assorted forms of mayhem. Thus, normal bullet damage is doubled after penetrating armor.

Hollow-Point Bullets: Expanding bullets create a greater wound cavity and tend to spend more of their energy inside the victim's body as the bullet flattens and mushrooms. Armor can easily stop these bullets. Double any Armor and Barrier Value between the target and the bullet, but any damage that gets through is tripled.

Armor-Piercing Bullets: These high-velocity, solid rounds punch through armor and obstacles, but also through the target. Armor-piercing rounds halve any Armor or Barrier Value in their path, but the damage inflicted is not modified.

Shotguns

Slugs are treated like normal bullets, with damage doubling when hitting flesh (there are also hollow-point slugs, which causes triple damage, as above). Shot damage does not double, and any armor worn is doubly effective against it (even heavy clothing may afford some protection against the lighter birdshot used in hunting shotguns). On the other hand, shot spreads over a wider area, making it easier to hit the target (see p. 131).

Ranged Weapon Table

Weapon	Range	Damage	Cap	EV	Cost
Thrown Rock	3/7/10/13/20	1 x Strength	n/a	1/1	n/a
Thrown Knife	3/5/8/10/13	D4(2) x (Strength -1)	n/a	1/1	$50
Short Bow	5/13/40/65/100	D6(3) x Strength	1	6/3	$400
Long/Composite Bow	10/30/50/100/200	D8(4) x Strength	1	8/4	$600
Crossbow	7/40/65/150/250	D10(5) x Strength	1	6/3	$500
Handguns	3/10/20/60/120				
.22 caliber		D4 x 2(4)	8-10	1/1	$400
.32 caliber		D6 x 2(6)	6-9	1/1	$500
.38 caliber		D6 x 3(9)	6-8	1/1	$600
9 mm		D6 x 4(12)	10-15	1/1	$500
10 mm		D6 x 5(15)	10-15	1/1	$1200
.45 caliber		D8 x 4(16)	7-10	2/1	$1500
High-Velocity Handguns	4/15/30/90/180				
.357 magnum		D8 x 4(16)	6-10	1/1	$1600
.44 magnum		D6 x 6(18)	6-10	2/1	$1800
Submachine Guns @	3/15/30/100/200				
9 mm		D6 x 4(12)	20-40	6/3	$1400
Civilian Rifles*	10/50/150/600/1000				
.22 LR		D4 x 4(8)	1-10	8/4	$1000
5.56 mm		D8 x 4(16)	1-30	10/5	$1200
.30-06		D8 x 6(24)	1-10	8/4	$1400
7.62 mm		D8 x 5(20)	1-30	8/4	$1600
Shotguns (12 gauge)				8/4	$1000
Birdshot	10/30/50/75/100	D6 x 5(15)	1-8		
Buckshot	10/30/50/100/200	D8 x 6(24)	1-8		
Slug	5/50/100/200/300	D8 x 5(20)	1-8		
Assault Rifles@	10/50/150/600/1000				
5.56 mm		D8 x 4(16)	20-30	8/4	n/a
7.62 mm		D8 x 5(20)	20-30	10/5	n/a
Sniper Rifles					
7.62 mm	15/75/225/900/1000	D8 x 5(20)	20	10/5	n/a
.50 caliber	15/75/250/1200/5000	D10 x 6(30)	10	28/14	n/a
Machine Guns@					
5.56 mm	10/100/300/1000/3000	D8 x 4(16)	200	22/11#	n/a
7.62 mm	10/150/300/1000/4000	D8 x 5(20)	100	24/12#	n/a
.50 caliber	15/200/400/2000/6000	D10 x 6(30)	100	84/42&	n/a

* Single shot or semi-automatic
@ capable of burst and automatic fire
# EV includes bipod (1/1) and ammo (6/3)
& EV includes tripod (40/20) making this exclusively a vehicle or stationary weapon

Explosives

Explosions inflict damage in two ways. First is the shockwave, which is nothing more than gas or air traveling at tremendous speeds. More dangerous are the fragments the shockwave throws around at bullet speed. Fragments come from either debris created by anything the shockwave encounters (bricks, earth, rocks), or from specially designed metal casings or shrapnel (the metal case of most bombs is designed to break into jagged metal fragments to inflict maximum damage; some pipe bombs are filled with nails or ball bearings for the same reason). The shockwave damage is rapidly reduced by distance; fragment damage is not.

To make matters simpler, explosive damage in *Armageddon* is expressed as one value, which takes into consideration both fragmentation and shockwave damage. Simple concussion devices cause less damage than fragmentary ones. There are three areas of effect: Ground Zero (close to the explosion), General Effect (the area of most widespread damage after Ground Zero), and the Maximum Range (the area after which the explosion ceases to inflict significant damage).

Each explosive weapon is used with a particular skill (detailed in the individual descriptions). More than three Success Levels places the target in contact with the explosive device at Ground Zero. Three Success Levels place the target at Ground Zero, but not in contact. Two Success Levels produce the General Effect damage, and a single Success Level inflicts only Maximum Range damage. If the Task or Test is failed, the grenade bounces far enough away to do no damage to the target. It may land close enough to someone else to cause damage, however, at the Chronicler's discretion.

Body armor is largely ineffective against concussion (Ground Zero damage). Only fully sealed armor (like that used by Ordinance Disposal teams) protects with its full Armor Value at any range. Normal body armor protects with half its Armor Value at Ground Zero, and normal AV at other ranges.

Rockets and anti-tank weapons create another form of explosive damage. These weapons use the Shaped-Charge Effect to better penetrate armor (of vehicles and other hard targets). Generally, those missiles divide the Armor or Barrier Values of a target by a number, usually 3 to 5, depending on the effectiveness of the weapon. This effect is only applicable at Ground Zero.

None of the explosive weapons listed are available for purchase on the open market. Black marketers charge whatever they can get.

Area of Effect

Explosive areas of effect are expressed as a radius (the distance from the center of the explosion to the edge of the circle-shaped area it affects). As always, meters may be roughly substituted for yards.

Explosive Weapon Table

Weapon	Range	EV
Thrown Grenade	3/7/10/13/20	1/1
Grenade Launcher	30/50/100/200/350	4/2
Mortar	100 to 3500	40/20
Light Artillery	5-10 miles (3-15 km)	#
Medium/Heavy Artillery	10-30 miles (15-45 km)	#
Light SAM/AAM	100*/500/1000/2000/2500	25/12
Medium SAM/AAM	10-20 miles (15-30 km)	#
Heavy SAM	20-100 miles (30-150 km)	#
Light Anti-Tank Rocket	10/30/50/100/150	10/5
Medium Anti-Tank Rocket	65*/4000	#
Heavy Anti-Tank Rocket	500*/6000	#

Artillery and heavy self-propelled munitions weigh thousands of pounds. They are towed by, or mounted on, vehicles, or simply part of ground installations.

* Guided Missiles have a minimum range, instead of Point-Blank. This is the minimum distance the missile must travel before its guidance system works.

Explosive Area of Effect Table

Explosive Type	Ground Zero	General Effect	Maximum Range
Offensive Grenade	1 yard	3 yards	5 yards
Defensive Grenade	2 yards	6 yards	10 yards
40mm Grenade	2 yards	6 yards	10 yards
40mm AP Grenade	1 yard	4 yards	6 yards
40mm HEDP Grenade	1 yard	6 yards	10 yards
Mortar Shell	3 yards	8 yards	15 yards
Light Artillery/Light Bomb	5 yards	10 yards	20 yards
Medium Artillery/Medium Bomb	10 yards	20 yards	50 yards
Heavy Artillery	15 yards	30 yards	75 yards
Heavy Bomb	20 yards	50 yards	100 yards
Fuel-Air Explosive Bomb	75 yards	250 yards	300 yards
Light SAM/AAM	1 yard	2 yards	5 yards
Medium or Heavy SAM/AAM	1 yard	10 yards	20 yards
Light Anti-Tank Rocket/Shell	1 yard	2 yards	5 yards
Medium Anti-Tank Rocket/Shell	1 yard	5 yards	10 yards
Heavy Anti-Tank Rocket/Shell	1 yard	10 yards	20 yards

Explosive Damage Table

Weapon Type	Ground Zero	General Effect	Maximum Range
Offensive Grenade	D6 x 8(24)	D6 x 6(16)	D6 x 2(6)
Defensive Grenade	D6 x 10(30)	D6 x 8(24)	D6 x 3(9)
40mm Grenade/Bomblet	D6 x 12(36)	D6 x 10(30)	D6 x 4(12)
40mm AP Grenade	D10 x 6 (30)*	D6 x 5 (15)	D6 x 3 (9)
40mm HEPD Grenade	D10 x 6 (30)	D6 x 8 (24)	D6 x 4 (12)
Mortar Shell	D8 x 10(40)	D8 x 8(32)	D8 x 4(16)
Light Artillery/Light Bomb	D8 x 20(80)	D8 x 10(40)	D8 x 5(20)
Medium Artillery/Medium Bomb	D10 x 40(200)	D10 x 10(50)	D10 x 5(25)
Heavy Artillery	D10 x 60 (300)	D10 x 10(75)	D10 x 5(25)
Heavy Bomb	D10 x 70(350)	D10 x 15(75)	D10 x 5(25)
Fuel-Air Explosive Bomb	D10 x 100(500)	D10 x 20(100)	D10 x 5(25)
Light SAM/AAM	D10 x 10(50)@	D10 x 2(10)	D6 x 2(6)
Medium SAM/AAM	D10 x 20(100)@	D10 x 5(25)	D6 x 4(12)
Heavy SAM	D10 x 50(250)@	D10 x 10 (50)	D10 x 5(25)
Light Anti-Tank Rocket/Shell	D10 x 7(35)*	D6 x 5(15)	D4 x 5 (10)
Medium Anti-Tank Rocket/Shell	D10 x 30(150)*	D6 x 10(30)	D4 x 10(20)
Heavy Anti-Tank Rocket/Shell#	D10 x 50(250)*	D6 x 15(45)	D4 x 10(20)

* Divide target's AV by 5 before applying damage
@ Divide target's AV by 2 before applying damage
# Damage that penetrates armor is tripled.

Damage

Explosive weapons have three damage numbers, representing the damage inflicted at different ranges. If a bomb, shell, or grenade explodes in direct contact with the target, Ground Zero damage is doubled against that target. Missiles are assumed to explode in contact with the target—do not modify their damage. Rocket damage degrades quickly with distance. Those weapons are meant to destroy specific targets.

Heavy Weapon Skills

Use Guns (Missile Launcher) for any man-portable anti-tank or anti-aircraft weapon. Artillery uses the Guns (Artillery) Skill, although the skill is used mainly to position the gun—computers do most of the shooting. Vehicle weapons (cannon, bombs, and the like) also use the Guns Skill. Each vehicle weapon system counts as a Type, so the crew of a tank would know the Guns (Tank) Skill, while the pilot of a fighter-bomber would know the Guns (Fighter-Bomber) Skill. In general, bombs and artillery should be treated as something that just happens on the battlefield. Except for calling in an artillery or air strike, most characters have little control over those weapons.

Explosive Weapon Descriptions

Grenades: These are hand-thrown explosives. The qualifiers "Offensive" and "Defensive" can be confusing to civilians, since Offensive grenades actually pack less punch than Defensive ones. The reason is simple: Defensive grenades are used by troops in trenches or other fortifications; they are intended to blow their way through some obstacles, as well as eliminate anyone in the area. Indeed, their blast radius is often greater than the distance they can be thrown and users have to toss them and duck under cover. Offensive grenades are intended for use in the open. Their blast radius is smaller to protect the troops who use them. Grenades use a Strength and Throwing (Sphere) Task.

Bomblet: A small anti-personnel bomb. These bombs are sub-munitions carried by a larger bomb. The bomb explodes above ground and releases dozens or hundreds of bomblets, completely covering the area. Assume that all targets in the area (unless they are inside a covered trench or vehicle) suffer at least General Effect damage, and one fourth of them suffer Ground Zero damage.

40mm Grenade: 40mm grenades are launched from a weapon and explode on contact. The weapons come in two basic forms. The first is a launcher that must be broken open, like a shotgun, to reload. The second is attached under the barrel of an assault rifle. Both are single-shot, and have the same range and cost. All grenade launchers have a minimum safe firing range of 30 yards (meters); closer than that, the firer risks being caught in the blast. Launched grenades use a Dexterity and Guns (Launcher) Task. Hand grenade scatter rules apply.

The armor-piercing (AP) version is effective against hard targets. The High Explosive, Dual Purpose (HEDP) ordinance has a shaped-charge warhead and a pre-fragmented casing, making it deadly against both hard (vehicles) and soft (people) targets.

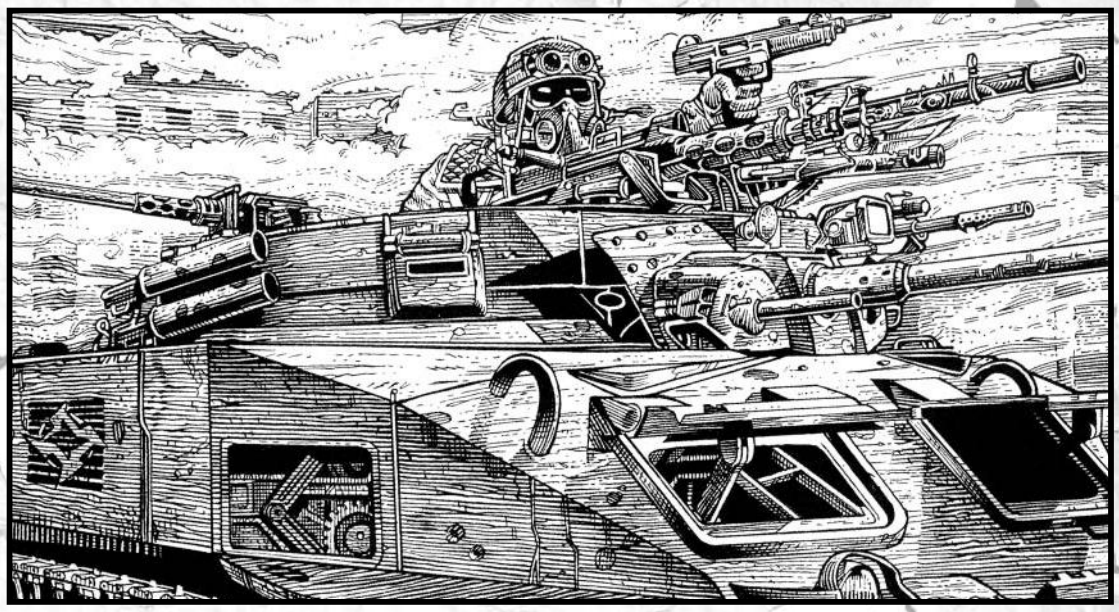
Mortar: With a 80mm shell, mortars can be found in heavy weapon platoons, or mounted in vehicles. Mortars consist of a tube, a tripod, and shells. The tube is aimed by adjusting the tripod. The shell is then dropped into the tube, and lobbed high in the air to drop down on the target. Differences in ranges are largely irrelevant to a mortar shot; treat all ranges as medium. All mortars have a minimum firing range of 100 yards (meters). For safety reasons, the tube cannot be tilted higher. Otherwise, the firer risks being caught in the explosion. Mortars are fired with a Perception and Guns (Mortar) Task. Hand grenade scatter rules apply.

Artillery: Light artillery is a 100-120mm howitzer or cannon; Medium is a 130-150mm cannon; Heavy is a 160-200mm+ cannon. All fire high-explosive ammunition.

Bomb: A Light bomb is 20-50 lbs (10-25 kg). A Medium bomb is 500-1,000 lbs (250-500 kg). A Heavy bomb is 1,500-2,000 lbs (750-1000 kg). All are designed to be dropped from aircraft.

Fuel-Air Explosive Bomb: These explosives first release a highly volatile spray over an extremely large area, then ignite it, creating a massive explosion. The Fuel-Air bomb described here is a small model; larger ones rival the explosive power of tactical nuclear weapons.

Light and Medium SAM and AAM: These are anti-aircraft weapons. Ground-based weapons are Surface-to-Air Missiles (SAMs) and airborne missiles are Air-to-Air Missiles (AAMs). The smaller models (light) are man-portable, like the Stinger missile. Medium missiles are transported by vehicles (missile launchers or aircraft).



Heavy SAM: These are the heaviest anti-aircraft weapons, like the Patriot missile. They are too large to be carried by aircraft, and are limited to ground installations.

Light Anti-Tank Rocket: Man-portable rocket launchers, like the LAW or AT-4.

Medium Anti-Tank Rocket/Shell: Typical examples include the TOW series of anti-armor vehicles, or light artillery or tank cannon (80-100mm) firing High Explosive Anti-Tank (HEAT) rounds.

Heavy Anti-Tank Rocket/Shell: These include such weapons as the Hellfire anti-tank rocket. They are fired from helicopters or heavy mobile launchers. Any damage that penetrates armor is tripled, as the blast of plasma tends to ignite fuel and cause the vehicle to explode.

Setting-Specific Weapons

This section describes weapons specific to the *Armageddon* setting.

Setting-Specific Weapon Table

Weapon	Range	Damage	Cap	EV	Cost
Ruger P-99	3/10/20/60/120	D6 x 5(15)	15	1/1	$450
MP-16	3/15/30/100/200	D8 x 4(16)	16/32	1/1	$600
M-16A4 Rifle	10/50/150/600/1000	D8 x 4(16)	30	10/5	$900
HAR-19	15/75/225/900/1200	D10 x 6(30)	20	12/6	$1500
HAR-19 (40mm)	10/100/200/300/500	Varies	1	4/1	n/a
KR-20 Rifle	10/50/150/600/1000	D8 x 5(20)	30	10/5	$1000
M249 SAW	15/75/225/900/1200	D8 x 4(16)	30/200	15/7	$1200
M260 SAW	15/75/225/900/1200	D10 x 6(30)	20/200	30/15	$2500
AT-4	20/200/400/600/1000	D10 x 10(50)#	1	15/7	$1200
Hawkeye (Anti-Tank)	50/200/500/800/1000	D10 x 12(60)#	1	40/20	n/a
Hawkeye (Anti-Air)	100*/500/1000/2000/2500	D10 x 10(50)#	1	40/20	n/a
Javelin	50*/500/1000/1500/2000	D10 x 20(100)#	1	50/25	n/a
TOW-3	65/500/1000/2500/3000	D10 x 30(150)#	1	160/80	n/a
TOW-4	60*/500/000/2500/3000	D10 x 40(200)#	1	220/110	n/a
M-19 Grenade Launcher	20/100/500/1500/2000	Varies	200	200/100	n/a

Divide target's AV by 5 before applying damage

* Guided Missiles have a minimum range, instead of Point-Blank. This is the minimum distance the missile must travel before its guidance system works.

Specific Weapon Descriptions

Ruger P-99: This handgun replaced the Beretta 9mm pistol as the sidearm of the U.S. Armed Forces in 2007. Many units are still outfitted with the lighter pistol, however (use the stats of the 9mm, with a capacity of 15 shots). The P-99 fires a souped-up 9mm round, for greater range and stopping power. It also has a laser sight that adds a +2 bonus to aimed shots, in addition to the normal aiming bonus.

MP-16: This machine pistol is the standard issue of the Soul Police, a 11mm pistol capable of fully automatic fire. It is not accurate, but ideal for firing into crowds or for house-to-house fighting. The MP-16 uses 16-round (+1 EV) or 32-round (+2 EV) magazines; with the former, it can be carried in a shoulder holster like a regular pistol.

M-16A4: This assault rifle was adopted by the U.S. Army in 2004. It is an enhanced version of the M-16 rifle, a 50-year old weapon design. The major improvements include its computerized sights and its ammunition. When used in conjunction with the U.S. Combat Armor Helmet, the rifle acts as a video camera, displaying what it "sees" on a Heads-Up-Display in the helmet. This allows the user to aim the gun without exposing her head. The computer sight also includes infrared and low-light capability. The M-16A4 fires a steel round that pierces 15mm armor with ease (treat as normal armor-piercing bullets, but divide armor by 3 instead of 2).

HAR-19: The Heavy Assault Rifle was developed in 2013 when studies found the M-16A4 to be inadequate against "parabiological" threats. It was issued in numbers in 2015. The HAR-19 uses a two-stage .406 "ramjet" round, a hollow bullet filled with jet fuel. A low-power charge fires the round. While it is halfway out of the barrel, the air pushed into the hollow "mouth" of the round ignites the jet fuel and accelerates it to supersonic speeds. The weapon has a heavier recoil than the M-16A4, but the result is a bullet with the power and penetration of a .50 caliber machine gun round. The HAR-19 can be outfitted with Computer Sights (see M-16A4); add one to the EV of the weapon.

The weapon's caliber and lethality make an HAR-19 hit almost invariably fatal to normal human; divide the Armor or Barrier Value of targets by two, but damage after penetration is still doubled as normal for bullets.

One drawback of the HAR-19 (and the M260) is the ramjets leave a contrail as they fly forward. This makes it easy to spot the shooter. The contrails can be spotted with a Simple Perception Test or a Perception and Notice Task, with a +1 bonus when there is little or no wind. In a normal battlefield, smoke from explosions and fires makes the contrails effectively invisible, however.

The HAR-19 also has a 40mm grenade launcher.

KR-20 Rifle: The standard issue firearm of the Army of Revelations fires a 7.62mm cartridge.

Squad Weaponry

The heavier weapons detailed all originate from the U.S. armed forces. Comparable weapons from other nations and the Army of Revelations exist. Until the specifics of those weapons are detailed in later supplements, Chroniclers should use the game stats for the American weapons should it be necessary.

M249 SAW: The Squad Automatic Weapon is a light machine gun issued to U.S. infantry units, typically one per squad. It fires the same 5.56 round of the M-16A4 Rifle.

M260 MSAW: The M260 is a recently issued replacement for the M249. It fires the same .406 ramjet rounds as the HAR-19. Its heavy weight makes it somewhat unpopular as an infantry weapon, however.

AT-4: This disposable missile launcher replaced the LAW rocket, which had proved ineffective against most armored vehicles. AT-4s are issued to U.S. infantry squads as their last-ditch defense against tanks (often a forlorn hope), or to use against bunkers and fortifications.

Hawkeye SMAW-II: The Shoulder-launched Multi-purpose Assault Weapon is an anti-tank and anti-aircraft missile launcher. It was introduced to U.S. forces in 2012, as a cheaper back-up to the more accurate (but very expensive) Javelin missile. While not powerful enough to knock out most tanks, the Hawkeye will destroy lighter vehicles and can damage tanks with hits on the rear or sides of their armor.

The weapon also fires a heat-seeking, anti-aircraft missile (anti-tank weapons are color-coded red, anti-aircraft, blue).

The anti-tank round is laser-guided. The attacker has to "paint" the target with a laser designator until the rocket hits. The missile travels 150 yards (meters) per second—to hit a target beyond 600 yards (meters) requires the shooter remain still and looking at the target for an entire game Turn (five seconds). Ducking for cover causes the missile to veer off course. For this reason, most of the time soldiers only fire at targets within 300 yards (meters) or less. Otherwise, they risk the enemy spotting the flash and firing back, trying to kill or scare away the shooter before the missile hits.

The anti-aircraft missile is a cheaper version of the Stinger missile. It uses a heat seeker to strike the target. The seeker has an "attack skill" of six plus the Success Levels (if any) of the aiming Task from the shooter. Add this to a D10 roll to determine if the missile hits. Countermeasures (decoys and chaff) give the target aircraft a "Dodge" Task to see if it avoids the missile.

Javelin: This recent addition to the U.S. armed forces is a "fire and forget" missile—once the aiming system "locks on" the target, it homes in without the operator's involvement. That means the shooter can fire and duck for cover with a clear conscience. The Javelin has the same "attack skill" as the Hawkeye.

TOW-3: This 1990s model was still in use when the war started, and the U.S. Army has been forced to rely it due to a shortage of more advanced anti-tank weapons. The TOW-3 is wire-guided. The gunner has to keep the target in her sights until the missile hits. TOW-3s travel at 320 yards (meters) per second, so targets beyond 1500 yards (meters) must be targeted for an entire Turn or more, giving the enemy a chance to fire back at the gunner. TOWs are barely man-portable (each missile has a 120/60 EV which adds to the launcher weight).

TOW-4: Introduced in 2013, the TOW-4 is another "fire and forget" missile (see the Javelin for more information). This is a heavy weapons system (each missile has a 140/70 EV which adds to the launcher weight). Portable models are transported on a HUMVEE or other vehicle and deployed by a two to five man team, or mounted on a vehicle.

M-19 Automatic Grenade Launcher: This is a U.S. Army machine gun firing 40mm grenades instead of regular bullets. The M-19 can saturate an area with anti-personnel explosives, or with shaped-charge, armor-piercing rounds to destroy lightly armored vehicles. The typical round is the HEDP (High Explosive, Dual Purpose) grenade, which acts as a shaped-charge explosive against hard targets, but also fires deadly fragments.

Chapter Five

Armor

The protection afforded by armor is represented by its Armor Value. Armor Values are expressed much like damage effects—a variable number (typically a die roll), a Multiplier, and a flat value added to the roll. This represents the fact that no suit of armor offers the same protection over every inch of the body. When a character is struck, roll the base die times the Multiplier, add the flat value, and subtract the result from the number of damage points inflicted. If the armor result is greater than or equal to the damage result, the character suffers no injury.

Armor Encumbrance

Wearing armor slows a character and makes some things (like being quiet, or reacting quickly) difficult. These problems are measured by the armor's Encumbrance Value (see p. 151).

Armor Types and Layering

Characters may wear different types of armor over different parts of the body (a helmet and a light Kevlar suit, for example). If the optional Targeting Specific Body Parts rules (see p. 133) are used, simply use the armor value that applies to that specific area.

Some characters may want to wear two types of armor on top of one another. Modern armor is not meant to be layered; wearing a Kevlar vest over another Kevlar vest is extremely uncomfortable, and only possible when the lightest form of Kevlar is used. It is also not as effective as it would appear at first glance. In general, when layering armor, add the average value of the weakest armor, halved, to the Armor Value of the heavier layer. Note the full amount of all Encumbrance Values are applied. The medieval armor listed in the table assumes a cloth padding: heavy padding adds +1 to the Armor Value, and leather adds +2 to the armor and one encumbrance level.

Body Armor Table

Armor Type	Armor Value	EV	Cost
Cloth Armor*^	D4 - 1(1)	1/1	n/a
Leather Jacket^	D4(2)	2/1	$400
Leather Armor*^	D6 + 1(4)	10/5@	n/a
Chain Mail*^	D6 + 6(9)	40/20#	n/a
Plate and Mail*^	(D8 x 2) + 8(16)	50/25%	n/a
Plate Armor*^	(D8 x 3) + 8(20)	70/35&	n/a
Leather Helmet*^	D6 + 1(4)	2/1	n/a
Metal Helmet	(D8 x 2) + 8(16)	8/4	n/a
Class I Armor	D6 + 7(10)	4/2	$600
Class IIa Armor	(D6 x 2) + 9(15)	4/2	$850
Class II Armor	(D6 x 2) + 14(20)	8/4@	$950
Class IIIa Armor~	(D8 x 2) + 17(25)	10/5#	n/a
Class III Armor~	(D8 x 3) + 18(30)	12/6#	n/a
Class IV Armor~	(D8 x 5) + 20(40)	16/8#	n/a
Riot Shield~	(D8 x 2) + 17(25)	8/4	n/a
Helmet~	Use Type I-IV Armor	2/1	$200
U.S. Combat Armor~	(D10 x 5) + 20(45)	20/10%	n/a
AoR Battle Dress~	(D8 x 4) +20(36)	14/7%	n/a

* This anachronistic armor is difficult to find.

^ Archaic and softer armors are not designed to stop high-velocity bullets. For such armor, divide the AV by 2 when using normal bullets, and by 3 when using armor-piercing bullets. Do not double the AV when struck by hollow-point bullets.

@ Regardless of EV, this item lightly encumbers a character when worn.

Regardless of EV, this item moderately encumbers a character when worn.

% Regardless of EV, this item heavily encumbers a character when worn.

& Regardless of EV, this item extra heavily encumbers a character when worn.

~ Civilians have a hard time getting anything heavier than a Class IIIa vest (anything beyond that level is hard to conceal, and the authorities will certainly investigate people purchasing heavy combat armor).

Armor Descriptions

Cloth Armor: Padded or quilted layers of cloth, designed to slow down or stop attacks.

Leather Jacket: A heavy motorcycle jacket.

Leather Armor: Boiled and hardened leather. Heavy combat boots count as Leather Armor, protecting the wearer's feet only.

Chain Mail: Flexible metal "cloth" made of interlocked rings.

Plate and Mail: Chain mail with metal plates protecting the chest and other critical areas.

Plate Armor: A suit of interlocked metal plates.

Class I-IV Armor: The "Class" of the armor refers not to its shape, but the type and thickness of the Kevlar weave. Modern body armor typically consists of a sleeveless vest. To the layman, it is hard to tell the Classes apart, except that each tends to be thicker than the previous one. Class III and IV armor has metal or composite plates inserted into the vest.

Class I, IIa and II armor can be found on the civilian market, commonly worn by bodyguards, all-night store clerks, and plainclothes policemen. Higher classes are used by police and military units, and are hard to acquire legally.

US Combat Armor: This advanced armor system consists of a full jumpsuit with a chest "clamshell" suit of composite plates, thigh, knee and arm plates, and a full helmet, using the best materials available. The suit has airtight seals and can be fitted with a gas mask. This combat armor makes soldiers nearly impervious to ordinary small arms fire and shell fragments, but it reduces mobility and increases exhaustion, especially in hot climates. Troops often wear only the helmet and clamshell (armor protects only the head and chest; reduce EV to 12/6#), or just the flexible jumpsuit (acts like Class II armor). Combat armor is commonly issued only to assault or front line units. There are insufficient to outfit everybody, so rear-echelon units do without.

AoR Battle Dress: The combat armor issued to assault units in the Army of Revelations, similar in design to the U.S. Combat Armor. This suit can also be made airtight and outfitted with gas masks. Regular units are often not outfitted with any armor or environmental protection at all.

Vehicles

The following examples present only a small number of the potential combat vehicles active in the war.

M1A3 Abrams Tank

The first M1 Tanks were introduced in the 1980s as a replacement for the M60 tank. They marked a new generation of Main Battle Tanks, surprising the armchair generals who had predicted that armored combat vehicles had been made obsolete by anti-tank missiles. These tanks used new composite armors that could not be pierced by most shaped-charge explosives.

The M1A3 was developed in the early 21st century. It added an automatic loader, not because it was necessarily superior to a human loader, but because the shrinking size of the army made it important to reduce the number of crew members per tank. It has more armor protection than earlier versions of the tank. The war has demonstrated that the M1 tank is no longer invulnerable; the Holy Fist is a superior fighting vehicle. A new tank model is due to start service in 2017.

Stats

Weight: 120,000 lbs (60 tons)
Height: 9 ft (3 m)
Width: 12 ft (4 m)
Length: 30 ft (10 m), including gun
Speed: 45 mph (72 kph)
Range: 300 miles (450 km)
Acceleration: 15 mph (22.5 kph)
Toughness: 6
Handling: 3
Crew: 3 (gunner, commander and driver), gun uses autoloader

Damage Capacity

Total: 750 **Turret:** 400
Main Body: 600 **Tracks:** 100 each

Armor Value

Front: 350* **Rear:** 120*
Sides (Turret): 300*
Sides (Main Body): 200*
Top: 120* **Tracks:** 50 each

* This armor is made of special composite materials. Do not divide AV against armor-piercing munitions.

Armament

120mm Smoothbore Cannon

Accuracy: 3 (5 w/laser range finder)

Shots: 40

Rate of Fire: One per two Turns

Ammunition: Typical mix is 20 armor-piercing (depleted uranium, or regular), 15 HEAT, five anti-aircraft

Depleted Uranium (HVAPFSDS) Round

Damage: D10 x 50(250); Armor-piercing Factor: 3 (kinetic); Damage Modifier: x 2; Range: 300/1000/2500/3500/5000

Armor-piercing (HVAPFSDS) Round

Damage: D10 x 50(250); Armor-piercing Factor: 3 (kinetic); Damage Modifier: None; Range: 300/1000/2500/3500/5000

HEAT Round

Damage: D10 x 40(200); Armor-piercing Factor: 5 (shaped-charge); Damage Modifier: x 3; Range: 300/1500/3000/4500/6000

Anti-Aircraft Round

Damage: D10 x 20(100); Armor-piercing Factor: None; Damage Modifier: x 2; Range: 300/1500/3000/4500/6000

.50 Caliber Machine Gun (Commander's Cupola, Turret)

Accuracy: 3

Shots: 2000

Rate of Fire: 3-round or 5-round bursts, or full automatic

Armor-piercing Round

Damage: D10 x 6(30); Armor-piercing Factor: 2 (kinetic); Damage Modifier: None; Range: 15/200/400/2000/6000

7.62mm Coaxial Machine Gun

Accuracy: 3

Shots: 2000

Rate of Fire: 3-round or 5-round bursts, or full automatic

Armor-piercing Round

Damage: D8 x 5(20); Armor-piercing Factor: 2 (kinetic); Damage Modifier: None; Range: 10/150/300/1000/4000

M2 Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle

This mechanized infantry vehicle is designed to carry, and provide fire support for, a squad of six soldiers. Although it looks like a tank, the Bradley is not meant to fight tanks one-on-one. It lacks the armor to survive a direct hit from a main gun, for one. The Bradley has been in service for over thirty years at the start of the war. Besides a few improvements (mainly in the anti-tank rocket launchers it uses), it is the same vehicle that fought in Desert Storm.

Stats

Weight: 70,000 lbs (35 tons)
Height: 9.8 ft (3 m)
Width: 10 ft (3 m)
Length: 21 ft (7 m)
Speed: 45 mph (72 kph)
Range: 300 miles (450 km)
Acceleration: 15 mph (22.5 kph)
Toughness: 3
Handling: 4
Crew: 3 (gunner, commander, driver), plus 3 troopers

Damage Capacity

Total: 450 **Turret:** 150
Main Body: 350 **Tracks:** 80 each

Armor Value

Front: 120 + 250** **Rear:** 75
Sides: 80 + 250**
Top: 75 **Tracks:** 40 each

** This Reactive Armor subtracts from the damage of shaped-charge rounds before applying any other modifiers (do not divide the Reactive AV due to the shaped-charge). Kinetic rounds are not affected by this armor. The armor works only once per side.

Armament

25mm autocannon (Turret)

Accuracy: 4 Shots: 300

Rate of Fire: 3-round or 5-round bursts, or full automatic

Armor-piercing Round

Damage: D10 x 10(50); Armor-piercing Factor: 2 (kinetic); Damage Modifier: None; Range: 100/200/800/1500/2000

TOW-4

Accuracy: Fire and Forget

Attack 7 (see p. 159)

HEAT Round

Damage: D10 x 40(200); Armor-piercing Factor: 5 (shaped-charge); Damage Modifier: x 3; Range: 60(minimum)/500/1000/2500/3000

XM8 Armored Gun System

This light tank (designated by the Army as an Armored Gun System, or AGS) replaced the obsolete and inadequate Sheridan tank in 2001. The XM8 was designed for short-lived conflicts in far-off Third World countries, where ease and quickness of transport counted for more than armor and firepower. The XM8 could be airlifted and even air-dropped. Units outfitted with this tank could reach hot spots around the globe in a matter of days or even hours.

By 2010, the US Army had over 2000 of these vehicles in its inventory, with many more on order, even as demand for the M1-series of tanks dwindled to almost nothing. Many of the armored units sent to Europe after the outbreak of the war were outfitted with the XM8, which was found to be woefully inadequate against the Holy Fist and other front-line main battle tanks. This tank did much better in the war along the Mexican frontier, where most enemy units were outfitted with armored cars or T72s. In general, however, the XM8 has a reputation akin to that of the Sherman tank of WWII—a rolling coffin, particularly when the tides of battle put the vehicle up against a real tank.

Stats

Weight: 40,000 lbs (20 tons)
Height: 8.5 ft (2.5 m)
Width: 8.8 ft (2.7 m)
Length: 30 ft (10 m), including gun
Speed: 45 mph (72 kph)
Range: 300 miles (450 km)
Acceleration: 15 mph (22.5 kph)
Toughness: 5
Handling: 4
Crew: 3 (gunner, commander and driver), gun uses autoloader

Damage Capacity

Total: 500 **Turret:** 250
Main Body: 350 **Tracks:** 100 each

Armor Value

Front: 150 (250)*@ **Rear:** 100*
Sides (Turret): 150 (250)*@
Sides (Main Body): 150 (200)*@
Top: 100 **Tracks:** 50 each

* This armor is made of special composite materials. Do not divide AV against armor-piercing munitions.

@ parentheses include Heavy Armor Package

Armament

105mm Smoothbore Cannon
Accuracy: 3 (5 w/laser range finder)
Shots: 21
Rate of Fire: 1 per 2 Turns
Ammunition: Typical mix is 11 armor-piercing, 10 HEAT

Depleted Uranium (HVAPFSDS) Round
Damage: D10 x 50(250); Armor-piercing Factor: 3 (Kinetic); Damage Modifier: x 2; Range: 300/1000/2500/3500/4000

Armor-piercing Round
Damage: D10 x 40(200); Armor-piercing Factor: 3 (Kinetic); Damage Modifier: None; Range: 300/1000/2000/3000/4000

HEAT Round
Damage: D10 x 25(125); Armor-piercing Factor: 5 (Shaped-Charge); Damage Modifier: x 3; Range: 300/1500/3000/4000/5000

.50 Caliber Machine Gun (Commander's Cupola, Turret)
Accuracy: 3
Shots: 1000
Rate of Fire: 3-round or 5-round bursts, or full automatic

Armor-piercing Round
Damage: D10 x 6(30); Armor-piercing Factor: 2 (kinetic); Damage Modifier: None; Range: 15/200/400/2000/6000

7.62mm Coaxial Machine Gun
Accuracy: 3
Shots: 1000
Rate of Fire: 3-round or 5-round bursts, or full automatic

Armor-piercing Round
Damage: D8 x 5(20); Armor-piercing Factor: 2 (kinetic); Damage Modifier: None; Range: 10/150/300/1000/4000

HMMWV (Hum-Vee)

The "Hummer" replaced the venerable Jeep towards the end of the 20th century, and it remains the workhorse of the army, used as a scout, reconnaissance, troop carrier, and command vehicle. As the war depletes the vehicle reserves of the Army, Hummers are being used in more combat missions than before.

Stats
Weight: 6000 lbs (3 tons)
Height: 6 ft (2 m)
Width: 7 ft (2.1m)
Length: 10 ft (3.3m)
Speed: 50 (50 mph/80 kph)
Range: 320 miles (480 km)
Acceleration: 15 mph (22.5 kph)
Toughness: 5
Handling: 3
Crew: 2 (commander/gunner, driver), plus 6 passengers

Damage Capacity
Total: 110

Armor Value
Normal: 4
W/ Combat Armor Package: 60

Armament
Varies. Typical weapon modules include M60 machine gun, M2 .50 caliber, M260 SAW, M19 Automatic Grenade Launcher, and TOW-3 or TOW-4 launchers.

Holy Fist Tank

This main battle tank was secretly developed and produced by the Church of Revelations, under the guise of a joint German-Polish weapon research project to build a substitute for the Leopard II tanks. The prototype was meant to be the first of the next generations of tanks, with vastly improved armor and weapon systems. Unfortunately, the research was used by the Believers to produce their tanks.

The Holy Fist has a very unusual shape, with two small, unmanned turrets stacked one on top of the other and pushed towards the rear of the tank, and a radically sloped front. It only has two crewmen, and even then it is rather cramped compared to other tanks. It is also heavier and somewhat slower than the previous generations of tanks. It is, however, almost unstoppable. Few weapon systems have a chance of scoring a one-hit kill on the machine, and few can survive one shot from its 140mm hypervelocity gun.

The only good news about the Holy Fist is that the Believers have not been able to produce it in large quantities. The AoR had about 1,000 of the tanks at the start of the war. After replacing losses, the current inventory may be less than 3,000, a fourth of them are in service in America.

Stats
Weight: 140,000 lbs (70 tons)
Height: 9 ft (2.7 m)
Width: 10 ft (3 m)
Length: 36 ft (12 m), including gun
Speed: 35 mph (63 kph)
Range: 250 miles (375 km)
Acceleration: 10 mph (15 kph)
Toughness: 6
Handling: 4
Crew: 2 (commander/gunner, driver)

Damage Capacity
Total: 800
Turret: 250 **Main Body:** 700
Secondary Turret: 100 **Tracks:** 150 each

Armor Value
Front: 420* **Sides:** 200*
Rear: 150* **Top:** 300*
Tracks: 50 each
* This armor is made of special composite materials. Do not divide AV against armor-piercing munitions.

Armament
140mm Smoothbore Cannon
Accuracy: 3 (5 w/laser range finder)
Shots: 50; Rate of Fire: 1 per Turn
Hypervelocity Depleted Uranium Round
Damage: D10 x 70(350); Armor-piercing Factor: 3 (kinetic); Damage Modifier: x 2; Range: 300/1000/2500/3500/5000
Hypervelocity Standard Round
Damage: D10 x 70(350); Armor-piercing Factor: 2 (kinetic); Damage Modifier: None; Range: 300/1000/2500/3500/5000
High-Explosive Round
Damage: D10 x 60(300) (Ground Zero), D10 x 10(75) (General Effect), D10 x 5(25) (Maximum Range); Armor-piercing Factor: None; Damage Modifier: None; Range: 300/1500/3500/4500/6000

20mm Autocannon (360-degree mini-turret)
Accuracy: 4; Shots: 300
Rate of Fire: 3-round or 5-round bursts, or full automatic
Armor-piercing Round
Damage: D10 x 10(50); Armor-piercing Factor: 2 (kinetic); Damage Modifier: x 2; Range: 100/200/800/1500/2000

Coaxial Automatic Grenade Launcher
Accuracy: 4
Shots: 100
Rate of Fire: 1 10-round burst per Turn, or 2 5-round bursts per Turn
40mm Grenades
Damage: See Explosive Damage Table (p. [?]). Armor-piercing Factor: Varies. Damage Modifier: None; Range: 20/100/500/1500/2000

Bow-Mounted Automatic Grenade Launcher
Accuracy: 4
Shots: 100
Rate of Fire: 1 10-round burst per Turn, or 2 5-round bursts per Turn
40mm Grenades
Damage: See Explosive Damage Table (p. 159). Armor-piercing Factor: Varies. Damage Modifier: None; Range: 20/100/500/1500/2000

7.62mm Coaxial Machine Gun
Accuracy: 3
Shots: 2000
Rate of Fire: 3-round or 5-round bursts, or full automatic
Armor-piercing Round
Damage: D8 x 5(20); Armor-piercing Factor: 2 (kinetic); Damage Modifier: None; Range: 10/150/300/1000/4000

Holy Vessel Infantry Fighting Vehicle

This troop carrier is roughly equivalent to the Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle (see p. 162), except that it is somewhat larger, able to carry an eight-man squad, and more lightly armored.

Stats

Weight: 60,000 lbs (30 tons)
Height: 10 ft (3 m)
Width: 10 ft (3 m)
Length: 30 ft (10 m)
Speed: 45 mph (72 kph)
Range: 300 miles (450 km)
Acceleration: 15 mph (22.5 kph)
Toughness: 3
Handling: 4
Crew: 3 (gunner, commander, driver), plus 8 troopers

Damage Capacity

Total: 425 **Turret:** 120
Main Body: 300 **Tracks:** 80 each

Armor Value

Front: 100 + 200** **Sides:** 75 + 200**
Rear: 75 **Top:** 75
Tracks: 40 each
** This Reactive Armor subtracts from the damage of shaped-charge rounds before applying any other modifiers (do not divide the Reactive AV due to the shaped-charge). Kinetic rounds are not affected by this armor. The armor works only once per side.

Armament

30mm autocannon (Turret)
Accuracy: 4
Shots: 300
Rate of Fire: 5-round bursts, or full automatic
Armor-piercing Round
Damage: D8 x 15(60); Armor-piercing Factor: 2 (kinetic); Damage Modifier: None; Range: 100/200/800/1500/2000

TOW-4
Accuracy: Fire and Forget
Attack 7 (see p. 159)
HEAT Round
Damage: D10 x 40(200); Armor-piercing Factor: 5 (shaped-charge); Damage Modifier: x 3; Range: 60(minimum)/500/1000/2500/3000

T-72 Tank

The Soviet T-72 is a simpler, less efficient version of the T-64 tank, produced mainly for export to other countries. This 30-year old model's only virtue is its relative low cost and ease of maintenance and use. Like many Russian designs, it is intended for half-literate, poorly trained recruits. The Church of Revelations purchased a number of T-72 tank factories during the 1990s, mainly in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Rumania. Some of the factories were retooled to produce Holy Fist tanks, but most of them quietly started building tank fleets. Another factory was built in Argentina in 2002. Thousands of these tanks are now part of the Army of Revelations, either manufactured by the Church or seized from the arsenals of conquered nations.

Stats
Weight: 90,000 lbs (45 tons)
Height: 7.5 ft (2.2 m)
Width: 12 ft (4 m)
Length: 31 ft (10 m), including gun
Speed: 37 mph (60 kph)
Range: 270 miles (405 km)
Acceleration: 10 mph (15 kph)
Toughness: 3
Handling: 2
Crew: 3 (gunner, commander, and driver), gun uses autoloader

Damage Capacity
Total: 500
Turret: 250
Main Body: 350
Tracks: 100 each

Armor Value
Front: 220 + 200**
Sides: 120 + 200**
Rear: 70
Top: 70
Tracks: 25 each
** This Reactive Armor subtracts from the damage of shaped-charge rounds before applying any other modifiers (do not divide the Reactive AV due to the shaped-charge). Kinetic rounds are not affected by this armor. The armor works only once per side.

Armament
125mm Smoothbore Cannon
Accuracy 2 (4 w/laser range finder)
Shots: 50
Rate of Fire: 1 shot per 2 Turns
Ammunition: Typical mix is 20 Armor-piercing, 20 HEAT, 10 Missiles
Armor-piercing Round
Damage: D10 x 40(200); Armor-piercing Factor: 2 (kinetic); Damage Modifier: None; Range: 300/1000/2500/3500/4500
HEAT Round
Damage: D10 x 30(150); Armor-piercing Factor: 5 (shaped-charge); Damage Modifier: x 2; Range: 300/1500/2000/3500/4500
Missile
Damage: D10 x 40(200); Armor-piercing Factor: 5 (shaped-charge); Damage Modifier: x 2; Range: 100/1000/2000/3500/4500

12.7mm Machine Gun (Turret)
Accuracy: 3
Shots: 2000
Rate of Fire: 3-round or 5-round bursts, or full automatic
Armor-piercing Round
Damage: D10 x 6(30); Armor-piercing Factor: 2 (Kinetic); Damage Modifier: None; Range: 20/100/450/1500/2000

7.62mm Coaxial Machine Gun
Accuracy: 3
Shots: 2000
Rate of Fire: 3-round or 5-round bursts, or full automatic
Armor-piercing Round
Damage: D8 x 5(20); Armor-piercing Factor: 2 (kinetic); Damage Modifier: None; Range: 10/150/300/1000/4000

F-22 Raptor Advanced Tactical Fighter

Designed in the 1980s and 1990s as the replacement for the F-15 fighter, the first prototypes of the F-22 Raptor flew in the last years of the 20th Century. With a price tag of $100 million apiece, the fighter aircraft was designed to be stealthier, more maneuverable, and deadlier than any other aircraft in the world. The end of the Cold War and budget problems hindered production of the aircraft. By 2005, less than a hundred F-22s were in service. The war changed things and by 2010, over six hundred F-22s were in service, despite terrible war losses. Even so, the number of fighters is pitifully low, and most of the U.S. Air Force makes do with outdated F-15s or F-18s.

Stats
Weight: 30,000 lbs (15 tons)
Height: 16 ft (5 m)
Width: 45 ft (15 m)
Length: 60 ft (20 m)
Speed: Mach 1.5 (1140 mph/1824 kph) at maximum thrust
Range: 700 miles (1100 km)
Acceleration: 100 mph (150 kph)
Toughness: 4
Handling: 7
Crew: 1 (pilot)

Damage Capacity
Total: 175

Armor Value
All: 20

Armament
Four internal weapon bays can carry a number of different weapon packages. Typical ground-attack package is 2 Medium Bombs, 2 Light AAMs, 2 Medium AAMs.

Medium Bomb
Accuracy: 4; Shots: 2
Rate of Fire: 1 or 2; Damage: D10 x 40 (200)

Light AAM
Accuracy: 7; Shots: 2
Rate of Fire: 1
Missile
Damage: D10 x 10 (50); Armor-piercing Factor: 2 (kinetic); Damage Modifier: x 2; Range: 100*/500/1000/2000/2500

Medium AAM
Accuracy: 7; Shots: 2
Rate of Fire: 1
Missile
Damage: D10 x 20 (100); Armor-piercing Factor: 2 (kinetic); Damage Modifier: x 2; Range: 60 miles (90 km)

20mm autocannon
Accuracy: 4; Shots: 480; Rate of Fire: 20-shot bursts
Armor-piercing Round
Damage: D10 x 10(50); Armor-piercing Factor: 2 (kinetic); Damage Modifier: None; Range: 100/200/800/1500/2000

Mirage 2000 Fighter

In 2007, the Argentine Air Force placed a large order of French Mirage 2000 aircraft to replace their obsolescent air force. Then Argentina was taken over by the Church of Revelations and the aircraft were used in the war in South America and Mexico. After the Church conquered France, it kept the factories going to supplement the Russian Migs that comprised much of the AoR's air force. As a result, the Mirage is the most likely aircraft encountered over the skies of Mexico. Still, the AoR is working on a new aircraft designed to outperform the F-22.

Stats
Weight: 15,000 lbs (7.5 tons)
Height: 16 ft (5 m)
Width: 30 ft (10 m)
Length: 50 ft (16 m)
Speed: Mach 1.2 (912 mph/1460 kph) at maximum thrust
Range: 1,000 miles (1,500 km)
Acceleration: 100 mph (150 kph)
Toughness: 3
Handling: 4
Crew: 1 (pilot)

Damage Capacity
Total: 100

Armor Value
All: 10

Armament
Four internal weapon bays can carry a number of different weapon packages. Typical ground-attack package consists of 2 Medium Bombs, 2 Light AAMs, 2 Medium AAMs.

Medium Bomb
Accuracy: 4; Shots: 2; Rate of Fire: 1 or 2
Damage: D10 x 40 (200)

Light AAM
Accuracy: 7; Shots: 2; Rate of Fire: 1
Missile
Damage: D10 x 10 (50); Armor-piercing Factor: 2 (kinetic); Damage Modifier: x 2; Range: 100*/500/1000/2000/2500

Medium AAM
Accuracy: 7; Shots: 2; Rate of Fire: 1
Missile
Damage: D10 x 20 (100); Armor-piercing Factor: 2 (kinetic); Damage Modifier: x 2; Range: 60 miles (90 km)

30mm autocannon
Accuracy: 4; Shots: 400; Rate of Fire: 20-shot bursts
Armor-piercing Round
Damage: D8 x 15(60); Armor-piercing Factor: 2 (kinetic); Damage Modifier: None; Range: 100/200/1000/2000/2500

CHAPTER SIX: ASSOCIATIONS

EMPTY
ZONE
TRAVIS
INGRAM

Chapter Six

The ceiling fan did little to dispel either the noontime heat or the cloud of opium smoke that gave the room a misty, dreamlike quality. Neither the heat nor the drugs bothered Mercer very much. He'd been in far hotter places.

Ho—Mercer's second in command—entered the room. The twin bandoleers of AK-47 bullets crossed over his chest jingled rhythmically with each step. His forehead, below the red bandanna he wore as a badge of office, was stained with sweat. Mercer knew Ho well enough to realize the sweat had little to do with the heat. Ho was afraid of something. Ho's soul had been blackened beyond redemption by a series of brutal crimes that made even Mercer quail. The bandit's only qualities were loyalty and courage. To see him covered in cold sweat concerned Mercer more than he cared to admit.

"Churchies." The word explained it all.

"Show them to the Hall of Jade," Mercer said calmly, as if he had been expecting them. Ho nodded, reassured by Mercer's coolness, and left.

Mercer left the bed and took out a silk robe from the gold-inlaid closet. The girl he'd been with muttered something and tried to reach for him. He pushed her back gently. Pathetic and human though she was, Mercer had actually grown somewhat fond of her. He would never admit it, of course; his Superiors might frown on it, and a frown from them was worth a hundred years of torment.

On his way to the Jade room, Mercer took the time to observe the newcomers through the two-way mirror he'd had installed for just this purpose. Two of them were Vietnamese. The third man was Caucasian, German perhaps, wearing civilian clothing. All bore the Mark, the black spiked circle, starting on their temple and running in spidery fashion down their necks. The three were examining the exquisite jade and ivory carvings of the room with some appreciation, and even a touch of envy. The Revelationists placed no stock in chastity or poverty, and their leaders were rewarded quite well. The way to a man's soul, Mercer had discovered, was often through his pocketbook.

Mercer let them wait for a few minutes before entering the room. The two Vietnamese gave no signs of discomfort, but the German—it had to be a German, Mercer decided—was frowning. "Gentlemen," Mercer said in English. "And lady. Welcome to my humble abode."

Neither of the three offered an introduction. Instead, the Viet woman spoke. "We are here to purchase your business establishment and attached network. You will accept our offer and leave Thailand within twenty-four hours. If you refuse us, you will be killed. If you do not leave Thailand within the day, you will be killed." She grinned. "If you try to bargain for more, you will be killed."

The German spoke next. "Thirty million dollars, payable in gold or the currency of your choice. We will need the names of your connections and a thorough description of your operations, with special attention paid to the arms-trafficking operation you have. And all contacts with the Americans operating here."

Mercer smiled. The offer was nothing short of armed robbery—his operation grossed close to thirty million dollars a day—but not unexpected. They knew he was funneling arms to rebel groups throughout Southeast Asia. The CIA and the New Viet-Cong were among his clients, and he knew enough to severely endanger their operations in the region. The drugs and the girls Mercer also dealt in were of no particular interest to the Churchies, of course, except as a little sideline that could be used for their own purposes. Mercer had little doubt as to their ability to carry out the threat. He could sense the gathering of Taint, the anti-Essence, in the quiet Vietnamese man. Hovering in the space within worlds were a dozen hideous, gibbering creatures. If the man spoke a word or made a gesture, they would appear in this room and shred every non-Believer in the house within minutes. It would have been a perfect plan—if Mercer had been human.

"I have no choice, then," Mercer said, and the Revelationists relaxed minutely. That's when he struck.

As he lunged forward, Mercer changed. His skin became leathery, darkened to an angry crimson tone. His hair became long and jet-black. The beard disappeared, uncovering the face of a wrathful Adonis with fangs and glowing black eyes, his head surrounded by a halo of flames. His hands grew inch-long talons as they thrust towards the Vietnamese man's mid-section. The terrible blow transfixed the Believer through the diaphragm, paralyzing him. No word was spoken, no gesture made, and Mercer sensed the troop of Shaitan squealing in frustrated anger. They were trapped between dimensions, unable to join the fight.

Even before blood could flow from the mortal wound, Mercer flung the Vietnamese against the woman, knocking them both to the floor. He kicked out with a clawed foot, and the woman's head flew across the room.

A piercing shriek behind him made him turn around.

The German glowed with the purplish-black energies of the Taint. Mercer's girl had jumped on the Believer's back, and was making a good attempt at clawing his eyes out, while shrieking a stream of obscenities. Before Mercer could react, the German unleashed the Taint blast on her.

It was mercifully quick. The girl's youthful body collapsed into a decaying mass. Her last scream—no, it might have been quick, but it was not merciful. Not even in the darkest Pit of Abaddon had Mercer heard such a scream.

Mercer unleashed a blast of Hellfire. From the hidden firing port on the wall, Ho opened up with his AK-47. The combined impact of bullets and dark Essence did the trick. The German crashed against a stand, knocking over a priceless Ming artifact; he bled and died, looking in death much like any other human.

For long moments, Mercer stood over the grisly remains of his lover. Ho entered the room. The bandit was not shocked about Mercer's shape; he learned long ago that the "foreign devil" he served was a true devil in every sense of the word. "She jumped on him before I could shoot," he explained, while he coolly awaited his punishment. Ho worried that, because he had not opened fire regardless of the girl's presence, he might have endangered the Master.

Mercer shook his head. "You did well." He changed back to his Profane form. "Stupid girl," he said calmly.

"We need to change headquarters," Mercer said. The Churchies are not going to be happy with us, and we'll need to be more careful. Find out who revealed our location, and bring him to me. I'll have to make an example of him."

Ho left, and, after a second, so did Mercer, sparing one last glance at the dead girl.

Funny, he'd never thought there could be more pain after Abaddon.

Chapter Six

Introduction

The war against Leviathan involves everyone on the world—and its periphery. The ultimate choice is simple: oppose the Mad God, or become one of its creatures. Neutrality only serves to strengthen the enemy. This is doubly true for those who belong to the occult underground—their power and knowledge make them too dangerous to leave alone.

This does not mean those who oppose the Church of Revelations have joined forces in a single monolithic organization, however. For one, the Gifted and supernatural denizens of the world are a fractious lot, nursing enmities and grievances against each other, often for centuries or even millennia. A single group could not accommodate all those conflicting interests. Infighting over who would lead might take years to come to a resolution, years that the planet cannot afford to waste. As a result, the forces arrayed against Leviathan are split into numerous factions, each with its own leadership, organization, and goals. Some of them work together for the greatest good, while others have their own agenda in addition to (and in some cases ahead of) the conduct of the war.

Six of these Associations, the largest and most influential in the conflict, are described in this chapter. This section amplifies the summaries provided in **Chapter Three: Roles**. It includes the organization, history, and goals of the Association, and the role it plays in the battle against Leviathan and its minions.

Alliance

The Alliance is the largest Association in *Armageddon*, a group formed with the express purpose of battling the Church of Revelations. It has gathered humans and supernaturals, angels and demons, Immortals and demigods, fierce rivals and former enemies, to fight side by side for the first time. Although this organization is often wracked by internal struggles and petty conspiracies, it provides fresh hope for the future of the world of *Armageddon*.

History

The Alliance came into being sometime after 2008. The first major mover and shaker in the organization was the former Archangel Michele, who about a decade before had come to Earth as a result of the machinations of the Archangel Gabriel. Michele contacted various secret societies worldwide and asked for their support in creating a hybrid organization, a network that would share information and resources against a common foe. While some groups refused, others agreed, cautiously at first, then more openly as the dangers posed by the Church became more apparent to all.

The Norse god Odin also officially joined the Alliance, and pledged the entire pantheon of the Aesir to it. Seeing a Seraphim and an Old God working together did much to allay the concerns of other supernatural groups. The Watchers established loose ties to the organization. Shortly thereafter, a third member joined the leadership of the group. This was a ghost, the spirit of a dead human, who claimed to be none other than the soul of Benjamin Franklin. Michele, Odin, and Franklin have shaped the course of the Alliance over the last eight years.

Beliefs

The Alliance does not have an ideology or set of beliefs beyond those concerning the war. The organization has gathered more information about the Church of Revelations than any other group. All members know about the concentration camps, the steady transformation of the Believers into inhuman creatures, and the Church's plan to transform humankind into a tool dedicated to bring Leviathan into this reality. Preventing this is their one and only goal; everything else is secondary.

To achieve their goal, the Alliance has a number of directives. First, the nations opposing the Believers' conquest must be assisted and protected. The same applies to any resistance movements in the conquered territories. Additionally, the Alliance seeks to learn more about Leviathan, the Dark Apostle, and the Believers—any weaknesses, dissension in the ranks, or some new way to strike at the Adversary. Recruiting new members is also a major, though still secondary, goal. The Alliance constantly tries to draw more members, or even entire organizations, into its fold.

Organization

The Alliance is loosely organized. Many of its members also belong to other organizations, and for them the Alliance acts more as a clearinghouse of information and contacts than a ruling agency. The Alliance has connections to several national intelligence and military

agencies, including the CIA and SOTF-COM (see p. 32). It also has access to the records of several Covenants of Magic (see Allies and Enemies). With these assets, the Alliance has the best intelligence resources of the Free World and can coordinate the actions of dozens of groups.

Those who pledge themselves to work for the Alliance full-time are assigned to Teams, which are headquartered in diverse parts of the world. Each Team consists of three to ten members, one of whom is appointed leader. The Teams are assigned missions by Central Command, which is the most organized part of the Alliance. Central Command studies information coming in through its contacts, and sends Teams on missions designed to disrupt the plans of the Church of Revelations.

Each Team knows the location of a safehouse, the names of the other Team members, and little else. If captured, they cannot reveal any valuable information about the upper echelons or other cells and their activities. Orders arrive via e-mail or anonymous phone calls, which are identified through a system of code words that changes weekly. Mission reports are filed through the Internet, and are sent and received blindly, with no direct contact. This security has paid off—so far, no Soul Police or the Church agents have managed to infiltrate or "turn" any members.

The Effects of the War

Unlike other Associations, the Alliance was specifically founded to face the threat of Leviathan. The war has changed the organization just the same. For one, it has grown in size, from a small group revolving around the Archangel Michele to an international group with thousands of agents, wielding enormous mystical and mundane power. Its size is also a liability, however, as it is harder to coordinate and oversee the myriad Teams operating around the globe. Since many Teams have members with divided loyalties and secret agendas, this lack of oversight has allowed some unscrupulous members to engage in power plays which have little to do with the war.

As casualties mount and the power of the Church increases, many members have become more ruthless and fanatical in their efforts. Generally, the Alliance is caution about avoiding "collateral damage." Every killed innocent is one less human standing between Leviathan and the world. This attitude has begun to deteriorate among those Teams who have been at the front line for too long, especially those with beings who care little about humans anyway. As a result, more trustworthy Teams spend almost as much time policing their own organizations as they do fighting Leviathan's minions.

Allies and Enemies

The Alliance's relationships with many of the numerous organizations of the *Armageddon* world are detailed below. Those not discussed in this book (noted with a "*") are covered in various Unisystem products, such as *CJ Carella's WitchCraft* roleplaying game.

Cabal of Psyche*: This society of psychics seeks to protect people with the Sight from the world—and vice versa. Members are taught to use their powers carefully and responsibly. When the war started, members joined the Alliance in large numbers.

Combine*: This shadowy organization (or organizations) has been manipulating the governments, economies, and societies for centuries. The Combine had some help from the Heavenly Host (see p. 175), but its true masters and goals remain a mystery even to their most deadly enemies. The Combine appears to have been infiltrated and largely destroyed by the Church of Revelations—or maybe it is just biding its time. Some elements of the Combine have started cooperating with the Alliance and other groups to suppress the Church of Revelations.

Covenant of Legba*: This is the largest grouping of Voodoo magicians in the world. The Covenant follows the African god Legba, and fights the machinations of evil societies. Members use Magic and Spirit Patron powers. The Legbans are strong supporters of the Alliance, and of the Pantheons through the Voodoo Gods.

Heavenly Host: The Host is willing to help, but cooperation is imperfect, and it is clear the angels do not share all their information and resources with their allies.

House of Thanathos*: This group is obsessed with discovering the secrets of Death. Members include magicians and necromancers, but the Covenant is dominated by the once-dead—Vampyres and Phantasms, primarily. The House has concentrated on defending the Death Realms from the depredations of Leviathan, but they also cooperate with other groups.

Infernal Legion: Demons have proven to be all too willing to help, though sometimes they appear to be corrupting the organization to their

own ends. So far, all such attempts have failed, but demons are to be watched closely.

Knights Templar*: This ancient secret society both predates and survives the historical Knights of the Temple of Solomon. Members use Magic and the powerful Keys of Solomon, mystical patterns that give them tremendous power over spirits and even angels. For millennia, the Templars have fought the Combine's attempts to keep humankind enslaved. The arrival of the Dark Apostle has forced the Templars to shift the focus of their struggle, and they now collaborate with other groups, but largely on their terms.

Lodge of Undying: The Lodge has turned over most of their resources to the Alliance, and Immortals operate in the group in all capacities.

Mockers*: A small and misunderstood Covenant, the Mockers are survivors of encounters with the Mad Gods. They emerged Tainted, but relatively sane. They have Taint powers, but their wills remain their own. The Mockers make deadly enemies for all Mad God cults, and Leviathan is no exception. Their nature makes it difficult to garner allies, however.

Nomads*: These wanderers are largely Ferals, people whose souls are a hybrid of human and animal spirits, and who turn into animals at will. The Covenant also includes all manner of beings, however, from Gifted and Mundane humans to Inheritors and Undead. The group serves the Moon Gods, and these deities have directed them to battle Leviathan. They maintain connections with both the Alliance and the Pantheons.

Pantheons: The Norse Gods have joined the Alliance in numbers, and other Pantheons have followed suit. There is still considerable friction between Incarnates or Avatars and the Alliance's "mere" humans, however.

Pariahs*: This group is made up of abused and terrorized people, many of whom have developed Gifted powers as the result of their ordeals. Members mostly use the Disciplines of the Flesh, which allow them to alter their bodies by reliving the most traumatic events of their lives. Some Pariahs have succumbed to the lure of Leviathan, but most of them fight its minions, sometimes working with other groups.

Rosicrucians*: These ceremonial magicians follow the hermetic school of magic. This order concentrates on the study of magic and the well being of its members. They have a great deal of power and influence, and recruit members mainly from the educated and moneyed elite. Members rely almost exclusively on Magic. The

Rosicrucians tentatively joined the Alliance, but then split off when its ties to the Infernal Legion were discovered. Some Rosicrucians remain, and cooperation still exists, but it is guarded.

Sentinels*: This society came into being during the Middle Ages to combat supernatural predators. They have hunted down monsters and evil cults for centuries. Members include Mundanes, the Divinely Inspired, and Seers. The Sentinels work closely with the Alliance and, to a lesser degree, the Heavenly Host.

Storm Dragons*: Martial artists extraordinary, the Storm Dragons practice Tao-Chi, a powerful discipline allowing them to tap their Essence to perform incredible feats. The Dragons have led resistance to the Church of Revelations throughout Asia and the Americas.

Twilight Order*: These necromancers combine ancient thaumaturgical practices with modern spiritualism; they are mystics and ghost-hunters. Members use Necromancy, Magic and the Second Sight. The Twilight Order has lent some aid to the Alliance.

Watchers: The Watchers have been willing and sincere allies. Their penchant for secrecy can be a problem, but they are generally to be trusted.

Wicce*: These magicians follow the ancient traditions of the early European cults. They believe that magic is a natural force, meant to be used with care to maintain balance and harmony. Members use primarily Magic and the Sight. The Wicce have long had dealings with a number of Old Gods and nature spirits. The Wicce are strong supporters of the Alliance.

Other Associations: The Alliance is continuously tries to convince other groups to join in or at least collaborate with it.

Heavenly Host

They are the angels, the beings of light who have fascinated, terrified, and inspired millions of people for thousands of years. They claim to be God's Messengers, carrying out His plans for humanity. Even in the most favorable myths, however, the angels are not flawless beings. The greatest among their number turned against the Creator and was cast down into Hell.

The reality is even harsher than these stories, however. The Heavenly Host is beset by doubts and fear. Their goals are lofty, but their methods are questionable at best. Their claims that they implement the wishes of the Creator is a lie. For millennia, they have been acting on their own, doing what they think God would want. Now, with the ultimate enemy beating down the Gates of Heaven, the angels must make some very hard choices if they—and humanity—are to survive.

History

Creation: The oldest angels are the Seraphim. They are celestial beings, creatures born before the creation of the universe, or shortly afterwards. This is not to say the Seraphim remember the beginning of the universe, however. The Celestials (gods, angels, and similar beings) are descended from the original Sephyr, primal entities who helped give form to the universe.

This descent is not exactly a lineage of parents and children. It might be more accurate to say the Seraphim are fragments or greatly changed versions of their own selves. Their recollection of Creation remains muddled; at the time, their thought processes were utterly alien even to their current selves. At creation, they were beings who hardly noticed the passing of millennium or birth of galaxies, and yet could perceive the dance of subatomic particles. The Seraphim are no longer those beings—whether this makes them "debased" or "evolved" is the subject of some debate—and those memories are little more than confusing images.

The Seraphim did not come into being until billions of years later, when the first human beings became self-aware. The former Sephyr changed, narrowed their focus, and became more human-like. Some were heralds and warriors (the Seraphim) while others became builders and rulers over elemental forces (the Titans). The Seraphim and the Titans shared the world with the rising humankind. The Heavenly Host dwelt in the Sephiroth of Binah, visiting Malkuth (the human universe) frequently, and treating humans as near-equals by the time the Elder Kingdoms arose on Earth.

The First Schism: The fall of the Elder Kingdoms sundered this harmony, and broke the Heavenly Host. Fearing the destruction of Earth, the Lord Archangel Lucifer unleashed the Flood and led the Seraphim in a war that eradicated all trace of humanity's glory. Lucifer then went too far, and decided humanity itself should be eradicated. He claimed to speak with the voice of God (the Metatron), but when it was discovered that the Creator had fallen silent even before the Flood, the other angels turned against Lucifer and cast him out. After a brutal war, Lucifer and his cohorts were trapped in a hellish prison in the

Death Realms. The Host suffered yet another split in its ranks shortly afterwards—a group of angels who thought the Flood too harsh fled Elysium and hid on Earth.

Divided, decimated by war and desertion, and bereft of true leadership, the Seraphim embarked on a Diaspora, leaving a small contingent of angels behind while the rest sallied forth, looking for the Creator. The millennia-long quest was a costly failure. Still, upon returning, the Host found a new purpose: to make humanity worthy of the Creator's attention. When they came back, they found humans worshipping the Titans as their gods. Enraged, the Seraphim tried to overthrow such practices and establish monotheism over the world. This Celestial War ended with the defeat of the Old Gods, who lost most of their worshippers and were forced to retreat to their otherwordly Realms.

The Second Schism: Even though he helped orchestrate Lucifer's Fall, High Archangel Gabriel shared some of the Lord Archangel's fears of humankind. The Elder Kingdoms had threatened the destruction of all reality, and the Archangel tried to make sure humans did not enjoy such a rapid rise ever again. While the Seraphim were away in the Diaspora, humans were kept ignorant and primitive by the Old Gods. These entities enjoyed being worshipped; they ensured the development of science or arcane art was kept hidden from the masses.

After the angels returned and wrestled control over humans from the Old Gods, Gabriel decided to continue their work. Knowing that most Seraphim would object to this, he kept his plan from all but a handful of faithful allies, and used humans for the most part. These human agents were rewarded with prolonged longevity and great financial and political power. They helped persecute those who sought to improve the lot of humans, and in doing so corrupted several organized religions and governments.

Humans made poor puppets, however. In a few centuries, Gabriel lost control of the organization he had helped create. This shadowy society, known as the Conspiracy or the Combine by outsiders, has pursued its own goals for many years.

A breaking point came sometime between the 14th and 15th centuries. The Black Death—a supernatural as well as a mundane disaster—weakened the Seraphim and the Combine both. The Renaissance and the Age of Enlightenment battered through the restraints of human creativity. The Combine managed to restrain the *spiritual* growth of humankind, however. Even as humans learned the secrets of Science, they actually lost ground in the fields of Faith and Magick. Technology without morality eventually led to the horrors of the 20th century. The Secret Plan had failed; humans, while still not having reached the level of power of the Atlanteans, had unleashed all manner of technological wonders and threats. The Combine became so powerful that Gabriel could not destroy it without revealing his part in its creation. Hoping to keep some modicum of control, he continued to assist its works.

This situation led to the events of the Second Schism. The Archangel Michele, the Warrior Angel, discovered evidence of the Secret Plan sometime during the 1990s. After a number of plots and assassination attempts, Michele and several hundred Kerubim and Seraphim abandoned the Heavenly Host and exiled themselves to Earth. Thus, it was a divided and conflicted Host that greeted the New Millennium and the rise of the Church of the Revelations.

Beliefs

The basic purpose of the Seraphim is to protect Creation and humanity. Left to their own devices, the Seraphim have carried out their mission with varying degrees of success. Lucifer caused the Flood to destroy all the advanced civilizations of the time. Then he considered the utter extermination of humans before being dethroned and thrown into the Pits of Abaddon. Gabriel has tried to keep humans ignorant and helpless, a plan that ultimately failed but still left humans unprepared to deal with the supernatural powers of the Church of Revelations.

The members of the Heavenly Host believe they are the agents of the Creator, and that they are doing His Will in this world. They consider themselves to be caretakers and guardians of humankind. Human beings are the heirs of Creation, and will one day become entities as great as the Creator Himself. This, however, is far in the future. Many Seraphim and Kerubim believe humans are little more than weak, ignorant, and helpless children who can be easily distracted, deceived, or corrupted. They must be protected from their own follies as well as outside threats. Humanity, they believe, is not ready for the powers of magic, science, or even faith. Unfortunately, humans are harnessing these powers despite everything the Host has done to hold them back.

Binah—The Abode of the Angels

The Seraphim make their homes in the Sephiroth of Binah, one of the higher planes of existence. A world of light and white flames, Binah's natural state is one of fluctuating Essence energies. Only the Seraphim, the Titans, and similar order of beings can survive there for long. Unprotected humans who somehow stumble into this realm are blinded in a few seconds and drained of Essence in a matter of minutes. Their minds are soon overwhelmed with psychic feedback from intense energies coursing through this dimension.

In their natural state, the angels are energy beings who exist in a state of Ecstasis, a blissful trance in which time passes extremely slowly, and the angel is only marginally aware of any existence outside its Self. Until recently, the majority of the members of the Celestial Host remained in Ecstasis, waiting as a dormant reserve for the time in which the Host would march again. For the most part, the Seraphim prefer this world of light and purity to the damp, dirty, and cold physical realm. Those who visit the physical world often find Ecstasis lacking in meaning and purpose, however.

Many angels remain awake, however, abandoning their natural energy state. They assume humanoid forms and impose order onto a portion of the Realm, forging colossal, surreal palaces, and other constructs from which they can draft plans, study the physical world, and think on a human time scale, unencumbered by Ecstasis. Many of these solid constructs resemble the shapes of human versions of Heaven. Whether human thinkers somehow sensed these shapes through dreams or visions, or the Seraphim simply chose to ape the human's conceptions remains unknown. Seraphim and Kerubim summoned to the presence of the archangels often find themselves in a cloudy hall, surrounded by white pillars of light, and addressed by a gigantic or shadowy figure. This is the same setting in which angels are tried and sometimes punished.

Binah is isolated from the rest of Reality by a number of metaphysical barriers, making travel in and out of it very difficult. At first, the barriers were imposed by the Seraphim themselves, in an effort to control the interaction between angels and humans, which they considered detrimental to both sides. Viewing Earth is relatively easy for Archangels, but actually influencing events on Earth requires the angels to assume a physical form—a lengthy process called Incarnation or Transcendence (see p. 254).

An even stronger barrier separates Binah from Geburah, the Lands of the Dead. Abaddon, the fiery realm where Lucifer and his fallen angels have been trapped, is located in Geburah. Every once in a while demons try to storm the Pearly Gates that are the only connection between the two worlds. Every time, these assaults fail miserably. Guard duty at the Pearly Gates is a dangerous but prestigious post among the Seraphim.

When Leviathan's cult rose on Earth, the angels tried to remove the barriers between the realms to better fight the enemy—and found they could not. The separation has either become permanent, or has been strengthened by Leviathan or its servants. This means angels have to pick their battles carefully. The fate of the Ten Thousand at Rome (see p. 28) is stark proof that Leviathan is not to be underestimated.

Behind their façade of self-righteousness, however, most angels are wracked by doubts. The knowledge that they have not been given direct orders from the Creator for untold millennia weighs heavily on many of them. The more introspective angels wonder if this is all some sort of test, and whether they have passed or failed. Many fear that their pride is as great as Lucifer's, and their final punishment will be even more horrible. A few wonder whether or not the Creator cares at all for them, or for humankind. This crisis of faith has been set aside for the current conflict, but it continues gnawing at many of them.

Organization

The Heavenly Host has seven ranks of authority, from the near-mindless Ethereals and the lowly once-mortal Kerubim to the Council of Four that rules all. Advancement through the ranks was very slow until the coming of the war. Many angels spent hundreds of years in Ecstasis and gained precious little experience or wisdom in that time. Now, they are being sent to Earth in increasing numbers, and leaders found lacking are often replaced.

Human writers have often speculated about the organization of the Seraphim. Some of their guesses have been wildly imaginative, but for the most part wrong. These mistaken impressions were actually encouraged by the Seraphim's agents to keep humans in the dark. Some fanciful stories described the total number of angels in the millions, and were equally wrong. Before the war, the Heavenly Host numbered a little over one hundred thousand Seraphim and Kerubim, and about as many Ethereal spirits. Of these, nearly ten thousand Seraphim have been permanently destroyed, most of them during the Battle of Rome.

Ethereals: The most numerous order of being, these spirits unquestioningly obey the commands of the angels. These beings are not mindless, but they lack true free will.

Kerubim: The lowest-ranked angels are the Kerubim, who once were human and now labor to help and guide their former brethren.

Elder Kerubim: The more experienced and capable Kerubim are given the task of commanding and supervising their fellow Lesser Angels. Their authority can ordinarily only be challenged by the Greater Seraphim or Archangels, although technically all Seraphim are their superiors.

Seraphim: These are the rank-and-file of the Celestial Host. There are two sub-races of Seraphim, known as Lesser and Common Seraphim.

Greater Seraphim: These experienced and powerful Seraphim are in command of companies or phalanxes. They also serve as troubleshooters, shock troops, and enforcers for the Archangels.

Archangels: Archangels are a sub-order of Seraphim who possess a great deal more raw power. They are closer to the original Sephyr than most Seraphim. The Archangels command the troops of the Celestial Host, and each is in charge of an entire Army, comprising ten thousand Ethereals, Seraphim, and Kerubim. Their great power has a limitation, however; they lose most of their greater abilities if they leave the dimension of Binah, becoming only slightly more powerful than the Seraphim.

The Council of Four: These four High Archangels rule the Heavenly Host. Their office grants them near omnipotence, although their influence on Earth has been weakened due to the barriers separating Malkuth from Binah. Until recently, the four members of the Council were Gabriel, Michele, Uriel, and Raphael. After Michele's sudden desertion and the Great Schism, Sophia, the Archangel of wisdom, was elected to the post. Although officially the Four are equals in all ways, in reality Gabriel is the de facto leader of the Host. A persuasive (some might say manipulative) Archangel, Gabriel has shaped the policies of the Host since the Fall of Lucifer.

The conflicts with the Elder Kingdoms, the Titans and the Infernal Legion have turned almost every angel into a soldier, and they are organized along military lines, in squadrons (formations of three to ten angels), companies (ten squadrons, totaling up to a hundred angels), phalanxes (ten companies) and armies (ten phalanxes). The typical Army is made up of roughly five thousand Ethereals and a similar number of assorted true angels.

Before the War, the Seraphim sent agents to Earth only for three types of mission: to gather information, to randomly help humans, and to locate and destroy major supernatural infestations or dangerous humans. Scouting and espionage missions were conducted by Kerubim and the occasional Seraphim agent. To aid these activities, the Heavenly Host established a number of "safe houses" throughout the world, with agents, both human and divine, charged

with intelligence-gathering. The Kerubim also occasionally came to Earth to help humans; unlike the Seraphim, the Kerubim can sometimes sense a human's distress, and may feel obligated to respond to such calls. Unfortunately, only a relative handful of suffering humans ever managed to reach the Kerubim with their pleas, and only a few of those were helped. The most important missions involved destroying humans and creatures that threatened Creation. Supernatural predators, cults of the Mad Gods, and the more extravagant demonic schemes were the primary targets. Some of these activities occur at present, but the war occupies most of the Host's attention.

The Effects of the War

In the past, the Heavenly Host had an official policy of non-interference. Contact with humans was kept to a minimum, and of the hundred thousand or so angels, less than five hundred can be found on Earth at any given time. The war changed all of that. Most safe houses in the Conquered Territories were destroyed, and hundreds of Seraphim, Kerubim, and human agents were captured or slain. The urgency of the situation has forced the angels to take unprecedented action.

The Angels were caught completely unprepared by the Dark Apostle and the Cult of Leviathan. Somehow, the Revelationists infiltrated the Combine and took over most of its assets and influence in Europe and South America. The Seraphim had sensed a major disturbance in the flows of Essence as early as 1980, when the Dark Apostle was born, but they could not pinpoint its cause. The Host had also become concerned with the increased birth of Gifted humans, from magicians to the divinely inspired. Something big was afoot, they could sense, but they did not know what.

They managed to get close to the truth, but by then it was too late. Fifteen Seraphim and twenty Kerubim were in Munich on April 30, 2008, and perished in the same holocaust that gave birth to the Dark Apostle (see p. 27). Binah itself was invaded by monstrosities from Leviathan's home universe, keeping the angels distracted long enough for the Church to make its move. The Council of Four decided not to confront the Dark Apostle directly. Doing so risked a metaphysical "action-reaction" cycle: it seemed the more power brought against the Dark Apostle, the more power he was able to gain from Leviathan. A war of escalation could lead to Leviathan manifesting itself in reality even before it managed to convert all living humans.

The Host currently wages a form of limited warfare. It helps the underground movements in the Conquered territories, finds and destroys Revelationists operating in the Free World, and on occasion sends a few hundred Seraphim to the battlefields of the world to confront the Shaitan and Sheol monsters that assist the True Believers. The Council fears committing great numbers of angels to any one battle. When Uriel impulsively sent an entire army to defend Rome, thousands of Seraphim were destroyed, shot down with weapons powered by Taint (see p. 326), or torn apart by hordes of monsters.

While many angels were able to recuperate from their injuries in Binah, many were destroyed for what might be hundreds, maybe thousands of years, or perhaps permanently. Not since the First Celestial War has the Host suffered such casualties. It has made its leaders careful, even timid in some ways.

Allies and Enemies

The Host has few friends, and has spent most of recorded history making enemies.

Alliance: The Host has sent a number of agents to work for the Alliance, despite the fact that a renegade Archangel serves as one of the group's leaders. The relationship remains uneasy, especially when the Seraphim are involved.

Infernal Legion: The ancient foe of the Host has not been forgotten—or forgiven. For the time being, the Host does not watch the demons closely, but neither have they completely relaxed their guard. Many Seraphim and some Archangels feel that, if they achieve victory over Leviathan, the Legion should be targeted next.

Lodge of the Undying: Many Seraphim remember the days of the Elder Kingdoms with a mixture of fear and hatred. True Immortals are constant reminders of those days, and angels prefer to avoid their company. In times past, the Host hunted down Immortals, especially those who became too involved in the affairs of normal humans. Nowadays, the Host tends to ignore True Immortals, who for their part bear little love for the angels.

Pantheons: The Old Gods nurse old grievances against the Host, but a rapprochement is being sought by both sides. The more benevolent deities would like to forge some sort of union of the forces of light to battle the forces of darkness,

The Archangels

The Archangels are beings of god-like power. In addition to their power over Celestial Fire and other Seraphim powers, Archangels can manipulate tremendous amounts of Essence (in the tens of thousands). Described below are the Four High Archangels and a few other Archangels of note.

Gabriel: Also known as Jibril and Gabriele (when he assumes female form), Gabriel is the leader of the Host in all but name. It was he who overthrew Lucifer—and, if one believes Lucifer, he who manipulated Lucifer into unleashing the Flood and planning the destruction of humankind. Despite his varying form, Gabriel apparently thinks of himself as a male. Tremendously charming and persuasive, Gabriel favors subtle and cunning agents.

Uriel: Uriel is the angel of fire and retribution. He is a warrior, and given to rash actions. It was his decision to send his Army to Earth to defend Rome, and his considerable power that allowed ten thousand angels to appear on Earth without any normal preparation. Even the disaster at Rome has not tempered him, and most of the angels sent to the battlefields on Earth serve him.

Raphael: The angel of healing and mercy, Raphael is the gentlest of the Four. He opposed the Flood, and was among the first to follow Gabriel's overthrow of Lucifer. Raphael is the only High Archangel who customarily surrounds himself with Kerubim, whose company he finds preferable to that of Seraphim. Most of his agents are Kerubim who focus on healing and mediation.

Michele: Also known as Michael and Mikail, Michele is a warrior Archangel. She cast down Lucifer and led the war against the Infernal Legion. When Michele discovered Gabriel's role in the Secret Plan, she abandoned Elysium and hid on Earth, where she helped found the Alliance.

Sophia: The archangel of wisdom and beauty, Sophia was largely removed from the politics of Elysium, making her—in Gabriel's eyes—an ideal candidate to replace the rebellious Michele. Sophia did not remain a meek mouthpiece for long, however. She has her own vision of the direction the Host should follow, and challenges Gabriel's position among the Four.

Azrael: The angel of Death, Azrael has no Army under his control. Instead, he keeps to himself (or perhaps it could be said that he is imprisoned) in a dwelling linked to the Death Realms. Azrael's power is the match of both Gabriel and Lucifer.

Barakiele: Her name means "God's Lightning." This archangel shares a number of powers with the Sky Gods. She challenged the likes of Zeus and Thor, and traded bolts of power with them during the Celestial War. Barakiele likes to act decisively (and violently), and she favors agents and servants who follow in her footsteps.

both during the current crisis and afterwards. Most angels remember the presumption and arrogance of the Old Gods, however, and view their former enemies with distrust.

Watchers: These renegades are not as hated as the Legion, but few Seraphim have anything to do with them (the Kerubim are slightly more tolerant). Many members of the Host think of the Watchers as weak at best, corrupt at worst.

Other Associations: Angels view most groups with suspicion or even outright hostility. Even Inspired humans are not greeted warmly by many Angels. A large percentage of Seraphim often try to assume the leadership of any group they join—this does not make them any friends, of course. Others—a growing number, as the Angels acquire more experience working alongside humans—have started to reconsider their prejudices.

Infernal Legion

The Fallen Seraphim were those who most resented humankind, or whose misplaced loyalty to Lucifer led them astray. Exiled from the Realm of Binah, trapped in the world of the dead, the Infernal Legion is dedicated to tempting and deceiving humans. While forbidden from harming humans directly (a rule often ignored or twisted), the Fallen prefer to fool humans into harming each other. They claim most people make their job almost too easy; mortals are all too ready to take advantage of their fellow man, or to give in to ill-advised impulses and lusts. Since humans possess free will, their misdeeds are ultimately their responsibility, but the Fallen delight in providing a little push here and there. These demons consider themselves to be the mystical equivalent of undercover cops or confidential informants, weeding out evil humans who, after death, are dragged into the Pits of Abaddon to be punished for their crimes.

The war took the Infernal Legions by surprise. Like their angelic counterparts, the demons had thought the final conflict would be between Heaven and Hell. Instead, another force entered the fray, an enemy that new and ancient, and which, if victorious, will destroy both Heaven and Hell. This has forced the Fallen into the dubious role of defender. With the danger, however, also lies an opportunity. The Fallen Seraphim see the war as a chance to reclaim their position, and to punish humankind for its sins. If Leviathan wins the war, the known universe ceases to exist; if Lucifer wins the war, there will be Hell to pay.

History

The stories are correct in one thing: it was Lucifer's pride that caused his downfall. When some of the Elder Kingdoms became a threat, his reaction was to destroy them all. Then, he sought to assume the prerogatives of the Creator, and tried to destroy all of Humankind. The other angels overthrew him for his hubris.

Lucifer and his followers were cast out of Binah. From the Death Realms, Lucifer continued his war against the Host, however. The Lord Archangel recruited malignant spirits—Fiends—to fight at the side of his followers. The conflict dragged on for centuries before an agreement ended the hostilities. Lucifer and his minions would serve a purpose: to punish those humans whose crimes demanded retribution. The Fallen Seraphim, now called demons, were allowed to venture onto Earth in small numbers, provided that they did not attack humans directly or attempt to control or otherwise destroy the free will of humans. Demons could tempt, but not force. They could punish, but not attack without provocation.

Almost as soon as the agreement was reached, the Fallen started to break and twist its terms. Many of the Fallen's operations involved not only the corruption of humans, but a search for ways to defeat the Heavenly Host and to return Lucifer to his "rightful" position as the Lord Archangel.

Along the way, the demons began recruiting new members from among the Dead. Since their numbers were smaller than those of the Host (only about a quarter of the Seraphim chose to follow Lucifer into exile), the Fallen bolstered their ranks with malignant spirits and the souls of evil humans, which became their own version of the Kerubim. They also used their powers to bring large numbers of Fiends to Abaddon. By the time of the War, the Infernal Legion was almost as numerous as the Host, although not quite its match in raw power.

Beliefs

The Fallen's avowed purpose is to "prove" that humankind is unworthy of its role in the scheme of Creation. Every time a mortal harms somebody to get what he wants, or betrays a principle in the name of self-interest or lust, the

demons feel they have won a small victory. They are, in effect, bigots pointing at people and events that seem to confirm their prejudices. They like to set people up to take the fall, like informants prodding their targets to commit crimes, which they can then report to the authorities. The Infernal Legion is populated by supernatural con-men, tricking their marks into knowingly doing evil, and then gleefully punishing them.

The one thing that confounds and angers them is encountering people who refuse temptation and do what they feel is right. Even those people can be tricked into replacing morality with self-righteousness, and discipline with fanaticism, however. Demons are the ultimate cynics.

Being exiles and the losers of a civil war, many of the members of the Legion have geared up for a rematch. The prophecies of a Final Battle seemed to indicate a conflict between them and the Heavenly Host, an ultimate war with Earth and Binah as the prize. The standard interpretations indicated that the Heavenly Host would win, but, as many a demon has pointed out, the bible is propaganda for the Heavenly Host. Some demons waited for Armageddon with anticipation, hoping to get their revenge; others simply dreaded it, fearing they would experience the ultimate defeat.

Beyond these goals lie a number of other agendas. Some Fallen Seraphim simply take out their frustrations on humans, for no defined purpose beyond mere satisfaction. Some demons concentrate on foiling the plans of the Heavenly Host, for good or ill. And a growing number simply rebel against everything, including the goals of the Legion, and simply do what they want, with consideration for none and with malice to all. A small minority even rebel against the idea of tempting humans and doing evil, and instead help humans perform good works.

Organization

The Legion's organization apes that of the Heavenly Host. Seraphim, be they Infernal or Celestial, are very rank-conscious. Demons tend to be servile towards their superiors, and bullying towards those beneath them.

Fiends: These beings, also known as Imps, are elemental or nature spirits bound to the service of the demons. Most of them delight in the suffering of others, tend to be stupid brutes, and are used as cannon fodder or minor servants.

Qliphonim: The demonic equivalent of the Kerubim, the Qliphonim are humans given a choice between Damnation and service. Those who choose the latter find themselves only worsening the state of their souls. Although less powerful than the Fallen, Qliphonim are master manipulators, quite adept at exploiting human weaknesses. Some Qliphonim eventually develop a conscience and disobey orders, however. Once again, free will makes all humans or former humans unpredictable creatures.

Elder Qliphonim: Those among the Dammed who prove themselves valuable servants are raised to this rank. These Qliphonim are among the most devious and powerful of their kind, and some actually aspire to one day dethrone the Fallen and rule Abaddon in their stead.

Fallen: These Seraphim backed Lucifer during the First Celestial War. They have the same powers and natural abilities of their Celestial counterparts, although their Essence is colored by negative emotions, and many prefer bizarre or repulsive shapes to the typically beautiful forms chosen by the Seraphim. The Fallen are divided between Lesser and Common, and are organized into the same squadrons, companies, and phalanxes used by the Celestial Host.

Demon Lords: The more powerful among the Fallen become leaders. The Lords control companies and squadrons of the Fallen, or are talented troubleshooters sent in special missions for the Dark Archangels.

Dark Archangels: Ironically, more Archangels than common Seraphim backed Lucifer during the Celestial War; the old adage that power corrupts seems to apply to angels as much as to humans. These Archangels fulfill the same purposes as their Celestial counterparts.

Hierophants: The most powerful of the Dark Archangels, and a couple of ancient Fiends, rule Abaddon under Lucifer. These beings each govern a province of the Realm as a personal fiefdom. Each of them was handpicked by Lucifer, and they rule at his sufferance. Some prominent Hierophants include Asmodeus and Belial.

Lucifer: The Lord Archangel continues to be the sole ruler of his domain, unencumbered by Councils or co-monarchs. The purposes and motivations of Lucifer remain a mystery even to the Hierophants. Some rumors assert that Lucifer has repented from his evil ways, while others claim that he is as proud and full of hatred as he was millennia ago.

The Effects of the War

Since the Fall, the Infernal Legion expected an apocalyptic conflict with their natural enemies. The Hierophants were shocked to discover that Leviathan, a being whose name evoked dread even before Lucifer's defeat, was the true enemy was. It had been the specter of Leviathan, in fact, that had prompted Lucifer to unleash the Flood and destroy the Elder Kingdoms. The conflict with the One Who Taints predates the Celestial War, and gives the Legion and the Host a common enemy. Sadly, this has not been enough to end old hatreds and disputes.

Demons on Earth were always alert for new cults, secret societies, and other possible "scams." The Fallen quickly tried to infiltrate and subvert the Church of Revelations, hoping to use it for their own purposes—humans are so capable of committing horrible crimes when they think they have God's blessing, after all. These efforts failed, however; dozens of Fallen and Qliphonim disappeared with no explanation.

The Hierophants suspected Celestial activity (ironically enough, the High Archangels suspected Infernal involvement), and restricted their investigations. When the Church went public, Leviathan's relationship to the cult was revealed. By then it was too late. The demons lacked the resources to seek out and destroy the Revelationists. Furthermore, they feared (rightly) that unleashing their demon hordes on Earth would only provoke the angels. For once, the Hierophants hoped that the Celestial Seraphim would take care of the problem.

Their hopes were in vain. As the Army of Revelations swept through Europe and three other continents, many demons were discovered and destroyed. Even worse, a number of demons actually went over the enemy! The final betrayal came when it was revealed that Lord Asmodeus, one of the top-ranked Hierophants, had left Abaddon and now stood by the side of the Dark Apostle, along with several hundred demons and Qliphonim, all branded with the Mark of Leviathan. These betrayals also made the Heavenly Host even more suspicious of the demons. Some angels need little in the way of evidence to believe that the entire Infernal Legion had joined the ultimate enemy.

For the most part, the Fallen want to destroy the Church of Revelations as much as their Celestial counterparts. They go about it in a different way, however. Some demons have tried tempting Believers into betraying their new masters; these demons have discovered, to their regret, that

Abaddon, The Pit of Despair

After their banishment, the Fallen Angels were trapped in the fiery realm of Abaddon. This terrible place is wracked by burning, angry Essence flares. These Essence explosions cause any anger, envy, hatred or other negative emotions a person feels to turn against him, causing him physical and psychic pain. Those who dwell in Abaddon can only blame themselves for their suffering. The souls of sinners who feel they deserve punishment find themselves in Abaddon. Demons herd them into mines or pits, where they dig and work and suffer. The process is neither eternal nor meaningless, however. Some people are actually purified by the experience and transcend Abaddon, moving on to other planes of existence, their sins expiated. Many others just sink lower into their vices or hatred, and prolong their agonies.

Although demons can leave the realm, they are eventually and inevitably dragged back after some time. Humans have the chance to escape, but demons remain trapped there, seemingly for an eternity. It is perhaps no wonder that their resentment towards humankind has only been exacerbated by the millennia. Some magicians have discovered a means to prevent demons from having to return to Abaddon, but they charge highly for such services, often requiring servitude or worse from the demons.

Abaddon lies in Geburah, the same dimension as several other Death Realms, such as Tartarus, Hades, and the Norse Hel. In times past, the Death Gods and the Infernal Legion have conflicted, although for the most part each Realm leaves its neighbors alone. Strange beings known as the Grim Reapers patrol the borders between the Realms, and not even the Seraphim challenge those entities without good reason. They seem to be living extensions of the Death entity, a being whose power dwarfs that of even the Archangels.

Leviathan is a better corrupter and seducer than most of the Fallen could ever hope to become. Others work supplying the enemies of the Church with information, weapons, and resources, while occasionally acting directly against the Believers. Demons typically think the end justifies any means: if killing a prominent Church leader requires blowing up a bus full of schoolchildren, demons cheerfully do it, or direct others to do so.

Another side effect of the conflict is that the Heavenly Host can no longer monitor demon activities to ensure they do not harm humans directly. Some demons pay no attention to the larger conflict and have gone on mindless killing rampages, making no distinction between Believers or normal people. By the same token, many demons, freed of the supervision of their superiors, have rebelled and joined other groups, such as the Watchers or the Alliance, using mystical means to avoid returning to Abaddon.

Allies and Enemies

Alliance: Apparently, Lucifer does not seem to mind that one of the main leaders of the Alliance is Michele, the Archangel who cast him down from Elysium. Perhaps the Prince of Hell simply bides his time. Whatever the reason, the Demon Lords and the Hierophants have been instructed to assist the Alliance. Many demons work alongside humans and other beings. This has actually caused other possible Alliance members to drift away in disgust, however.

Heavenly Host: Most Legion members have not forgotten the war with their tormentors. Cooperation with the Host is grudging at best, and most demons do not hesitate to stab their "allies" in the back at the first opportunity. Such acts of betrayal must be performed most carefully or not at all, however. The Demon Lords operate under strict orders not to antagonize the Host for the time being, and they cannot officially condone such acts. If a demon gets caught, his superiors not only disallow his actions, they send the culprit's Unraveled carcass to the Host by way of apology.

Lodge of the Undying: Lucifer destroyed Atlantis, and this revelation was finally spread around the Lodge shortly before the war. Thus, Immortals and demons do not work together except under the most extreme situations. To the Legion, Immortals are the embodiment of the danger all humans represent.

Pantheons: To the demons, the Old Gods had a sweet racket—extracting worship and powers from mortals while doing pretty much whatever they wanted to them. On the other hand, many pagan deities have defended their charges against the machinations of the Fallen, which has not endeared them to the Legion. Relations vary from pantheon to pantheon (or, more accurately, from god to god). Overall, however, less animosity exists between these two groups than with the Heavenly Host.

Watchers: The Fallen are of two minds when it comes to the Watchers. Some consider them fellow outcasts, and in the past have tried to recruit them to their side, only to be rebuffed time and time again. Others resented the Watchers from the beginning, both because of their lighter punishment—being stranded on Earth is far better than being trapped in Gehenna, after all—and their professed affection for humanity. Over time, the second faction has predominated, and the Legion has been as much of a foe to the Watchers as to the Host. Cooperation between the two groups is more likely to turn violent than when the Host is involved, because the Legion fears the Watchers' less.

Other Associations: In the past, Demons have worked hard to subvert, corrupt, and manipulate other groups. This has not forgotten this, and relations with other groups are tenuous at best.

Lodge of the Undying

Immortals tend to be fiercely individualistic, and they do not take well to rules or orders, even from others of their kind. Over time, however, they formed an informal brotherhood, eventually known as the Lodge of the Undying.

The principles of the Lodge are very simple. First, members are expected to extend every courtesy and offer hospitality to other Immortals who arrive in the area. Second, no Immortal must knowingly endanger the secrets or activities of a fellow Lodge member. And finally, no Immortal who asks for aid can be refused, unless the request is unreasonable or the Immortal has violated one of the rules above.

A number of volunteers provide a network of information and maintain a number of safe houses across the world. Immortals who visit a city can often expect help, and, if they have the right connections, can locate other Undying in most parts of the world.

Associations

History

The Lodge of the Undying is a surprisingly young organization, especially given its membership. The association was created in the late 18th century, by a 1,000-year old Immortal known simply as Quintus.

Quintus had traveled extensively throughout the world, and had encountered and befriended several dozen Immortals. He was one of the first to start gathering the Immortals' collective lore, in an effort to discover the secrets of Atlantis. He hoped to eventually lead the way for a new, greater Renaissance, one where the lost powers of the antediluvian kingdoms would lead humanity towards a new golden age. Some Immortals who lived through that period remain cynical about Quintus' goals, however, and they claim that Quintus wished to rule the new world his discoveries would create.

Tragedy struck during the French Revolution and the Terror that followed. It appears that Quintus had attracted the wrath of some powerful third party. He was arrested and executed—beheaded, and his corpse incinerated. The manner in which his body was disposed of revealed some clue of how to kill an Immortal. The rest of the Lodge went underground, but managed to survive the ensuing wars and chaos. It continued recruiting Immortals, especially those who had recently discovered their abilities and desperately needed guidance.

For the last two centuries, the Immortals remained relatively quiet. The war has brought them out of hiding, however.

Beliefs

The Lodge's major belief centers on legends of Atlantis. Members may disagree (sometimes violently) about the details, but all of them believe that some time in the world's prehistoric past, a number of great human civilizations rose to prominence, and were destroyed (the Flood seems to be the best candidate).

Learning more about the past is a major goal of the organization. A number of Immortals have become involved in the archeological field, and tried to uncover physical evidence of Atlantis. So far, they have found a few ancient artifacts of dubious origin, but nothing solid. These researchers have also uncovered evidence of interesting finds that have been destroyed or suppressed by a shadowy organization.

Atlantean Secret Masters

Every generation, a few more Immortals were born, and as few of them died, their numbers slowly but surely increased. As the Lodge grew in numbers, it started developing its own body of myth and folklore. The Undying compared notes about their dreams and visions, performed research, and explored remote locations to gain a better idea of who they truly were. From this knowledge emerged a number of wild rumors, having little or no bearing on reality. One of the most popular is the idea that a remnant of Atlantean civilization survived the Flood. According to the myth, these Secret Masters escaped destruction by hiding in some remote or obscure area. Some tales claim the Himalayas as a possible hiding place, others, the North or South Pole, the Amazonian Jungle, or the Heart of Africa. Many expeditions were sent to these areas, looking for answers. Most returned empty-handed. A few did not return, prompting new rumors and speculation. Perhaps the missing Immortals had encountered the Secret Masters, and had been destroyed or recruited by them. No expedition returned with any concrete proof of the existence of a current Atlantean civilization.

The UFO craze of the 1950s provided more food for thought. Some of the glowing vessels described by witnesses appeared to resemble the Atlantean Thought Ships (see p. 308), which many had seen in their visions. In some cases, the ships proved to be Thought Ships—except that they had been built by Immortals who had "remembered" some of the lost arts of Atlantis. These Makers (see p. 306) had no more knowledge of the Secret Masters than anyone else—or so they claimed, the more paranoid Immortals whispered to each other.

So far, the Secret Masters remain a myth, a tale to excite young Immortals and to make older ones shake their heads in amusement. A few remain obsessed with the idea, and they risk their lives (and, sometimes, the veil of secrecy that protects the Lodge) to try to find these elusive beings.

Chapter Six

Organization

The Lodge is organized along geographical lines. The Undying maintain some thirty "Colleges"—facilities combining the characteristics of social clubs, libraries, and meeting places. The size and features of these Colleges vary from place to place. Typically, they include at least three or four guest rooms for visiting (or hiding) Immortals, live-in facilities for the Dean of the College and his assistants, and decent library and media facilities.

Each College has a Dean, an Immortal who assumes the responsibility to maintain and administer the area. The Deans are selected by Lodge Masters, a group of twelve Immortals who participated in the creation of the Covenant.

Before the war, the Lodge maintained twenty-nine Colleges around the world. Most were located in the West—five Colleges in the U.S., another six in Canada and South America, ten in Europe. Only one College was located in Africa (Egypt), one in the Middle East (Jerusalem), and one served Australia and the entirety of Asia.

By 2008, the Lodge had over a thousand members. Less than one fifth were really active in the organization—maintaining the Colleges, conducting research, and managing the funds of the Covenant. Since the war, however, this has changed, and almost every member has become an active participant.

Most charter members are Immortals. Over the years, other beings have been accepted into the ranks of the organization, however. Almost all of them are unaging or long-lived people—Magicians (former Rosicrucians) with large Essence capacities, Seers who have learned how to stop the aging process, even a few Vampyres. To qualify under these circumstances, however, the non-Immortal must perform some great service for either the Lodge or an influential Immortal, and the application requires the approval of the Lodge Masters themselves.

In addition to full members, the Lodge employs a small army of research assistants, servants, bodyguards and security officers, secretaries and so forth. Most remain wholly ignorant of the Lodge's true nature and purpose, but many know the truth—they could not perform their duties otherwise. Many of the more loyal servants are given Ambrosia (see p. 308) as a gift, greatly extending their life spans; several employees are in their late fifties and sixties, but look half as old.

The Effects of the War

The number of Undying births increased dramatically in the last years of the 20th century, doubling the number of Immortals between the years of 1985 and 2005. Even the most materialistic of the Immortals realized that something strange was happening. Many think that some force, maybe the Creator, maybe the Secret Masters, somehow summoned the souls of Atlanteans to come and fight the descendants of their ancestral foes.

Unlike many other supernatural beings, the Immortals mostly wanted to be left alone. The Church of Revelations made these desires a luxury none could afford. Any Immortal uncovered by the Church was killed. The Servants of Leviathan did not even give the Undying a chance to turn coat—apparently they had their own memories of the war between Atlantis and Ultima Thule. They were not prepared to offer quarter to ancient enemies.

Lacking a coherent organization, the Immortals have largely reacted to the war as individuals. Some have joined the Alliance or the Watchers, while others serve in the militaries of the nations of the Free World, or fight in the Underground. They remain highly effective warriors, but lack the numbers or the discipline to make a major impact in the conflict, at least for the time being. Some Makers, Atlantean super-science craftsmen, have made unique contributions to the war effort, and the occasional Thought Ship can be seen streaking over some battlefields, engaging and destroying the Church's stealth aircraft or flying monsters. It is even rumored that a Maker is working side by side with Air Force developers on some obscure Nevada base, trying to mass-produce Thought Ships—an undertaking almost certainly doomed to fail.

Allies and Enemies

Alliance: Prompted by fear of Leviathan, the Lodge has effectively joined the Alliance. Although it retains its institutions and organization, it shares information and resources with that group. Many members remain unenthusiastic supporters of the Alliance, however. They still see to the welfare of their kind over that of the world as a whole.

Heavenly Host: The Lodge has long avoided the Host, and they do not particularly welcome the company of angels, even now.

Associations

Infernal Legion: Demons have little to offer Immortals, and the Lodge considers Seraphim of any stripe to be equally dangerous, so the two groups have had little interaction before or since the war.

Pantheons: Immortals have been the friends, lovers, and enemies (sometimes all of them at one time or another) of Inheritors, Avatars, and Incarnates. A few Inheritors are members of the Lodge, and members do not have strong prejudices when it comes to the Old Gods, treating them as individuals rather than members of a group.

Watchers: The Watchers have on occasion stepped in and prevented ambitious Immortals from establishing their own kingdoms or cults. The Lodge also suspects that the Watchers were involved in the French Revolution, although they do not know if they helped bring about the death of Quintus. They work alongside Watchers, but rarely trust them fully.

Other Associations: The Lodge generally avoids contact with other groups, and prefers to remain anonymous.

Pantheons

The Old Gods walk the Earth once again, and some of their pantheons have joined forces in a loose confederation for the duration of the war. Their primary goal is to defeat Leviathan and its minions, since victory for the Mad God would mean the end of everything. This group is not particularly cohesive or coordinated. Most deities and their followers pursue their own plans and agendas, and rarely consult with each other. The Pantheons wield considerable power, but are beset by division and petty ambitions.

History

The Titans, like the Seraphim, descend from the Sephyr, primal entities who participated in the creation of the universe. These entities came into contact with humans during the Elder Kingdom era, which shaped their personalities and powers. Each god came to espouse a variety of traits and powers.

After the Flood and the Seraphim Diaspora, the Titans helped humans rebuild their lives. This was not charity, however. The Titans demanded worship and sacrifice from their charges. Each gathering of gods soon ruled over a group of people—first, small hunter-gatherer bands, then small pastoral or agricultural tribes, and eventually nations and entire peoples. Gods and humans warred against each other for prime locations and larger populations. The winning people and their pantheon would gain dominance; defeated deities often accepted a subordinate role in the winning pantheon.

When the Seraphim returned, they warred against the Titans, and unseated them. Losing battles and worshippers at the same time, many of the Old Gods retreated from human affairs, and escaped to fabulous Realms in the dimension of Netzach. For the most part, the dethroned deities found contentment in their exile, although some occasionally plotted to defeat the angels and return to their past glories. None of those plots succeeded, and except for a few pantheons, most of them lost all but a handful of followers, and became the stuff of myths, their names remembered only by scholars or young children.

Before the war, only a few Titans ventured to Earth, and then only with difficulty and for short periods of time. Some fathered the odd Inheritor—Avatars were a rarity—and only a few Incarnates made homes on Earth, careful not to reveal themselves to the Heavenly Host and other enemies.

Beliefs

The Old Gods generally feel a strange mixture of fear, contempt, and admiration for humans. Many find their mortality to be both poignant and limiting. They feel somewhat like human adults dealing with children doomed to die before reaching adolescence.

On the other hand, the Elder Gods remember the raw power of Atlantis with fear, and regard recent developments like atomic weapons with trepidation. They look down on humanity's pettiness and greed, ignoring that the Titans themselves are not immune to these weaknesses. Many Titans behave towards humans like humans behave towards their pets, with a combination of affection, possessiveness, and a feeling of superiority. Most certainly do not consider humans to be their equals, and are usually unwilling to take their words or deeds seriously.

A number of deities are profoundly selfish beings. They love their pleasures, preserving their privileges, and jockeying for position within their pantheons. To them, the Pantheons are an alliance of convenience, a regrettable necessity that has taken most gods away from their games and pastimes. Others see the conflict as a time to prove themselves; warlike deities in particular delight in this, the ultimate battle.

Netzach—Land of the Pantheons

The Old Gods reside primarily in the Sephiroth of Netzach. It is here that most of the pantheons erected their kingdoms and palaces, built as larger-than-life imitations of human buildings and cities.

Netzach is not unlike Earth in many ways, with a sun and sky, seasons, and lands that teem with life. Everything in this dimension is of epic proportions. Trees soar to the size of small buildings, and bears grow as large as elephants. Netzach wilderness areas are treacherous for the unwary, and even the gods do not venture there lightly. Each pantheon controls an area of the world relating to the geographical distribution of the pantheon's followers. Their lands have their own denizens, and even their own natural laws, which vary from kingdom to kingdom.

The dwellers of Netzach include the gods themselves, who endure the centuries by engaging in pleasant pastimes, from hunting the fabulous beasts of the wilderness to engaging in mock battles and titanic feasts. Many Inheritors who followed their parents to the Otherworlds also live here, acting as agents and servants. Even some human beings live there, the descendants of worshippers who chose to join their deities in exile. Their descendants often live in the manner of long-dead ancestors, and know nothing about the modern world.

Netzach is connected to two other major Sephiroth in addition to Earth (which the Norse call Midgard, and the Quabbalists Malkuth). The Death Gods of most pantheons reside not in Netzach but in Geburah, the lands of the Dead. The Kingdoms of the Death Gods are usually dark, cold places, where human souls endure centuries as mere shades, or are tormented much as they are in Abaddon. The other realm connected to Netzach is Yesod, the Moon-lit lands, where the Sidhe and the Fey and Sylvan races dwell. Traffic between the three realms is light, but it exists.

Some Pantheons of Note

A few pantheons especially active in the war against the Church of Revelations are discussed. Unfortunately, there is not enough room in this book to do even one pantheon justice. Additional pantheons will be described in upcoming *Armageddon* sourcebooks.

Norse Gods: The Aesir

These deities were worshipped by the Vikings and, before them, by the diverse Germanic peoples of Europe and Eurasia. Worshipped by large numbers of people until as late as 900 AD, a combination of Christian missionaries (and Christian persecution) and the Seraphim's attack on the Realm of Asgard ended their existence as an active pantheon. Among their chief deities are Odin (also known as Woden or Wothan), Thor, Loki, Tyr, and Heimdall. Some of the children of the gods became powerful heroes, and helped give rise to the legends of the dreaded berserkers who would turn into brutal killing machines that made little distinction between friend and foe.

The Norse gods made a stand against Leviathan on 2013, when they sunk the fleet the Army of Revelations was preparing to use against the Nordic countries. Odin himself is said to be in the United States, helping coordinate the moves of the Alliance (see p. 172), while Thor is somewhere in Russia, making occasional appearances to destroy entire tank columns, accompanied by a number of steppe deities. Loki, the trickster god, is a master spy, weaving complex patterns of lies and half-truths that confound the most adept members of the Soul Police. And several Inheritors and Avatars of this pantheon now serve in England and Northern Europe in diverse capacities.

Olympian Gods

Perhaps the best-known deities in Western Civilization, the Olympians were first worshipped by the Greek peoples, and they grew in power, spreading with the conquests of Alexander the Great and the Roman Empire through three continents. One of the largest and most powerful pantheons, Olympians were among the first to fall to the Heavenly Host. Prominent Olympian gods include Zeus, Ares, Hera, Athena, and Poseidon. One of their gods, Hercules, was an Inheritor who was raised to full immortality after his death.

The Olympians operate throughout the world. They are active in Greece and the Balkans, and have many followers and agents in the Free World. Many Inheritors fill their ranks—the Olympians have long been fond of fathering demigods—and several Incarnates have operated on Earth for years now.

Aztec and Mayan Gods

The deities of Central America are a complex lot. The Mayan deities, beings like Kinebahan (the all-father), Ixazaluoh (goddess of water), and Kukulcan (the winged serpent, known by the Aztecs as Quetzacoatl), were more benevolent than the bloodthirsty Aztec pantheon, dominated by Huitzilopochtli, who demanded constant human sacrifices, or Xipetotec, the "Flayed Lord," whose victims were horribly tortured before being offered to him. Kukulcan was banished by these brutal Aztec deities, and for several centuries the Aztecs dominated the area, until the Spaniards brought their own version of mass murder and, on the metaphysical plane, the Seraphim assaulted the gods' homeworld of Aztlan and brought these deities down.

In the twenty-first century, Mexico and Central America have become a vast battleground between the forces of the United Nations (headed by the U.S.) and the Third Army of Revelations. While aircraft and artillery destroy what little remains of half a dozen countries, and tanks and infantry race back and forth, monsters summoned by the Adepts of Leviathan scour the countryside, seeking the few brave enough to resist the invaders. Amidst the chaos, the Old Gods of the Mexico and the Maya have returned. Kukulcan the dragon-god is said to have appeared in the midst of great battles to strike down the largest Shaitan monsters summoned by the Believers. Inheritors of Huitzilopochtli have become important leaders of the Underground movements in Mexico and Central America. Unfortunately, it is rumored that at least some of the Aztec gods have actually turned coat and joined the ranks of the Church of Revelations, their powers augmented and twisted by the Mark of Leviathan.

Egyptian Pantheon

One of the most ancient pantheons, the deities of Khem, as the Egyptian Pantheon calls itself, were among the first Titans to manifest on Earth to demand the worship of humans. Overall they were benevolent, helping the culture of the Nile to develop and regain some of the arts and sciences lost during the Flood. Their gods included Ra (the sun god), Isis (the Mother Goddess, identified with Gaea/Gaia), Ptah (the god of Essence and wisdom), Bast (the cat-headed goddess), and Set (once the overlord of Khem, then enemy of the gods). The Egyptian pantheon was first weakened by wars with other deities (among them the Olympians who backed both Alexander the Great's conquests and later the Roman Empire) and then overcome by the Seraphim and the monotheistic movements (first by Christians, and later by Muslims).

The Middle East and North Africa are now places of contention in the War, and the gods of Khem have returned to make a stand. Veiled in secrecy, and persecuted by the local Muslim authorities, a Cult of Khem, dominated by Avatars and Inheritors of the Old Gods, has spread through Egypt and other parts of North Africa. They are dedicated to finding and hunting down any cell of the Church of Revelations in the area.

Chapter Six

Organization

Each Pantheons has its own system of organization. Still, there are some basic ranks that hold true for most pantheons.

The Earth Mothers and Sky Fathers: Earth and Sky represent two basic forces, worshipped since the earliest times, and two consorts embodying these forces rule most pantheons. The Sky Fathers are the warriors and thunderers, who permit rain to fertilize crops but also slay wantonly with lightning bolts. The Earth Mothers are the nurturers and life bringers, who rule the cycle of life and death just as they rule the cycle of the seasons.

The Elder Gods: These are older and more powerful Titans. A few exist in each pantheon (typically less than a dozen or two), and most of their names are known to students of mythology. Each Elder God is the match of an Archangel in raw power. They usually do as they please, unless a number of Elder Gods or the leaders of their pantheon decree otherwise.

The Lesser Gods: These Titans are younger and less powerful, roughly equivalent to the Seraphim. Their names and deeds go largely unrecorded in the annals of myth and legend. These beings are the most likely Incarnates to be found in the world (the Incarnate Quality assumes the characters are Lesser Gods).

Inheritors: The children of gods and mortals, these demigods are sometimes guided and protected by their divine parents (or, on occasion, by their aunts or uncles), but all too often are left to their own devices.

Avatars: Part human, part embodiment of a god, Avatars have, until recently, been relatively uncommon creations. Avatars usually function under the close supervision of their creator, who observes the world through their eyes and sends them on errands and quests.

Human Followers: Mortals in the pantheons can be broadly divided into three categories: people born in the Pantheons' Realms, human worshippers from Earth, and hirelings and dupes. The Realm-born have lived alongside gods all their lives. They do not know a great deal about the modern world, but often have Gifted powers of their own. Worshippers can be both Gifted and Mundane. They might be Neo-Pagan gatherings, or remnants of ancient cults that have survived millennia of persecution. The dupes are mostly mundane humans; they act out of greed, misguided political, or religious fanaticism, or other similar motivations.

The Effects of the War

Like the angels, the Old Gods had visions of a final conflict, a Ragnarok that would change the world. Many of the Titans thought war would be waged between two pantheons, or between an alliance of gods and the hated Seraphim. The rise of the Dark Apostle revealed the truth. The enemy was Leviathan, represented in Norse myth by the dragon Nidhor, the Dread Biter, who gnaws the World Tree that represents Reality. The danger Leviathan poses makes it impossible for the Old Gods to idly watch by the sidelines.

The pantheons have returned to Earth due to the rise of the Church of Revelations. This migration was helped by the subtle change in the world that started with the birth of the Magic Generation (see p. 25). As magic and the flows of Essence became stronger in the world, it became easier for the gods to break through the barriers separating their reality from Earth. Unlike the Seraphim, who now have great difficulty in traveling back and forth from their Realm, the Old Gods cross over easier than they have had since the beginning of Christianity. Some deities have even materialized physically on the world, despite the grave dangers involved.

The gods sensed the upcoming upheaval, but knew little more than the angels about its causes. Most pantheons had legends of an upcoming war, and the omens seemed to indicate the New Millennium would be the time of conflict. To prepare for that day, the gods set to prepare an entire brood of warriors. They fathered Inheritors, or created Avatars, living embodiments of their power. These beings have become valuable assets in the war. Still, some have joined forces with the Dark Apostle.

Allies and Enemies

Alliance: The Allfather of the Norse Pantheon is one of the Alliance leaders. Cooperation between the two groups so close that it is hard to tell where one group ends and the other begins. The stubborn and fractious personalities of many Old Gods often lead to conflicts, however.

Heavenly Host: To most Old Gods, the angels are the ultimate hypocrites, beings who claim to follow the wishes of the Creator but who are acting on their own. They "freed" humankind from the Old Gods, and then tried to keep humans mired in ignorance and misery. Many elder deities remember the battles of the Second Celestial War and are itching for a rematch.

Infernal Legion: The Pantheons do not particularly like the demons, either. They are corrupters and traitors of their own kind, and as such they cannot be trusted.

Lodge of the Undying: Gods and Immortals have plenty of reasons to be either friends or enemies. They have more in common with each other than with normal humans, but the Immortals are also a reminder of the danger humans may one day pose. Current relations are warmer than ever, however.

Watchers: Several Titans, led by Prometheus, were among the founding members of this organization. The Titans, still afraid of humans after the events that led to the Flood, were incensed by what they saw as an attempt to bring back the Elder Kingdoms. They captured Prometheus and tortured him for centuries, until the Inheritor Hercules rescued him. After the Old Gods themselves were forced into hiding, the enmity between the two groups died down somewhat, and now old rivals are trying to work together.

Other Associations: Some pantheons or individual gods have maintained small cults on Earth for centuries. They have also made contact with some Neo-pagan groups, and gathered new followers and allies in this way.

Watchers

The Watchers were Seraphim who grew to like humans too much. They lived among them, married them, and begot children with them. When they were discovered, their fellow Seraphim persecuted them and forced them into hiding. They have remained on Earth ever since, forever barred from Heaven or Hell.

Although only a relative handful of Seraphim (less than a thousand) became the Watchers, they made up for this by siring several generations of Nephilim, the result of the union between an angel and a mortal. These hybrids combine the superhuman physiques of the Seraphim with the boundless potentiality of humans. Their greatest power is their immunity to aggressive manipulations of Essence. Feared by angels and demons, mortals and Pagan Gods, the Nephilim can find sanctuary only among the Watchers (and more recently, the Alliance). Those who grow up ignorant of their nature are too often found and killed by those who consider them to be aberrations or too dangerous to be allowed to exist.

This band of outlaw angels and their progeny have operated for millennia in the world. Some of them became legendary heroes and martyrs, while others operated in such secrecy that no knowledge of their activities survives in official records. While trying to keep their activities to a minimum, the Watchers have often interfered with the plans of the Combine, the Host, and the Infernal Legion. The return of the Cult of Leviathan has forced the Watchers to take action on a wider front than ever before.

History

The Watchers appeared some time after the Flood and the Fall of Lucifer (see p. 175). They were the creation of two Archangels: Shemizael (who at the time was a member of the Council of Four) and Azrael. They, together with the Titan Prometheus, established a secret network of angels and gods on Earth, in open defiance of the decision to limit contact between humans and Celestial beings. These rebels acted out of a mixture of altruism and selfishness. On the one hand, they thought they could help humans regain some of their lost glory (most Watchers had been opposed to Lucifer's decision to unleash the Flood). On the other, many had grown enamored of humans, either physically (most Watchers were romantically involved with one or more mortals) or intellectually (the human capacity to create anything from new philosophies to new tools was endlessly fascinating to the angels, who for the most part lack the inclination or capacity to create or build anything on their own).

When their actions were discovered, the Watchers were attacked and persecuted. Many were killed, many others recanted and were admitted to the fold. Only a minority eluded pursuit and go into hiding. Most of the renegades had to sever their ties to their angelic origins, becoming Exiles. A relative handful were able to preserve their abilities. Since then, and throughout history, the Watchers have taken a hand in human affairs. Although they avoided direct action most of the time, the Watchers would step in and either nudge events in the "right" direction or destroy supernatural intrusions in the world.

Beliefs

The Watchers have the same basic goal as the Heavenly Host. It is in the implementation that conflicts arise. The Watchers claim that, before becoming the guardians of humankind, before daring to judge it, angels must grow to understand

humans. Only by living among humans, by observing their spiritual and technical evolution, can angels truly become protectors.

The main Watcher goals involve helping and protecting humans as they evolve as the Creator's heirs, destroying major supernatural infestations in the world, and studying humans without disturbing them. Most Watcher Seraphim adopt mundane identities and interact with humans in ways unimagined by both the members of the Heavenly Host and the Infernal Legion. Some have amassed considerable financial and social influence, although for the most part they use it to further the goals of their secret society. In the course of their history, the Watchers have interacted with almost every major conspiracy on Earth, from the Combine to the Knights Templar to the Boxer Rebellion. Sometimes they have worked alongside those groups, more often (especially where the Combine is involved), they have tried to oppose them.

In their effort to minimize the impact on humans, the Watchers prefer to work in secrecy. Shemizael fervently believed that if humans truly accepted angels walking among them, they might stop striving towards better things on their own, hoping those "superior beings" would take care of them. This would be a tragedy, affecting humankind's destiny. Thus, the Watchers hide their actions as best they can, using their powers to alter events and memories, and acting in subtle ways, preferably without witnesses, to avoid detection and discovery.

A secondary, but fundamental goal is the protection and welfare of its members. For centuries, many Watchers did little more than observe and report, in return for which their careers, living arrangements, and general welfare were taken care of. The Watchers have a well-established network of money and influence, allowing the Seraphim and their children, as well as human allies, to go to the best schools, get prestigious jobs or appointments, and lead lives of luxury or at least comfort. While there are dangers and hardships involved, life among the Watchers is good—or it was before the war.

Organization

Unlike the two other Seraphim bands, the Watchers include a great number of human and half-human members among their ranks. And, although the Seraphim (many of them Exiles) dominate the highest ranks, humans can rise to high positions of power and responsibility. The "ranks" of the Watchers do not depend on species or sub-order of being. Instead, they are meant to represent experience and dedication. This is not to say that favoritism or even nepotism (many a Seraphim has favored his progeny over other candidates) does not exist, but overall, those who achieve success are rewarded with higher rank (and incidentally, with more responsibilities and worries).

Novice: This rank includes Nephilim who recently discovered their abilities (and need to be trained and educated in their use), and humans who show promise and interest in joining the organization. Novices have few responsibilities and even less information.

Observer: These are beginning members who know some of the basic secrets, and receive given positions of some importance. Local safehouse keepers, guards and bodyguards, and special agents and informants are all considered Observers. Nephilim and the odd Inheritor who has been prepared but still lacks experience are also in this category. Observers rarely operate on their own, instead acting under strict guidance.

Watcher: This is the basic rank of the organization. Watchers are full-fledged members, who know most of the secrets of the organization and who are expected to defend its interests to the full extent of their capabilities. Many human Watchers are Gifted, including psychics, magicians, and even a number of Inspired. Others are mundane scholars, researchers, spies, and soldiers. Humans are a slight majority, but Nephilim and Exiles can be found among their ranks as well, as well as an assortment of other supernatural beings.

Advocates: The Advocates are experienced members in charge of supervising the actions of other Watchers. Advocates receive their appointment from Judges, and serve for periods of six years before their performance is reviewed and their position either renewed or revoked. Some Advocates travel around and act as troubleshooters and inspectors, while others oversee activities over a specific area (usually a city, although some are in charge of an entire country). About half are human, many of them Gifted; the rest are supernatural beings.

Judges: The Judges are old members (most of them are at least one hundred years of age; many are several times older), renowned for their wisdom and experience, who perform most of the leadership functions. The Judges appoint (and, if

necessary, dismiss) Advocates, and also make most of the important decisions about intervening in major matters. Most Judges are Nephilim, Incarnates, or Seraphim; a few humans whose Gifted abilities have extended their lives (see p. 202) can also among their ranks. Recently, the Judges were discredited by noting signs of the coming war, but failing to adequately prepare for it. Their authority over the rank and file has suffered for it.

The Founders: These are the original Watchers, including Shemizael (Azrael disappeared after the original persecution and has not been heard of since), and the Titan Prometheus. They are all true Archangels, Greater Seraphim, or full-fledged Titans, and they form the ultimate council and court of appeals in the organization.

The Effects of the War

The rise of the Church of Revelations represents a major defeat for the Watchers. The cult escaped detection until its power was so great that the Watchers could not challenge it directly. The organization's obsession with secrecy also proved its undoing. Until the end, the Watchers hesitated before taking direct action against the Church of Revelations, and when they finally acted, the Munich Massacre had occurred and the Dark Apostle walked the Earth as a living embodiment of Leviathan.

This tragedy has made many Watchers angry at their own inaction. These members are now far more likely to break their vows of secrecy and directly attack the enemy. For the most part, however, the group prefers to work in relative secrecy. They are the Alliance's biggest supporters, and the two groups are on the verge of combining into a single society.

Another event that caught the Watchers by surprise was the birth of an unprecedented number of Nephilim among the Magic Generation. Apparently, many people had been born human, but with a latent Nephilim gene; the same phenomenon that increased the birth rate of Gifted humans also resulted in the birth of thousands of Nephilim without the knowledge of the Watchers. Many of these Lost Children have been killed by enemies, while others have developed their supernatural abilities without proper preparation. Some Lost Children have become criminals and, worst of all, a few have even joined the ranks of the Church of Leviathan. The Watchers constantly lookout for these Lost Children, either to take them back into the fold or, if they prove to have turned out wrong, to destroy them.

Allies and Enemies

Alliance: When the Archangel Michele broke from the Host, the Watchers tried to bring her into the fold. Her answer was less than friendly. As far as she was concerned, the Watchers had achieved little in their time of hiding, and needed to take some more direct action in order to earn her respect. Since the war started, however, the Watchers and the Alliance have perhaps the best relationship of all the groups confronting Leviathan's minions.

Heavenly Host: The Watchers have hidden from the Host for a long time, and old habits die hard. For the time being, the Host has bigger fish to fry, but the Watchers rarely relax their guard when the angels of Elysium are around.

Infernal Legion: To the Watchers, both demon and angel share the same defect—a lack of understanding and empathy for humanity. As far as they are concerned, the two groups are just as loathsome. Demons are not trusted, and Watchers rarely have any tolerance for the Legion's methods.

Lodge of the Undying: A few True Immortals have joined the Watchers in the past. Some of them remained in the Lodge, making sure the organization stayed out of the affairs of the mundane. The Watchers have revealed themselves to the organization, and tried to establish a friendly relationship with it. Immortals in general are seen as something of a failed experiment: an attempt to evolve spiritually that led instead to a dead end. Immortals, quite naturally, do not find the description flattering.

Pantheons: The Old Gods deceived humans into worshipping them. They exploited and tormented people for their pleasure. Some of them, like Prometheus, tried to help mortals, and suffered horribly as a result. Followers of the Pantheons are dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Other Associations: The Watchers have almost never willingly revealed themselves to other groups. Organizations like the Knights Templar (see *Abomination Codex*) knew more than most, and on occasion worked alongside them, but for the most part the renegade Celestials trusted no outsiders with their secrets.

CHAPTER SEVEN: METAPHYSICS

Chapter Seven

The van leapt forward as Sato stepped on the gas pedal, reckless of obstacles and traffic. A small Fiat, clipped by the van, spun away like a child's toy. One of the pursuing Soul Police cruisers smashed into it, barely slowing down.

"You can't go any faster, can you?" Jeanna asked idly from the passenger's seat. Sato scowled at her. Jeanna seemed unfazed that their mission had failed, that the Soul Police were in hot pursuit, and that they were, in all likelihood, going to die—quickly if they were lucky, horribly and at great length otherwise.

"I guess it doesn't matter," Jeanna continued as the pair sped through the streets of Paris. "We'll be running into roadblocks any second now."

"Your optimism is invigorating," Sato hissed as he took a sharp turn without slowing down. For a heart-stopping moment, two of the van's wheels lifted of the ground, and he braced for the rollover. Then they came down, and on they went.

Right into a roadblock. Soul Police troopers started shooting as soon as the van came into view. The windshield splintered, and Sato involuntarily recoiled when a bullet bounced off his energy Shield.

"This is going to hurt," Sato muttered gunning the engine to its limits.

"Hold on," Jeanna whispered. She thrust her hands forward. A blast of light, as bright as the sun or a nuclear explosion, erupted from her fingers. A Soul Police car exploded, scattering bodies and debris everywhere.

"Aim for the gap," Jeanna ordered.

Sato held his breath as the van darted past the smoke and flames. A Soul Policeman did not get out of the way fast enough. The van shuddered as it ran him over.

"That's worth fifty points," Jeanna commented. "Seventy for officers, one hundred for an Adept."

"Dear lady," Sato replied in a low voice. "I am truly thankful, but must you speak so much?"

"Sorry. I always blabber when I'm keyed up."

Sato pointed at the windshield, where the blast of light had melted a perfectly circular hole, about five inches wide. "Can you only do that when you're 'keyed up'."

"Oh, that?" Jeanna made a show of studying her fingernails. "A little something I picked from my dad. This is the first time I've used it for real."

"I wish you had told me you could do that. It might have come in handy during the ambush."

"You seemed to be handling yourself okay. I didn't want to intrude."

"So you let me fight three armed men on my own because you didn't want to intrude."

"Sorry about that." Jeanna smiled sheepishly.

"Never mind. Can you do the same thing to the cars behind us?"

"Maybe once or twice, but then I'll run out of juice."

"Save it for later," Sato said. "And it's all right if you want to chatter away."

Who knows, he thought, we might actually make it out alive.

Metaphysics

Introduction

Armageddon is a world of magic and supernatural beings. Occult forces pose as much of a threat as the rampaging armies and economic chaos of the mundane side of the war. This chapter describes many of the metaphysical elements of the game (others are covered in **Chapter Eight: Inhumans**).

Humankind Rising

Humans are the ultimate prize and the ultimate hope of the world of *Armageddon.* Born with incredible potential, humans can evolve into beings of godlike power. As a species, however, humankind remains in its infancy, often using its powers without the benefit of wisdom. Creative, adaptable and resourceful, humans are masters of technology and the crafts. Those who have learned to perceive the invisible worlds of magic and the occult are often more accomplished than most supernatural beings. Although not as physically powerful and long-lived as angels or demigods, humans with the right magical or technological tools can be the match of those beings.

The Seraphim know the Creator's plans for humankind. Humans are the Children of God, and heirs apparent to all of Creation. This does not mean that they "own" the Universe—that the concept of ownership still exists among humans shows that they are not ready to assume their inheritance. By the time humans evolve into readiness, untold years or millennia in the future, they may become something completely different, able to combine the physical sciences and the metaphysical arts in forms unimaginable today. Destroying humankind would be akin to murdering a baby in the cradle, long before adulthood is reached. But, unlike a baby, humans can defend themselves from both angel and pagan god. Even though the ultimate merger of spirit and technology is far from reality, humans can use both the tools of science and powers of the occult to fight their enemies.

Once before, humans grew in power until they rivaled the angels and gods. Their impatience and ruthlessness led them to open warfare and untold destruction. Eventually, one group on the losing side of the conflict consorted with dark forces more dangerous and evil than they could imagine. As a result, the Seraphim destroyed the Elder Kingdoms and sent humans into a dark age that took ten thousand years to overcome. Now, the same dark force ultimately ultimately responsible for the destruction of Atlantis and the fall of Ultima Thule has risen again, and threatens all of Creation. Humans will be the deciding factor in this conflict; should they choose wrongly, the best efforts of the Seraphim or the Old Gods will not be enough to stop the arrival of Leviathan.

Essence and the Human Soul

Essence is the main building block of reality. It is a force and an element, a source of power and the foundation of all matter and spirit. It is the Chi, Baraka, and Mana described by most cultures and legends. In its purest form, it can be found in currents floating through the world, or swirling around places and people of power. It ebbs and flows like the tides, strongest at certain, specific times. Those who can sense and manipulate Essence can create and destroy with the force of their wills. Magic, psychic powers, and all the supernatural abilities of myth and legend ultimately depend on Essence to work.

Essence is also the stuff of souls. Each human has a soul, an Essence matrix as unique in each individual as one's genetic pattern. This Essence pattern is almost indestructible and, unless unraveled through malice or misfortune, it is eternal and immortal. The basest human soul has a good chance of outliving the most powerful archangel, and a better chance of surviving an attack. Immortal as they are, however, human souls can be enslaved, twisted, and tortured by those who know the right secrets.

The strength of a human being's soul is reflected by her Essence capacity. Magicians and other Gifted humans possess very powerful souls, representing their more advanced state. Unfortunately, the advancement or raw power of a human soul has nothing to do with the morals and disposition of the person. Free will is as much a gift as a curse, and those who wield great power are at constant risk of being corrupted by its use.

By learning to project the power of their souls, and combining it with the power that flows freely through the world, magicians, psychics, and saints can manipulate the world with their minds and will alone.

Chapter Seven

Reincarnation and Life After Death

Since souls are eternal, death is not an end to existence. The spirits of the dead, once released from their mortal shells, have a number of choices. They can be reborn in a new body, adding each new lifetime's experience to the soul, becoming stronger and more experienced with each new existence. They can enter a higher realm of existence, a place where even the Seraphim and Old Gods cannot follow. Finally, they can wander in the Death Realms, shadowy dimensions where the Death Gods and Fallen Seraphim often prey on the souls of the wicked and the weak.

Reincarnation is a major element in *Armageddon* games. While reincarnated souls rarely retain any conscious memories of their past lives, these memories, and the feelings and instincts attached to them, can be reawakened. People who were linked in a previous life very often encounter each other in the next, perhaps in different roles, and always reflecting the consequences of previous interactions. A formerly betrayed lover could return in the next life as an implacable enemy, with neither participant truly knowing why they feel hatred for each other. Immortal or long-lived beings are often haunted by new reincarnations of those they wronged in ages past.

Changes From *WitchCraft*

Players who own *WitchCraft* or *Armageddon* First Edition will notice that a few new supernatural effects and powers have been added or changed in this book. This reflects the increase in the ambient Essence that has occurred since the Reckoning. Chroniclers of a *WitchCraft* campaign can ignore these new applications, or use them as they see fit.

Essence

Essence is pure potentiality, a chaotic force that can spawn matter and energy in violation of all known physical laws. It is the stuff of our souls, a force of emotion as much as it is of reason. To work any number of metaphysical effects, Magic in particular, one must be able to weave Essence into the right matrix. Powers, Invocations, and rituals provide the mold into which Essence is poured. If enough Essence is summoned and used, and if no outside force is interfering with the ability, the desired effect takes place.

Magical Signatures

Each person's Essence is as unique as her DNA code. Thus, any Metaphysical effect powered by a person's Essence (i.e., not powered wholly through ambient Essence) bears the person's "imprint" or "signature." A Gifted character or supernatural being must pass a Difficult Perception Test to detect this signature. If she has seen it before, a Simple Intelligence Test brings the memory to mind.

Sources of Power

The Essence necessary to power metaphysical effects may be collected in a number of ways. Essence Channeling, Rituals, Places of Power, Times of Power, Symbols of Power, and Items of Power are all discussed in turn.

Certain sources, such as Places of Power and Times of Power, provide an additional measure of Essence. When this amount is used up, however, it is no longer available. Once gone, the Essence does not return until the Place of Power replenishes, the Time of Power returns, and so on.

For example, during the hour of midnight, the extra five points of Essence may be divvied up among as many Invocations as a Magician wants (to a maximum of five Invocations with one free Essence Point each). This same limit is applied when gathering additional Essence during Group Magic (see p. 207).

Essence Channeling

Some among the Gifted have the power to tap into Essence at will, without needing to rely on complex rituals and ceremony. Those with this power are known as Channelers. Channelers can release Essence quickly, in a matter of seconds in some cases, which allows them to dispense with lengthy rituals to call forth ambient Essence. Some Channelers are more powerful than others. A character's level in Essence Channeling (see p. 81) determines how much Essence she can bring forth from her inner reserve in one Turn (one to five seconds).

Channeling requires a degree of concentration. Involved activity other than Channeling, such as running, would affect that concentration. It might take longer to Channel under those circumstances, or the Chronicler could impose a -2 or -3 penalty to any subsequent Art using the gathered Essence.

Rituals

A ritual is an involved, often repetitive activity meant to tap into ambient Essence. This is the only way those without Essence Channeling can use certain metaphysical effects, particularly Invocations, as they lack the ability to tap into their own Essence Pool except in the most basic and limited ways. Rituals are time-consuming and require a great deal of preparation, effort, and dedication. The hours or days of preparation and ceremony, however, can provide a great deal of extra power. For this reason, even Essence Channelers sometimes resort to rituals.

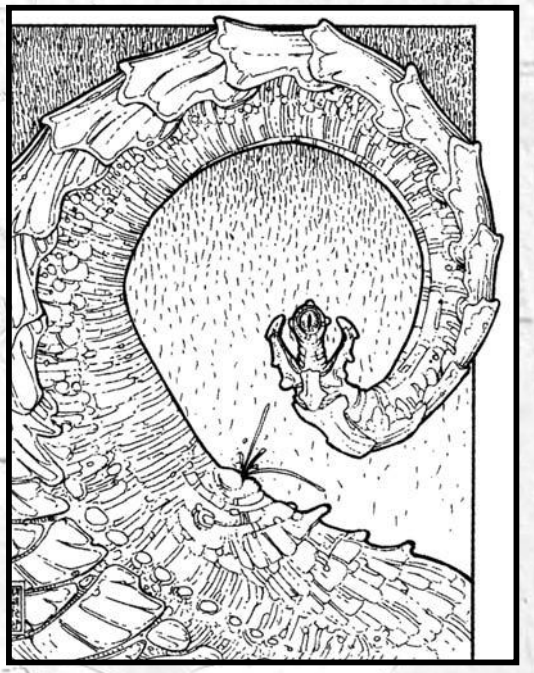
Performing a ritual uses an Intelligence and Rituals Task; the skill Type is specific to each metaphysical group or tradition (see p. 96). A ritual must last a minimum of 10 minutes, at the end of which time the Task is attempted. Each Success Level in the Task provides D4(2) Essence Points to be used in the metaphysical effect. This Essence is added to any other Sources of Power. If the Task fails, the Essence gathered must be Dismissed (see p. 205).

Extending the length of the ritual adds bonuses to the Rituals Task: +1 for every hour the ritual lasts, to a maximum bonus of +6. Longer lasting rituals add a +1 per 24-hour period after the first 24 hours, to a maximum additional bonus of +6 (for a total of +12). At the end of the ritual, a participant can contribute some of her own Essence. If she has Essence Channeling, she simply releases as much as she needs, limited only by time. Those without Essence Channeling must make a Difficult Willpower Roll. Each Success Level releases 1 Essence Point from their personal Pool, to be used in the ritual.

Places of Power

Certain areas have a greater flow of Essence than normal. Most of them are places where the barriers between Earth and the Otherworlds are thin, allowing for energies from other places to enter into our world. Others are places where ancient magical cults conducted their magical ceremonies. Most such places become shrines, temples, haunted houses, or other remarkable areas, often the focus of local legends. Many have been claimed by groups of Magicians or supernatural beings, and they do not look kindly on intruders.

All Places of Power have an "overflow" of Essence that can be tapped by anybody performing Invocations in the area. This overflow renews itself every twenty-four hours, and it works on a "first come, first served" basis—after somebody exhausts the overflow, no extra Essence is available for the rest of the day. A minor Place of Power has an overflow of 10 to 50 Essence Points. Most Places of Power have 50 to 100 Essence Points. The most powerful ones have hundreds or even thousands of available Essence Points. Chroniclers must devise the rationale for each Place of Power, its background story, and the number of available Essence Points.



Some Places of Power

Shrine: A lesser shrine or holy place, used for at least a century, has 10 Essence Points. The site of a great temple, a sanctified burial ground, or similar holy place has 25 Essence Points, but the spirits of those associated with the place have a say about who uses their power—or at least, who uses that power without consequences. An ancient holy place (over 1,000 years old) has 100 Essence.

Crime Scene or Battlefield: Places where many people died at once, or where someone died a horrible death, can become storehouses of Essence. The site of a gruesome crime or a medium-sized battlefield has 10 points of Essence; a major historical battlefield, or the former place of operations for a serial killer has 30 Essence. In all cases, the Place of Power is tainted with negative emotions, however. All magicks used with the help of this power require a Dismissal Task. These places are also likely to be haunted, and the local ghosts may react badly to anybody "poaching" in their turf.

Major Occult Locales: Stonehenge has over 1,000 Essence Points, but it appears some group already taps that power for its own uses. The Pyramids should have a lot of power, but for some reason it cannot be accessed; perhaps only those with the right supernatural "keys" can use them. Finally, places like the Bermuda Triangle appear to be huge Places of Power (where up to 100 points of Essence may be tapped by each and every sorcerer), powerful enough to break the barriers between worlds.

Times of Power

Essence flows from many things. The Sun, the Moon, the planets and the stars emit Essence and their influence has an impact on this world. In that matter, astrology is correct (although often misused and misunderstood). The external powers contribute to some times of the day, dates of the year, and special events having a special significance. During other periods, the amount of ambient Essence is only sufficient for regular Channeling and ritual practice; no additional Essence is available. But during these Times of Power, extra Essence can be tapped by the Gifted or other supernatural beings.

The extra Essence available during a Time of Power can be tapped once during that period, and not again until the next such time. In general, the extra Essence available is cumulative. For example, a ritual conducted during the Vernal Equinox at midnight garners a total of 25 extra Essence Points. Some of the most common Times of Power are listed below.

Noon and Midnight: Midnight is known as "the Witching Hour" a traditional time of Magic and the supernatural. Noon is a similar, less well known, Time of Power. These two times see a "peak" in the flows of Essence energies. Any Invocation or supernatural ability performed during these hours (the benefits last for the entire hour) gains an additional five Essence Points.

Full Moon: The moon emits great quantities of Essence, perhaps as a result of its proximity to Earth. During the full moon, lunar energies bathe the land at peak strength. Metaphysics conducted at night during a full moon can tap an additional five Essence Points, or a total of 10 points when conducted at midnight.

The Solstices and Equinoxes: These solar dates mark the beginning of the seasons, and are important times of change and transition. They also provide great power. The Summer and Winter Solstices occur approximately on June 21 and December 22, respectively. The Vernal (spring) and Autumnal Equinoxes are approximately March 21 and September 23. During these days, an additional 20 Essence Points may be tapped.

The Four Days of Power: During four particular dates of the year, magical forces flow in greater abundance. So noticeable are these flows that the four dates have long held religious significance. They are each traditional pagan holidays. The four dates are, in chronological order: Imbolc (February 2nd), Beltane (April

30th), Lughnasadh (August 1st) and Samhain (October 31st—Halloween). During these four days, 30 extra Essence Points are available.

Symbols of Power

Many symbols generate a great deal of power. It appears that some geometrical configurations attract power naturally, acting like magical magnets or lightning rods. By taking the time to use these symbols, Gifted or supernatural beings can tap their power. The most common Symbols or configurations of power are listed below.

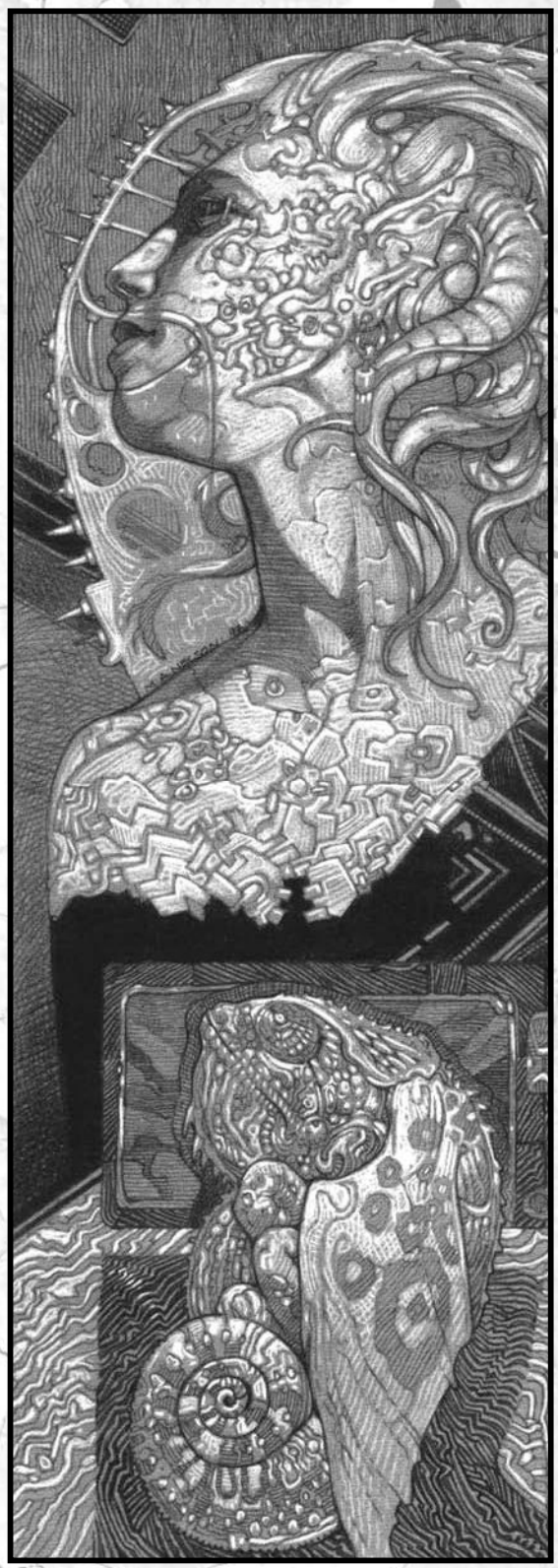
The Circle: The circle represents infinity, a line without ending or beginning. It can be used for protection against hostile magicks, or to tap into the flows of Essence. The circle must be drawn or carved on the floor. Although a perfect circle is best, a not-quite exact drawing will often do the job. When used for protection, those being protected must stand or sit within the circle. Used in this manner, the circle attracts an additional 10 Essence Points, usable on defensive only. To use the circle as a source of power, the Gifted or supernatural being stands outside the drawing. Used thusly, the circle grants five Extra Essence to those standing outside the circle.

The Pentagram: The five-pointed star has long been a symbol of magic. Popular culture wrongly believes that pentagrams are Satanic symbols. They were in use long before Christianity ever existed, and have come to represent many different things (pentagrams were actually used in some old Churches to represent Christ's five wounds). Drawing a pentagram requires an Intelligence and Rituals Task. A drawn pentagram contributes five Essence Points to any metaphysical effect used within it. A pentagram inside a circle contributes a total of seven Essence Points, or 15 to any defensive metaphysics.

Items of Power

Certain common objects and articles have inherent power, either because they can hold Essence more easily, or because they interfere with the flows of Essence.

Crystals: Crystalline formations have special shapes that seem to interact with Essence in a manner similar to that of Symbols of Power. Even carrying a crystal on a chain helps prevent Essence loss due to the stress of highly emotional situations (see p. 125). A crystal worn against the skin reduces such accidental losses by half.



Using a crystal as the basis for a magical symbol, amulet, or Essence Vessel provides one to four extra Essence Points (roll D4 or as determined by the Chronicler).

Salt: Common table salt is made up of crystalline particles, and makes a powerful weapon against spirits and other incorporeal beings. Salt somehow interferes with the Essence pattern of these creatures. Actually tossing a handful of salt at a Phantasm, Ghost, or immaterial spirit inflicts D4(2) points of damage to their Vital Essence. Using a circle of salt for protection also prevents such spirit beings from reaching a Magician. Using salt in protective metaphysics (such as the Warding Invocation) adds five Essence to the process.

Using Essence Defensively

When being targeted by a supernatural attack (be it the hypnotic gaze of an undead, a hostile Invocation, or a Seer Power), a character can use Essence in defense. A defense is only possible if the character possesses some form of Essence Channeling (that Quality, the Seraphim's natural ability to channel Essence, a Primal Power who grants that ability, etc.) and knows she is being targeted with an opposing power. A Gifted or supernatural may sense this by passing a Difficult Perception Test. If successful, a Channeler using Essence to defend against an area of effect attack negates it for all affected.

Make a Resisted Task. The attacker uses the result of her Focus, Seer Art, or other metaphysical/supernatural ability Task. The attacker gains a bonus of +1 for every 10 Essence Points used in the supernatural attack (a minimum of 10 Essence must be spent to gain the bonus; attackers who spend no Essence have no bonuses or penalties). The defender uses her Willpower and adds one for every point of Essence channeled in the defensive maneuver. If the defender reacts quickly, she is limited by the amount of Essence she can release in one Turn through Essence Channeling. If not, she may use more than one Turn to channel as much Essence as possible. If the defender wins or ties, the offensive effect fizzles out before affecting her. Otherwise, the Invocation, Seer Power, or other metaphysical/supernatural ability works as the wielder intended.

This defensive Task is used in addition to any normal Resisted Tasks or Tests that apply to the power. For example, if a power can be resisted by a Simple Willpower Test, the character can perform two resistance rolls, one using the rules above, and the other using the Simple Willpower Test. Both would be applied against the same Task total by the attacker.

For example, Tanya, played by Grace, is targeted by an insane cultist. The babbling maniac points a hand towards Tanya, who can see the glow of Essence gathering around him. Grace announces that Tanya is going to try to defend against the hostile magic. Tanya has a Willpower 5 and an Essence Channeling 3; she uses all three Essence Points, for a total of +8 to her defense. The cultist is using Soulfire and spending less than 10 Essence Points—he gains no additional bonuses. The man's combined Willpower and Invocation levels total seven. Grace rolls a six, for a total of 14. The Chronicler rolls a seven, for a total of 14—a tie. Tanya makes a sweeping gesture and a wave of energy meets the jet of Soulfire, dispersing it a foot away from her body.

Essence and Immortality

Many cultures, from the Gnostic heretics of early Christianity to the Taoists of China, hold beliefs about Immortals—enlightened humans who have transcended the boundaries of Life and Death, and who are no longer subject to the ravages of age. Some of these "immortals" are supernatural creatures, like the Incarnates or the True Immortals, whose lifespans greatly exceed those of humans. Other Undying Ones are Gifted humans whose power and wisdom have defeated the aging process. Those who know the occult truths of the world refer to them as "Lesser" or "Common" Immortals.

Any Gifted character whose Essence Pool grows beyond certain limits ages more slowly. Characters with over 75 points in their Essence Pool age at a rate one-third as fast as normal people. Such a character would only age the equivalent of ten years over a period of three decades. Many Gifted reach their sixties and seventies while still appearing to be in their late thirties or early forties—enough to be the envy of their contemporaries but not unprecedented in modern times, where plastic surgery and "clean living" can hide the effects of age. Gifted characters with over 100 points of Essence age at one-fifth the normal rate. These men and women can be over a hundred years old, but still appear to be fairly young. Such characters need to cover their tracks after a certain point, or their continued good health and youth becomes

suspicious to those around them. After exceeding 125 points of Essence, the aging process slows to one-tenth the normal rate, resulting in people living for over two centuries without appearing to be much older than forty years old. Upon reaching 150 Essence Points, the aging process nearly stops, and the character ages at one-twentieth the normal rate. At 200 Essence and beyond, aging is reduced to one fiftieth of its normal rate.

Regardless of how much Essence the character had during her childhood, the slowdown in the aging process does not "kick in" until the person reaches full adulthood—roughly the mid- to late-twenties. Essence does not stop growth, but only the decay caused by age. Also, the slowed aging does not begin until the character accumulates the requisite Essence. For example, a character who reached 75 points of Essence at age forty would start aging at one-third the normal rate from that point on; at age seventy she would look like she was fifty years old.

How the Essence is accumulated is usually not relevant. Magicians, Necromancers, and practitioners of any of the Gifted Arts can increase their Essence Pool through experience. By focusing and refining their Powers, the characters strengthen their souls and begin to transcend the limits of age.

Magic

Magic involves the channeling of Essence to affect the real world. By manipulating Essence, the sorcerer can make and unmake things, can release energy and affect matter, can cause wounds with a touch or heal the injured. To work Magic, the Gifted must use Invocations—ritual actions and words that help focus the Magician's will and imagination to produce the desired effects.

Magic Patterns

Having the ability to manipulate Essence is not enough. The raw energies of Creation need focus, or their potential remains unrealized or, worse, produces effects at random. Invocations are the tools used to weave Essence into the desired shape. As the Magician learns her Art, she acquires a transcendental understanding of how to Create specific things using Essence. One can think of Essence as a fine thread that can be used to weave anything. The pattern of the

weave determines the final result. Each Invocation helps the Magician to understand one specific pattern or matrix.

To imprint this understanding in her memory, the Magician uses a "code" of words and signs which, when properly spoken or gestured, "remind" her of the pattern she wishes to weave. So, the Elemental Fire Invocation is learned to weave Essence into fire shapes and forms. The amount of Essence available limits how large or destructive the fire is, but the same Invocation serves to light a match or to turn a building into a blazing inferno—both effects are part and parcel of the same Invocation.

Learning Invocations

Each Invocation is learned as a separate skill. Due to the complex nature of Invocations (the character does not just memorize a way of doing things, but also achieving a fundamental understanding of a part of Reality), they cost two character points per level up to level five, and five character points per level thereafter. Learning a new Invocation after character creation costs 10 character points for the first level; the rest are learned normally.

The Process of Casting Invocations

Most Invocations require at least a few spoken words or quick gestures to help the Magician focus her mind on the process. If the Magician is restrained in such a way that neither words nor gestures are possible, the process requires more time (at least one additional Turn) and incurs a -2 penalty. If the Magician is blinded or blindfolded, any Invocation that has a specific target is not possible unless the Magician can touch or sense the target in some way (a Difficult Perception Test with a penalty determined by the Chronicler may be required). Any Invocation that only affects the caster can be performed as long as the Magician's mind is functional. Even a blind and paraplegic sorcerer could use such Invocations as Spirit Projection, for example.

Casting Invocations

Using an Invocation requires three steps—the Summoning, the Focus, and the Dismissal. Generally the latter two are combined in one Task.

The Summoning: During this step, the Magician visualizes the desired effect while gathering the Essence she needs to make it happen. The Summoning may be a matter of seconds if the character has Essence Channeling, or may take hours or days if ambient Essence is gathered through rituals and ceremonies.

The Summoning takes as many Turns as required to accumulate the Essence needed in the Invocation. If the Magician can summon all the Essence she needs in one Turn, she may perform the Focus Task on the same Turn. For characters without Essence Channeling, this is likely to take minutes, hours, or even days. This process requires no Task rolls, unless rituals are being used to accumulate ambient Essence or tap into a Place of Power (see p. 199).

The Summoning is always an intoxicating moment for a Magician. The gathered Essence fills the sorcerer with contentment and a feeling of almost sexual pleasure. She experiences a sense of being all-powerful and god-like. Some Magicians become addicted to this feeling. "Power tripping," the Summoning of Essence for no reason other than to get a "high," is a common vice among some younger and more inexperienced Magicians.

While the Summoning takes place, other Gifted characters may notice the glow of Essence around the Magician. This requires a Simple Perception Test, with a +1 bonus for every five Essence Points gathered around the caster. A successful Test tells the observer how powerful the magical aura is (i.e., how much Essence is being gathered). If a lot of Essence is being Summoned, the magical activity may be detected by other Gifted characters. If 20 Essence Points are Summoned, those within half a mile (.75 kilometer) of the caster may sense the mystical disturbance by passing a Difficult Perception Test. Add another half a mile (.75 kilometers) to the radius for every additional 20 Essence being gathered. The Gifted do not know exactly where the power is being summoned, only the general direction and how much power is being used. The Shielding Invocation (see p. 220) can be used to avoid detection.

It is theoretically possible to Summon enough energy for an Invocation and then "hold" it indefinitely or until needed. Holding Summoned Essence for long periods of time is not advisable, however. The longer a character holds pure Essence in, the more it affects her senses and stability. Holding Essence for a few minutes is like drinking a shot of hard liquor; the longer it is held, the more consecutive shots are drunk.

A character can hold Summoned Essence safely for 10 minutes plus an additional minute for each level of her Willpower Attribute. Every five minutes after that, the feeling of hubris causes the Magician to temporarily lower one of her mental Attributes by one (Chronicler's choice). When any one mental Attribute drops to zero, the Magician collapses in an orgiastic stupor, and the Essence is released randomly (see p. 206).

The Focus and Dismissal: Once all the needed energy has been Summoned, the Magician uses the Invocation to weave it in the desired pattern and dismiss its energies when the pattern's usefulness has ended. This is the actual "spell-casting" Task. Some Invocations can be resisted by the target or victim; treat these as Resisted Tasks. If an Invocation is performed successfully, the Essence is given form, and then harmlessly dismissed.

The Focus and normal Dismissal are both resolved as a single Task, using the Invocation level of the character, the appropriate Attribute (typically Willpower, but sometimes Intelligence or Perception), and any other modifiers that apply to the situation. The whole process may take a few seconds, the equivalent of a Turn. Where the Essence used in the Invocation derives from a limited source (such as the character's Essence Pool or an Item of Power), it is subtracted from that source once the Task is completed. If the Invocation fails, the Essence is still spent, but it becomes a potential danger.

Failed and Corrupted Invocations—Preventative Dismissal: When an Invocation Task fails, the energies released by the Magician do not simply fade away. Indeed, they may strike at random, turn against the Magician, or produce unpredictable and often lethal effects. To prevent this, a Magician who has failed an Invocation Task must Dismiss the Essence gathered.

A similar, separate Dismissal is required for any Invocation cast in anger, or with malicious intent, to dissipate the negative "vibes" created. Using Soulfire to destroy a demonic monster is not malicious; using it to win a bar fight is. Magic is a force shaped by emotion and intent—negative emotions produce negative consequences.

Such a Preventative Dismissal counts as a new Task, which takes at least one Turn to perform. Ideally, the Dismissal should be performed as soon as possible—but often, a failed Invocation occurs when the Magician is running or fighting for her life. If the Essence of a failed or corrupted Invocation is not Dismissed immediately, the backlash may occur before the character has a chance to Dismiss the Essence.

Use Willpower and the Invocation level to perform the Dismissal Task. The more Essence used in the Invocation, the more difficult the Dismissal becomes. Dismissal Tasks have a base penalty of -1 per every five Essence Points spent (rounded up). Also, the intent and emotions of the Magician may make the Dismissal more difficult—an Invocation cast in anger is more likely to get out of hand than one performed with perfect serenity. An additional penalty of -1 to -5 may be applied based on the mind frame of the Magician (see p. 206).

If the Dismissal succeeds, no further repercussions result. If the Dismissal fails, the magic continues to affect the world, in unpredictable and potentially dangerous ways (see p. 206).

Using Invocations in Combat

A magician finds herself facing two hitmen from the Church of Revelations. Dealing with them is an easy matter of casting a couple of spells—or is it? Before players start thinking that their characters are like comic book superheroes, they should take into consideration the difficulties involved in using Magic during a fast and furious fight.

Using Magic often takes time. In many cases, more time than the Gifted has got. A trained gunman can fire several rounds before most Magicians can finish a sentence. Only Invocations that can be fueled by the amount of Essence the character can release in one Turn can be cast instantly. This means the caster needs to be creative. Instead of incinerating the gunmen with a fireball, the witch might set her own hair on fire—not immediately lethal, but confusing and painful.

Intent and Magic

Unlike mindless natural forces, Magic is a function of the will of its wielder, and it is colored by the emotions and intentions of the Magician. The forces invoked reflect her inner desires and intentions. If the Magician holds evil in her heart, the Magic itself is evil and treacherous, and seeks to turn against its wielder at the first opportunity. Using Magic for revenge or to abuse the weak is a risky proposition. Magic used for malicious purposes tends to fail and backfire more often.

The intent of the Magician must be taken into account by the Chronicler. Using Magic to defend oneself, to gain some measure of good fortune (that does not harm others), or to accomplish similar, non-malicious purposes does not have unusual consequences. Using Magic to harm people who cannot defend themselves, especially for frivolous and petty purposes, requires a Dismissal Task regardless of success and suffers additional penalties. As a rule of thumb, the Dismissal of such Invocations incurs an additional penalty of -1 to -5. The same happens to Invocations that, although not meant to harm the innocent, do so because of carelessness. A Magician who unleashes a tornado on a busy street to destroy an enemy will pay dearly for any innocent bystanders who are hurt.

Random Essence Effects

If Essence is not properly Dismissed when required, it produces a random Magical effect sometime in the near future (within 24 hours). The effect occurs in the vicinity of the Magician who summoned it. The Chronicler can pick one of the entries on the Random Essence Effects Table, or roll D6 and apply the result.

The Crowd Effect

When confronted in great numbers, mundanes and their emotions can overcome or dim the powers of Magicians. The two most effective group emotions are unbelief and hatred. Until recently, unbelief was the most common reaction to Magic. By the time of *Armageddon* however, disbelief is relatively uncommon. The 21st century is a time of myth and superstition, when people once again believe in occult powers. Hatred, on the other hand, is stronger than ever. Those who consider all wielders of Magic to be evil are numerous, and they are often led by charismatic (and even Divinely Inspired) leaders.

Whether inspired by disbelief or hatred, the Crowd Effect serves to neutralize Essence around the Magician, potentially rendering her powers impotent.

Random Essence Effects Table

1 or 6: Reiteration

The original Invocation effect manifests itself somewhere around the Magician. This could be beneficial, harmful, or merely disturbing or startling.

2: Activation

An Invocation the Magician knows suddenly activates itself, fueled by the un-Dismissed Essence. The Magical effect appears suddenly and without apparent cause.

3: Burn

The Magician is suddenly affected by a fever-like state. She feels extremely hot and cold sweat starts running down her face and body. She loses one Endurance Point for every un-Dismissed Essence Point. If reduced below zero Endurance, she collapses, unconscious.

4: Grounding

The Essence "grounds" itself on the Magician, who suddenly convulses and goes rigid. After a few seconds, the spell passes but may return. One convulsion/paralysis occurs for every five points of un-Dismissed Essence (round up). Each one costs the Magician D6(3) Life Points and D10(5) Endurance Points. Further, the Magician is helpless for the duration of the spell (usually a Turn).

5: Hallucination

The Magician's senses are plagued by hallucinatory lights and sounds. Mundanes cannot see the lights, but other Gifted can sense the Essence flaring up around her. This effect lasts one minute for every 10 un-Dismissed Essence Points (round up). During this time all Perception and Intelligence-based Tasks suffer a -5 penalty.

Crowd Effect Table

Number in Crowd	Essence Neutralized
10-20	1 per person
21-50	20 plus 1 per 5 people
51-100	30 plus 1 per 10 people
101+	40 plus 1 per 20 people

All Essence amounts rounded down.

Overcoming the Crowd Effect

The most direct way to circumvent the Crowd Effect is to instill fear in their hearts. A graphic demonstration of power, perhaps killing one or more members of the mob, may do the job, but a Magician must be very careful of intent lest she be harmed by the backlash. Terror contains an implicit acceptance of the metaphysical power; in effect, it is a surrender to the will of the Gifted. Fear may not work on the truly fanatical, however. The only defense against their kind is a quick retreat—or to use enough Essence to overcome their defenses and destroy them.

Seven and Magic

The number seven has special Magical power. The seventh son of a seventh son is said to always have the potential to be a powerful Magician, for example. A Chronicler may wish to grant such a character additional levels of Essence Channeling or Essence Pool. These might be given as a bonus, or balanced out by assigning a Secret or Adversary of similar point cost. Further, rituals that last seven days and seven nights greatly magnify their power. Such a ritual may have a +3 bonus to Focus and Dismissal Tasks or +25% to Essence, at the Chronicler's discretion.

Neutralizing Essence

By unwittingly spending Essence, the members of an incredulous or angry crowd "jam" the flow of Essence around the Magician. This occurs only during specific circumstances. First, at least ten people must be present—only groups of mundanes can generate enough power to seriously hinder a practitioner. Secondly, the crowd must be aware that the Gifted is trying to use Essence for a metaphysical effect, unless she is trying to affect members of the crowd, in which case the resistance is automatic. For example, a Gifted character casting an Invocation without drawing attention to herself would be spared unless she targeted the crowd itself. Finally, the Crowd Effect only works against Magic; other Arts or supernatural powers cannot be countered.

When those conditions are met, the crowd neutralizes several Essence Points. This either ruins the effect, forces the user to settle for a lesser effect, or requires the user to spend extra Essence to overcome this resistance. The amount of Essence neutralized varies by the size of the crowd (see the Crowd Effect Table).

Group Magic

Sorcery is more effective when performed by a group. One of the obvious reasons is that all the participants can infuse their Essence into the Invocation, speeding up the Magic and allowing more powerful effects to take place. Additionally, certain numbers of participants actually draw ambient Essence towards the group, increasing the available energy beyond the sum of the Essence Pools of the participants.

The Power of Numbers

Certain numbers and combinations of numbers generate a degree of intrinsic power. By working as a group, Magicians can gain great amounts of Essence. Even three relatively weak Magicians working together can create powerful effects by tapping into this additional energy. Of course, when manipulating such amounts of Essence, the problem of controlling, focusing and then dismissing the power remains. More than one overly ambitious group of Gifted has been obliterated by playing with far too much power.

The most powerful groups are those numbering three, five, seven, and thirteen individuals. Groups of nine and eleven also grant extra Essence, but less on a person-by-person basis than the previous numbers. The Group

Magic Essence Table provides the amount of extra Essence generated by groups of various numbers. This Essence is immediately available to the group, even if the Magicians only spend one Turn in the Summoning step.

Group Magic Essence Table

Size of Group	Increase in Essence
3	45
5	60
7	105
9	90
11	100
13	132

Conducting Group Magic

Working as a group requires coordination and skill. Most group Magic is conducted by forming a Circle, facing inward. As a closed form, the Circle is useful in focusing the power of the gathering on the Task at hand without letting it escape through any corners or gaps. Sometimes, the members of the group hold hands, although this is not necessary. A member of the group, usually the most skilled Magician at the Invocations to be attempted, becomes the Leader of the Circle.

The basic steps to cast group Magic Invocations are the same as for normal Invocations: Summoning, Focus and Dismissal. The only changes are the contributions of the group to the process. Only characters with the Essence Channeling Quality can participate in a Circle.

The Summoning: During the Summoning, the members of the Circle all contribute Essence to the process. Circle members who do not know the Invocation being attempted are less effective, however—every two Essence Points they contribute only count as one Essence Point. This is due to their inability to visualize the specifics of the Invocation.

Like individual Summoning, the process can take as few as a handful of seconds or as long as the members can stand in a Circle. The process ends when all the available Essence has been absorbed by the Leader, or when the Leader decides she has gathered enough power. The Leader takes all the combined energy unto herself; this includes any "free" Essence generated because of the number of participants present or other sources of power. In some cases, the Leader holds hundreds of Essence Points. This experience is intense—a feeling of power and exaltation pervades the Leader until the Essence is released.

The Focus: The Leader performs all the Tasks involved in the Invocation. Everything else works the same as normal Invocations.

The Dismissal: When a Dismissal Task is necessary, the Leader gains a +1 bonus per member (including the Leader) of the Circle. These bonuses may only be used to offset the Dismissal penalties; they do not add to the Dismissal Task roll. This helps the Leader Dismiss the often-enormous energies gathered by the group's efforts.

For example, a group of five Magicians gather together to attack a farmhouse where a Black Magic cult is holed up. To flush out their enemies, the Gifted plan to create a devastating tornado. The sorcerers are Nathaniel, the Leader (Willpower 4, Elemental Air Invocation 7, Essence Channeling 6), Audrey (Essence Channeling 4), John (Essence Channeling 6), and Kate and Ben (both with Essence Channeling 4). Kate and Ben do not know the Elemental Air Invocation; everyone else does.

The group gathers and starts Summoning. Nathaniel wants to cast the Invocation instantly (one Turn), so they are limited to their Essence Channeling levels. Thus, Nathaniel and John each contribute six points, Audrey contributes four. Kate and Ben spend four each (but this sum is halved because they do not know the Invocation). The total gathered Essence is 60 (the additional Essence generated by the group) plus the 20 from the Magicians themselves, for a total of 80 points, far more than necessary. Nathaniel glows with mystical energy as he takes power unto himself and prepares to use it.

Next comes the Focus Task. Confident in his abilities, Nathaniel decides to use 30 Essence Points to create a tornado with a radius of 10 yards (meters). Such a blast should wreck the house and most likely severely injure the cultists. Nathaniel's player rolls a D10, adds his Willpower 4 and Elemental Air Invocation 7. The total result is a 17. The Invocation is successful, and a tornado takes shape in a matter of seconds. Nathaniel successfully directs it toward the house and smashes the cult's hideout.

As the tornado is a destructive force, and because weather effects must be Dismissed, the group must now try and calm the storm. The Dismissal Task has a penalty of -6 due to the amount of Essence involved. The group mostly offsets this penalty (+5). Added to Nathaniel's Willpower and Invocation skill, D10 is rolled with a -1 modifier. Unless Nathaniel's player rolls a one, the Dismissal will be successful. Such is the power of group Magic.

Invocations

Invocations are the patterns used to manipulate raw Essence into desired effects.

Invocations and Range

Unless otherwise specified, most Invocations have an effective range equal to line-of-sight; if the Magician can see the target, she can affect it. Ideally, this means the target must be in the presence of the Magician, or relatively close. In theory, however, one could cast an Invocation on a target over a mile away, but if the Magician cannot clearly see the target, apply a -3 penalty to all Tasks. Casting an Invocation through a remote viewing device, like a television camera, only works if the Magician knows intimately the location the device is showing (security cameras in the Magician's own home would work; a television interview "somewhere in New York" would not). Even when possible, using an Invocation remotely suffers a -4 penalty.

Attacking Invocations

Some Invocation effects can injure targets. Generally, the Focus result in casting an Invocation is used as the "attack" Task (there is no separate "to hit" roll). Magical attacks that can be aimed (jets of flame, lightning bolts, and other "energy blast" effects) may be delivered using the Magic Bolt Skill (see p. 94), instead of the Invocation Skill. If the victim can see or hear a magical attack (a wave of flames running towards her, for example), a Defense Task (typically Dexterity and the Dodge Skill) can be used to escape the attack.

Lesser Invocations

The bulk of the enchantments listed below are some of the most common Lesser Invocations. Lesser Invocations cover most of the aspects of Magic, including the four classical elements and the powers over spirits, emotions, and senses. Most Gifted never advance past this level.

Greater Invocations

Some more powerful magical effects require the mastery of one or more other Invocations. These Greater Invocations are harder to learn and develop. All Greater Invocations have prerequisites—Lesser Invocations that must be learned before the student knows enough about the nature of reality to progress further.

Beginning characters may learn Greater Invocations, subject to the approval of the Chronicler. Further, the level of the Greater Invocation cannot exceed the level of any of the prerequisites. For example, if the character has Elemental Air 3 and all the other Elemental Invocations at four, the Weather Lordship Invocation cannot be higher than three, and cannot be raised to four until Elemental Air is increased to that level.

After character creation, Greater Invocations follow the same rules as any other Invocation, restricted by the need for the prerequisite Invocations and access to a teacher. These teachers are powerful sorcerers or supernaturals, and may require a period of servitude, a high financial or mystical payment, or some other favor from the would-be student. The search for a teacher and meeting her price can be woven into the Story for additional subplots, or might even be the main plot.

Invocation Descriptions

A number of Invocations are described below. A brief description reveals their characteristics, followed by a list of possible effects and Essence costs. Each Invocation entry covers some basic examples. Creative players will probably come up with other effects; the Chronicler can use the examples provided to determine their Essence cost.

Affect the Psyche

This Invocation uses the emotional nature of Essence to change a person's feelings. It can be used to impress, charm or scare the target. The Chronicler decides whether or not the emotional state of the person being affected changes their behavior in the way the Magician intended: a scared would-be attacker might flee, surrender, or attack like a cornered animal, for example.

Aura of Confidence
2 Essence

This effect creates an impression of power and control around the Magician, making others unwilling to oppose her. The caster gains a +2 bonus on most social interaction Tasks, with an additional bonus equal to the Success Levels of the Focus Task. Only people who have a reason to dislike or hate the Magician may resist with a Simple Willpower Test; otherwise the bonus is automatically applied. This effect costs two Essence and lasts five minutes per Success Level; at the end of that time, the Invocation must be repeated.

Influence Emotional State
Variable Essence

This effect costs one Essence if the person was leaning towards the intended emotion, two Essence to inspire a different emotion, and five Essence for an utterly opposite emotion (e.g., anger if the person was happy, fear if the person was calm). This ability is resisted by a Difficult Willpower Test. Normally, the emotional change is short-lived, lasting one Turn per Success Level in the Focus Task. Used in combination with normal psychological manipulation and seduction, the Invocation may actually change the person's outlook over time. This depends on the Magician (mundane) skills, the target's personality, and other factors, at the Chronicler's discretion.

Blessing

Essence can be used to alter probability, increasing the chances of one specific, beneficial outcome taking place. Blessings alter probability in favor of the subject of the Invocation, making the person luckier and more successful.

The Essence spent on all Blessings must come from the Magician himself. Ambient Essence, Times and Places of Power, or other sources may not be used for this purpose. Furthermore, the Essence spent is not regained until the Blessing benefits end. For example, a Magician who gives himself or someone else a +5 Luck bonus has his own Essence Pool depleted by 15 points until the bonuses are used up.

Blessing of Protection
2 Essence per +1 Bonus

This effect protects the subject from metaphysical harm. Each Essence Point spent gives the subject a +1 bonus to resist one supernatural attack of one specific kind (Magic, the Sight, Primal Power, and so on). This protection activates whenever a hostile attack is made against the blessing's recipient. The protection is only good against one such attack. A Blessing of Protection can also be oriented against all forms of supernatural attack at the cost of two Essence per +1 bonus.

Good Luck
3 Essence per +1 Bonus

This effect gives the recipient Luck. For every three Essence spent, the target gains a +1 bonus. The total bonuses may be applied to one Task/Test, or may be split as desired among many such attempts. Once the Luck bonuses are spent, the effects of the Blessing stop.

Success Blessing
5 Essence

This effect guarantees success in some small matter involving mundane affairs, such as a business deal, school examination or sporting event, provided the recipient had a chance to succeed anyway. This effect costs five Essence.

Cleansing

Negative Essence, colored by bad emotions or evil intent, can "pollute" places, things, and people. Areas where violence, abuse, and other ugliness occurred often retain the taint of the Essence released during those incidents. In some cases, they can make people uncomfortable, especially the Gifted, who can sense the great evil. Nightmares are often experienced in these places. The Cleansing Invocation can remove this negative taint from areas. The process can also be used against harmful magicks, especially those lingering around the victim.

All Cleansing Invocations require separate Dismissal Tasks; the Dismissal is an intricate part of the Cleansing process. Failure to Dismiss a Cleansing Invocation means the negative Essence removed from an area or person follows the Magician around instead. It may require a new Cleansing Invocation to remove such effects.

Remove Curse
Variable Essence

This effect neutralizes a curse or other harmful effect temporarily attached to the target. It works against curses of all types, metaphysical and supernatural. This effect does not work on those with the Accursed Drawback. Removing harmful Magic costs the same amount of Essence as the harmful power cost in the first place, and is resisted by the Task effect of whoever inflicted the curse.

Remove Emotional Debris
3 or 6 Essence

When mundanes are extremely angry or are suffering other strong emotions, their Essence inadvertently "spills" onto objects and areas. These negative emotions can affect the well being of people, making them short-tempered, prone to nightmares, and even unlucky.

Cleansing a room or an object of negative "vibes" costs three Essence. Cleansing an entire house costs six Essence. Failure to Dismiss this effect causes the negative emotions to become attached to the cleanser.

Communion

Each mind is usually trapped inside its skull, relying only on its senses to perceive the world around it. Communion allows direct contact with an area and every living thing and spirit within it.

Communion Invocations are usually conducted in forests, gardens, or other places of nature, where the majority of the spiritual forces are benevolent and friendly. Using the Invocation in a city fills the Magician with the cries of dying trees, the cold calculation of rats and other vermin, and the petty maliciousness, bitterness, and anguish of most residents Magicians who make that mistake often find their sanity permanently impaired as a result.

One With the Land
2 Essence per minute

Becoming one with the land costs two Essence Points per minute. The Magician enters a trance state in which she is aware of everything occurring in the area centered around her. The area affected has a radius of 10 yards (meters) per Willpower level of the caster. This can be increased at additional Essence cost; +5 yards (meters) to the radius per additional Essence Point spent, per minute.

Once Communion is established, the caster can sense the whereabouts and emotions of every living thing in the area, including spirits and supernatural beings. The Magician can pinpoint the location of anybody entering the area, even those who are Shielded or hidden by illusions. Attempts by the caster to communicate, invoke, or awaken any spirits in the area gain a bonus of +5 as long as the Communion is active.

While the Communion is active, the Magician can also cast any Invocation (positive or negative) on anyone or anything in the area as if she was in direct contact or line of sight of them.

The main drawback is that the connection works both ways. The Magician is exposed to the pain and suffering, anger, or other negative feelings of every living thing in the area. The more intense the negative emotions, the greater the danger of a psychic backlash.

When performing the Communion in an area plagued by suffering or anger, the Magician must pass a Difficult Willpower Test to avoid being harmed by the experience. Note that the entire area must be permeated with negative emotions to pose a danger. If a group of men with murder in their minds entered an otherwise tranquil forest, for example, the Magician would know of the men and their emotions, but would not be affected by them. If the Magician casts the Communion in the middle of a burning forest, a city slum, or a concentration camp, the concentrated misery and agony in such places would sear her.

Penalties to the Magician's Willpower Test are determined by the Chronicler. Places of some misery and pain (a dirty park, a lightly polluted forest) have no penalty to the Test. A city slum is at -2 (more for really bad areas where everybody is suffering). A burning forest or a concentration camp is at -4 to -6. A serial killer's torture dungeon would be at -8 or worse. If the Willpower Test is failed, the Magician loses D4 x 10(20) Essence Points.

Elemental Air

One of the classic elements, Air gives the Magician control over all the forces associated with it. Most effects involve changing wind direction and speed, but the Magician can also create air where none existed before.

Creating and maintaining steady winds for long periods of time has severe effects on the weather. Even a relatively small wind, if not Dismissed, can trigger storms, tornadoes, and worse hundreds of miles away. Magicians are advised to always be careful about the use of wind and weather effects. Furthermore, all weather effects require a separate Dismissal Task or cause both Random Essence Effects (see p. 206) and random weather patterns.

Calm Wind
1 Essence per mph per minute

Changing the speed of a natural wind is possible. This has the same cost as the Steady Wind Effect (see p. 213), except that the modifier reduces the wind speed in the area affected. The effect lasts a limited amount of time, but it creates an area of relative calmness around the character. For example, stopping a hurricane-level wind (100 mph/150 kph) over a 10-yard (meter) wide radius for five minutes would cost a total of 106 Essence Points!

Cleanse and Create Air
1 or 2 Essence per person per minute

With this effect, the Magician can transform pure Essence into normal air, and remove any impurities and poisons in a volume of air. She may avoid suffocation even if locked in a small, airtight room. It costs two Essence Points to create enough air for a person to breathe for a minute. The Magician can also neutralize the effects of smoke, poison gas and other hazards. By spending one Essence Point per Turn, the Magician can create a "bubble" of clean air around herself at a higher pressure than the surrounding area. This bubble allows the Magician to walk through areas filled with toxic gases without suffering ill effect. Additional targets could also be protected in this way, at the cost of two Essence per Turn per person. The Magician can either spend the Essence beforehand or maintain the Essence expenditure continuously, if her Essence Channeling is high enough. So, to protect herself for one minute (12 Turns), the character could perform the Invocation and spend 12 Essence, or cast the Invocation and then spend the one Essence Point every Turn, for however long she needed—which might be more (or less) than 12 Turns.

Gust of Wind
1 Essence per 5 mph

The wind only affects a small area—two to three yards (meters) in radius—and only lasts for a couple of seconds. Very strong winds (over 50 mph/80 kph) knock people over, throw objects

around, and inflict D4(2) points of damage on people for every 10 mph of speed over 50 mph. So, a 60-mph wind does D4(2) points of damage; a 100-mph gust inflicts D4 x 5(10) points. The wind can be created within 10 yards (meters) per level of the Invocation. Thus, a character with Elemental Air 5 could trigger the wind up to 50 yards (meters) away. The wind gust only travels 10 feet (3 meters) per 10 mph (15 km) of base speed (a 100 mph wind rushes forward for about 100 feet).

Lightning Bolt
1 Essence per D6

The magician can ionize a section of air, and channel a powerful electrical discharge that can shock people, destroy electronics, and start fires. The lightning bolt inflicts D6(3) points of damage per Essence point spent. Divide the Armor Value of metal armor (including that in most vehicles) by five before applying it to these attacks. Furthermore, machines with electronic parts take double damage from these attacks. The base range of the effect is 20 yards times the Willpower of the Magician. This can be extended at the cost of one Essence per extra 10 yards of range.

Steady Wind
1 Essence per 1 mph per minute

This spell creates a continual wind rather than a gust. This costs one Essence Points for every one mph (1.5 kph) of speed, plus one Essence Point for every minute the wind lasts, and one Essence for every 10 yards (meters) of width of the wind. For example, creating a steady wind with a speed of 10 mph (15 kph) that lasts 15 minutes and affects an area 100 yards (meters) wide costs 35 Essence Points (10 for the wind speed, 15 for the duration, and 10 for the area).

Stirring Air
1 Essence per Turn

Creates a brief stirring in the air (roughly equivalent to a low-powered electric fan).

Whirlwind
3 Essence per yard radius per minute

This effect has a minimum radius of five-yards (meters). The same cost must be paid every minute to maintain the effect. A tornado can lift objects of up to 30 pounds (15 kg) per yard (meter) of radius. It can be used to carry a person or passengers, but piloting it requires a Focus roll every minute if traveling in a straight line, or every Turn if attempting complex maneuvers. A whirlwind obscures vision, breaks and tosses around objects, and inflicts damage on buildings, trees, and other fixed structures. Damage is D6 x 2(6) times the radius in yards (meters) of the twister. People and small objects take no direct damage from tornadoes, but are lifted up and eventually hurled away, taking damage from the fall (see p. 136). People are lifted up to one half the tornado's width, rounded up, in yards (meters). Also, objects in the tornado are likely to hit victims, inflicting half the normal damage of the tornado.

Elemental Earth

This Invocation gives the Magician total control over earth. Given enough Essence, a Magician can cause avalanches and earthquakes.

Crumble Stone
1 Essence per 5 (100) lbs

Stone may be crushed for one Essence Point per five pounds (2.5 kilograms) up to 100 pounds (50 kilograms). After that, it costs one point per 100 pounds.

Dust Devil
5 Essence

This effect creates a cloud of swirling dust that blocks vision and blinds people within it. The cloud costs five Essence and affects a radius of one yard (meter). Each additional yard (meter) of radius costs one Essence Point. The swirling dust can be made to appear up to one yard (meter) away per level of the caster's Willpower, plus an additional yard (meter) for each Essence Point spent. After it is created, it can be moved as far away as the caster wants, provided she can see it directly (see p. 209). A large dust devil, conjured at minimum range, may affect the Magician!

Earth Tremor
Variable Essence

This powerful effect causes the earth to shake in a specific area. Magicians are advised to take care with this power, as it may trigger earthquakes if performed in unstable areas or fault lines. The base area affected has a radius of 10 yards (meters) times the Magician's Willpower. Increasing the area affected costs one Essence Point per additional five-yard (meter) radius.

A slight tremor (enough to be noticed but little else) costs 10 Essence Points. A medium tremor (enough to knock small objects off shelves, make people stagger, experiencing a -2 penalty to any Task involving movement or similar activities) costs 20 Essence Points. A strong tremor (which may initiate avalanches on rocky or snowy slopes, knock people down unless they pass a Simple Dexterity Test, cause large objects to topple and fall, etc.) costs 40 Essence. An earthquake that causes structures to collapse (unless specially designed) costs 100 Essence. An Invocation that spends over 100 Essence to perform this effect triggers a real earthquake if any fault line lies within 10 miles of the effect.

This effect is powerful, and very dangerous, and always requires a separate Dismissal Task with a penalty of -1 per 20 Essence Points spent (rounded up). If the Dismissal fails, the character's body is struck by a devastating backlash (which the Wicce refer to as "Gaea's revenge"), inflicting D8(4) Life Points of damage for every 10 points of Essence put into the Invocation. No Random Essence effect occurs unless over 100 Essence Points are used. If the Invocation was cast maliciously, or where innocents could be harmed, normal Dismissal penalties apply (-1 per five Essence Points), and failure imposes damage on the Magician instead of a random essence effect, at the rate of D10(5) points for every 10 Essence Points used.

For example, Gina successfully casts an Earth Tremor using 50 Essence Points. A separate Dismissal Task is required. If she is careful in its placement (no innocents threatened), and was not malicious in its use, the Dismissal Task suffers a -3 penalty and failure harms her for D8 x 5(20) points of damage. No Random Essence effect occurs even with failure. If Gina was careless or malicious, her Dismissal Task would suffer a -10 penalty and failure would harm her for D10 x 5(25) points of damage.

If Gina used 100 Essence Points and was careful, the separate Dismissal Task suffers a penalty of -5, and failure harms her for D8 x 10(40) points of damage. If Gina wrecks a city, her Dismissal Task suffers a penalty of -20, and failure imposes D10 x 10(50) points of damage. Furthermore, in either case, failure results in a Random Essence effect. Playing with earthquakes is not something one does lightly.

Shift Earth

3 Essence per cubic foot per Turn

The sorcerer can move earth (such as soil, gravel, sand, and similar relatively loose and powdery minerals). This ranges from digging small holes to causing avalanches, and even engulfing man-sized and larger targets under a wave of earth. This effect costs three Essence per cubic foot (0.03 cubic meters) of earth moved, a cost that must be paid every Turn the earth is moving. The controlled matter can be moved at a speed of 10 mph (15 kph) or some 25 yards (meters) per Turn. This speed can be increased by spending more Essence: one Essence per additional mile per hour (1.5 kph) or 2.5 yards (meters) per Turn. Once the Magician releases her control over the earth, it collapses normally. This power enables the Magician to dig holes (a large enough hole, if opened in one Turn, could cause running or walking people to fall in), pile earth onto a target, and even launch earth waves that hit targets with a Strength equal to half the volume of earth in cubic feet, inflicting one point of damage times the Strength of the wave.

Stone Attack

5 Essence

This effect causes any stone within 10 yards (meters) of the Magician to fly out and strike a target. Stones must be available (even brick or concrete will do, as long as it is loose, or has been previously broken by using the Crumble Stone Invocation). Damage is D4(2) x Willpower points and the range is 10 yards (meters) per level of the Magician's Willpower, at the cost of five Essence Points. The character can raise the Multiplier or range of the attack by one for every additional point spent. Multiple targets can be hit by spending one point per additional target.

Weaken Metal

1 Essence per pound

This effect causes metal to weaken or break for one Essence Point per pound up to 50 pounds (25 kilograms), and one point per 50 pounds (25 kilograms) after that.

Elemental Fire

This powerful Invocation gives the Magician control over combustion and fire. Many Magicians favor Elemental Fire, for it is a powerful and lethal weapon. It is assuredly a two-edged sword, however, for it just as happily

consumes the caster and her friends as it does her enemies. Failure to Dismiss a Fire Invocation almost always ends up with the caster feeling the agonies she inflicted on others. Many "fire Magicians" have nasty scars on their hands, bodies, and (sometimes) faces as a result of their dangerous games.

Extinguish Flame
3 Essence per yard radius

A flame, fire, or heat source may be extinguished for a cost of three Essence per one-yard (meter) radius, plus one Essence per additional yard (meter) radius.

Fire Protection
1 Essence per Multiplier reduced per Turn

A Magician may reduce the impact of fire, heat and flames on a subject. This can be a man-sized person or object, or smaller. Larger objects require double, triple or even more Essence, based on their size. Basically, anything larger than a person but smaller than a car requires double the Essence, and something larger triple the Essence. Anything larger than a small aircraft or a truck requires ten times the Essence.

Flame
3 Essence per Turn

This effect produces strong light, causes flammable objects to ignite, or creates a brief flame (equivalent to a cigarette lighter's flash).

Flicker
1 Essence per Turn

With this effect, a Magician can produce a weak light, or cause existing light to flicker.

Striking Flames
Variable Essence

The Magician can summon flames to strike down her foes. The flames can be manifested either as a jet or blast originating from the Magician's hands, or as a rolling wave starting at the Magician's feet (more expensive to maintain and to avoid). This is a destructive Invocation—the flames readily ignite flammable substances and may spark deadly conflagrations. Careless or malicious use of this power requires a separate Dismissal Task, with an additional penalty. Rather than a Random Essence Effect, the caster suffers D6(3) points of damage times the total Essence spent on the Effect.

It costs one Essence Point to create a jet or bolt, inflicting D6 x 2(6) points of damage with a range of 10 yards (meters) per Willpower level of the character. Additional Essence Points may be spent to increase the Damage Multiplier by one per point, or the range by 10 yards (meters) per point. For example, a jet of flame inflicting D6 x 10(15) points of damage would cost nine Essence Points (one for the base, and an additional eight for the additional damage). A wave of flame is one yard (meter) wide for every four additional Essence Points spent. Dodging a wave of flame incurs a penalty equal to the width of the wave in yards (meters).

Elemental Water

Water Invocation effects allow the caster to control water in all its forms. It is often used to increase the chance of rain, although careless use produces droughts in other areas.

Cause Rain
Variable Essence

This effect causes rainfall over a small area. It costs five Essence Points for one minute of light rain over a radius of three yards (meters) for every level of Willpower and Intelligence combined. Increase the Essence Point cost by one for each additional three yards (meters) of radius. Add four Essence for hard rain or sleet, six Essence for light hail, or 10 Essence for heavy hail (enough to inflict D4(2) points of damage on unprotected humans every minute or so). If the day is sunny, double all costs. During a dry spell, in a desert, or similar area where rain is unlikely, triple all the costs. Like all weather effects, a separate Dismissal Task is required to restore weather patterns to their natural conditions.

Create Ice
1 Essence per lb

A sorcerer can create one pound (half a kilogram) of ice for every Essence Point spent. If water is available, two pounds (1 kilogram) of ice are created per Essence Point spent. The ice can be used to cause the ground to become slippery, to seal doors by freezing them over, or anything the player's imagination can devise (except materializing ice inside a living person and similar abominations). Once created, the ice remains depending on the ambient temperature; creating a lot of ice in an enclosed and well-insulated space effectively creates a refrigerator.

Create Fog
1 Essence per cubic yard

Creates a thin mist that imposes a -1 penalty on Perception-based Tests or Tasks. Tripling that cost gives rise to a thick fog that blocks visibility to a couple of yards (meters) and makes most Perception Tests or Tasks based on vision nearly impossible. The fog forms during the time it takes to cast the Invocation; if a caster has sufficient Essence Channeling, it happens in one Turn. The duration of the effect depends on local weather conditions (as adjudged by the Chronicler—few weather conditions can affect conjured fog inside most structures, but a powerful climate control system can).

Destroy Water
Variable Essence

The Magician can destroy water, and even dehydrate living beings, inflicting damage on them. Destroying one gallon of water in its natural state costs two Essence points. Using Destroy Water on a corporeal being inflicts D4(2) points of damage for every two Essence points spent. The target must be in sight of the Magician, and she resists the Focus effect with a Willpower and Constitution Test. Armor does not protect against this attack.

Water Flow
2 Essence per gallon

A Magician may slow or speed up the flow of water. By spending two Essence Points per one gallon (5 liters) per minute, the character can halve or double the speed of water. This can cause pipes to burst.

Farsight

Farsight is the power to see into other places and to search areas by projecting a fraction of one's Essence beyond one's body. Failure to Dismiss the Invocation after a Focus Task failure often causes inconvenient visions and flashbacks that bother the Magician for D4(2) hours.

Farsee
5 Essence

This ability allows the Magician to look into any area within range, but she must be aware of the general location of the area. The Magician decides the viewpoint of the vision, limited by the range (for example, the magician can select a bird's eye view, to look in a specific direction,

and so on), but the viewpoint cannot be changed unless the Invocation is re-cast. The base range is 100 yards (meters) for each point of the character's Perception Attribute. This can be raised to one mile (1.5 kilometers) times Perception for another five Essence, and an additional one mile per Essence Point spent thereafter. The vision lasts up to one minute.

Find Person
Variable Essence

Using Perception instead of Willpower, this effect searches for a person in the area covered by the Invocation. The Magician must know the target, either personally or by contact with her Essence signature. The more powerful the person being searched for is, the easier it is, as her Essence acts like a beacon for those with the right senses. This effect costs 10 points to search for a Mundane, five points for a Gifted person with less than 30 Essence, and two points for a Gifted person with more than 30 Essence Points. If the person being sought has used Magic or other supernatural abilities in the past few hours, all Focus Tasks gain a +1 bonus for every five Essence Points used by the target. If the Gifted character is Shielded (see p. 220), her Essence is hidden and she must be sought out like a Mundane. The base area has a radius of one mile (1.5 kilometers) per level of Perception. Each additional one mile (1.5 kilometers) costs one extra Essence Point.

Insight

All Gifted are sensitive to supernatural activity. Insight allows the Magician to further understand another's true nature—even uncover its deepest secrets.

Perceive True Nature
6 Essence

This effect allows the sorcerer to see a person's true self. Those subjected to this ability resist with their Intelligence and Willpower. Basically, the Magician knows all of the character's mental Qualities and Drawbacks, as well as her main goals and fears. On supernatural creatures, this effect (also resisted by the creature's Intelligence and Willpower) reveals the being's general nature (Demon, Ethereal, Nature Spirit, etc.) in addition to its goals and personality. This effect costs six Essence Points. An Essence Shield (see p. 220) blocks this power. The Insight shows the presence and strength of the Shield, but nothing else. This power comes as an instant flash of knowledge, and must be cast on each person one wishes to scan.

Greater Healing

Prerequisites: Lesser Healing

This Greater Invocation can be used to cure crippling wounds, terminal diseases, and mortal injuries. The Magician re-weaves a person's Essence entirely, and can restore lost limbs, although at great energy cost. It is even possible to resuscitate the recently dead .

Cure a Deadly Disease
60 Essence over two weeks

Twenty Essence Points must be spent in three separate castings (using Willpower and Greater Healing) conducted over a period of no more than two weeks. If any of the three Invocations fails, the Magician must start over. At the end of the process, the patient must succeed at a Difficult Constitution Task. Add a bonus of +1 for each Success Level accumulated during the three Invocations. If the roll is successful, the patient is healed. Example: Roger is dying of cancer. His friend Louis performs the three ceremonies, accumulating one, two, and one levels of success respectively, for a total bonus of +4. Roger has a Constitution 2. With the Success Levels bonus, she gets to add 6 to his recovery roll. Roger rolls a five, for a total of 11—Roger recovers. The cancer goes into an unexplained remission, and a couple of weeks later she can leave the hospital!

Restore Missing Limb
Variable Essence

A missing limb or organ (like an eye, for example) can be restored. This effect requires the expenditure of Essence equal to the character's base Life Points plus 10. The regrowth process is very painful and exhausting. The patient may need to be held down (a Difficult Willpower Test allows the subject to bear the pain without resisting). She loses D10 x 4(20) Endurance Points and D6 x 4(16) Essence Points as her body's energy reserves are channeled into regrowing the missing limb or body part. If either the patient's Essence or Endurance Pools are reduced below zero as a result, both of those Secondary Attributes are permanently reduced by one.

Resuscitate the Dying
Variable Essence

A character whose heart has stopped can be resuscitated if attended to quickly enough. Resuscitation can be attempted up to one hour per Constitution point of the victim after his heart has stopped. Enough Essence must be spent to heal all the wounds or damage suffered (as per the Lesser Healing Invocation) plus an additional 15 Essence Points. If the Invocation is successful, the subject must pass a Survival Test, with a +1 bonus for every Success Level of the Invocation Task. If the Test is passed, the subject is revived; otherwise, the victim remains dead, and no further attempts to resuscitate will work.

Greater Illusion

Prerequisite: Lesser Illusion

Some occultists refer to this Greater Invocation as "Lesser Creation," and that name may be more appropriate. Unlike Lesser Illusion, which only affects the senses (except touch), this Invocation creates things that can be felt, touched, or tasted. Still, they are not real in any lasting sense. An illusionary hamburger tastes as good as the real thing, but provides no nourishment, nor does it assuage hunger past the duration of the Invocation. An illusionary knife can produce painful slashes, but it can neither kill nor disable.

The biggest limitation of this Invocation is the fact that some characters are able to identify illusions as creations of Essence. On a successful Simple Perception Test, any character with the Gift or a supernatural race notices a faint supernatural glow around the illusionary object(s) or panorama.

Once illusions are engaged in combat, their unreality is very likely to be realized. Wounds inflicted hurt, but they do not impair the character beyond the momentary shock. Regardless of how deep the wound looks, only one point of damage is inflicted on the target. The wounded victim may need to pass a Simple Willpower Test to keep her cool (see p. 133). For one Turn, the character is unable to attack, but may defend normally. A new Test is required every turn until the character passes it, with a cumulative +1 bonus. After two or three such incidents, the targets realize that the illusionary bullets or blades or claws do not seem to be very effective. This allows them a new Perception Test (Simple for Gifted and supernatural races, Difficult for mundanes) to see through the illusion.

All illusion effect lasts five minutes, plus one minute for each Success Level on the Focus Task. At the end of that time period, a new Focus Task is required, with a renewed expenditure of Essence. Unless properly Dismissed, a failed Greater Illusion Focus Task creates illusionary images of the appropriate size (see below) which haunt the Magician one to four times (the Chronicler can roll a D4 or determine the number of apparitions arbitrarily). The length of these effects are left to the Chronicler's discretion.

Create an Illusion
3 Essence per cubic foot

This creates an illusionary object or person. Any creature or item that the character knows well can be recreated exactly as the character remembers it. For highly complex or detailed objects, or to create an illusion of a person, the Magician must pass a Simple Intelligence Test. The higher the Success Levels, the more realistic the illusion (even one Success Level fools most people, but to fully convince those familiar with the subject may require three or more Success Levels). The Essence cost of these illusions is determined by their size: thee Essence Points per cubic foot of size. Add five Essence Points to the total cost if the illusion can be moved around (this effect has a range of line of sight).

Illusionary Disguise
5+ Essence

The Magician can create an illusion around herself or others. This illusion feels as solid as the real thing, and can transform the person's size (although it cannot be smaller than she is in reality), gender and appearance. The illusion's movements follow the subject's perfectly. This effect costs five points plus an additional Essence expenditure equal to the size of the illusion, as noted above in the Create an Illusion effect (a human-sized disguise costs six Essence Points).

Panorama
6 Essence per cubic foot

This is an entire illusionary landscape—an environment that fools all the senses. The illusions do not support weight, however. Illusionary ladders or staircases feel deceptively solid—until somebody steps right through them. Magicians tailor their illusions to match the surroundings, saving a few spots as traps for the unwary. The cost of these complex illusions is high: six Essence points per cubic foot.

Lesser Curse

Essence is the force behind all things, including chance. By surrounding a person with negative Essence, a vengeful sorcerer may cause the person to experience misfortune, feel ugly and unwanted, and otherwise have a bad time. The unwarranted use of this power often turns back on the caster, however. Even if the Dismissal is successful, Magicians who curse others for petty reasons may find themselves visited with the same maladies they inflicted on others, and then only the Cleansing Invocation can remove them.

Bad Luck
3 Essence per point

This gives the character a bad luck pool. The Chronicler controls the Bad Luck pool. When something can go wrong, the Chronicler may opt to spend a point of Bad Luck to make sure it does. Spending a point of Bad Luck when a character attempts something causes immediate application of the Rule of 1 (see p. 121).

When the situation is resolved through roleplaying or the Chronicler's decision, things simply take a turn for the worse for the victim. People take what he says the wrong way, or some unforeseen circumstance turns his success to ashes. This lasts until the last of the Bad Luck points are spent, the victim finds the Magician who cursed him and forces him to remove the Magic, or a Cleansing Invocation is performed on the character. The latter is treated as a Resisted Task using the Magicians' Willpowers and respective Invocation levels.

Lesser Healing

This Invocation can restore minor wounds, reduce the severity of major wounds, and cure minor maladies. It requires the Magician to lay hands on the wounded or sick person.

During the Invocation, the Magician feels the victim's pain and ailment. Severe wounds and painful ailments require the Magician to pass a Simple Willpower Test to endure the second-hand pain and discomfort. If the Test succeeds, the Magician can continue unimpeded. Otherwise, the Focus Task is at -5. If the first attempt does not completely cure the wound or disease, any further attempts suffer a -2 penalty on both the Focus and any Dismissal Tasks necessary (this only occurs when the Focus Task fails). A failed Dismissal Task means the Magician is affected by the wound or disease she attempted to cure.

Cure Disease
10 Essence

Only any minor, non-terminal disease can be cured—anything that can be treated with antibiotics or is no more severe than a cold or the flu. This costs 10 Essence Points.

Heal Wounds
1 Essence per Life Point

The victim loses one Endurance Point for each Life Point restored; this accounts for blood loss and the energy cost of the accelerated healing process. This effect closes cuts and puncture wounds, mends broken bones, and even reattaches minor, fresh body part (like ears) provided the Invocation heals the entire damage inflicted. It does not restore missing limbs or organs, especially long-gone ones. In other words, a severed finger can be grafted on if the finger is fresh and available; a ruined eye cannot be fixed. By a separate variation of this effect, Lost Endurance Points can also be restored, at the same Essence cost as Life Points. The subject does not lose Endurance during this effect; they feel refreshed by the influx of Essence.

Lesser Illusion

Essence can be used to fool the senses, creating a simulacrum that may appear, sound, and even smell like the real thing. Such illusions are not solid, however, nor do they cast a shadow (although the illusion of a shadow can be created to get around that). Sometimes, illusions do not look quite right, allowing people to realize their true nature. Most illusions work as a Resisted Task, pitting the caster's Focus result against the Perception and Intelligence of those who see the illusion. Illusions are not selective—the effect can be perceived by everyone. Illusions with an extended duration must remain in the Magician's line of sight or other senses, or they disappear.

Auditory Illusion
Variable Essence

This effect creates the illusion of sound. The loudest sound possible is strong enough to be uncomfortable, but cannot damage or stun people. The cost is one Essence for a soft noise (equivalent to a whisper), two for the equivalent of normal speech, three for a shout or scream, five for a loud (but not deafening) sound. To produce an extended sound illusion, pay triple the cost (e.g., six Essence for the sounds of a conversation); this lasts five minutes.

Full Illusion
5 Essence per cubic foot

This effect creates a realistic illusion that fools all senses except touch. It lasts one minute.

Visual Illusion
1 Essence per cubic foot

This illusion can look like anything the character can picture, but is soundless. It lasts for five minutes.

Shielding

Most Magicians who put themselves in harm's way know this Invocation. Shielding weaves pure Essence around the sorcerer, protecting her from harm. Most Shields work only against hostile Essence effects, but Magicians can also weave Shields that protect against physical harm. A truly powerful Magician may be virtually bulletproof thanks to Shielding. Further, Essence and Physical Shields can be combined; the Magician must pay the Essence cost for both. A Shield can be woven around another person.

To the Gifted, Shields may be seen with a Simple Perception Test. Their actual appearance is up to the casting character. Some Shields are simple spheres of light, while others appear like suits of armor, complex crystalline structures, organic-looking shells, or exoskeletons. By spending more Essence, the Shielding can be made invisible.

The main drawback of Shields is that they must be fed by a continuous stream of Essence, which must come from the Magician's internal supplies (not ambient or from consecrated objects). This means that the energy used on a Shield cannot be used for anything else until the Shield is dispelled. The character can keep the Shield around herself indefinitely, until an outside force destroys or neutralizes it, or until she switches it off with a second Focus Task.

Essence Shield
Variable Essence

This is the simplest Shield available; it blocks Essence-based attacks. For three Essence Points, the Shield has a Protection Level of 10 plus the Success Levels of the Focus Task. Each additional point of Essence spent adds one to that Protection Level. Any hostile Magic, Seer Power, or other supernatural or Gifted power aimed at the protected character must have a Focus result higher than the Protection Level of

the Shield, or the Metaphysical effect does not work at all. The Shield works only against powers and effects that directly affect the target.

For example, Lisa has a Shield with a Protection Level 19, at a cost of 11 Essence (one Success Level in the Focus Task). An enemy Magician tries to inflict a hostile attack on her. His Focus roll is six, and his combined Willpower and Invocation levels are eight, for a total result of 14. This is less than the Protection Level, so the Invocation fails.

Attacks that drain Essence (like Soulfire, and the powers of some supernatural beings) can damage the Shield. Any such attack reduces the Shield's Protection Level by one for every three points of Essence damage inflicted.

In addition to this protection, the Essence Shield blocks any attempts to sense anything about the Magician (other than the fact that she is surrounded by a Shield).

Invisible Shield
15 Essence

Any type of Shield can be made invisible at the cost of 15 Essence Points. Nobody is able to see or sense the Shield until it flares up to stop an attack. Detection Invocations and abilities sense neither the Shield nor any special powers of the character. Insistent mental probing may finally pierce the invisibility. This is a Resisted Task, pitting the character's Willpower and Shielding Invocation levels against the Gifted or supernatural entity's abilities or Invocations.

Physical Shield
Variable Essence

Physical Shields deflect any attack that seeks to damage the subject directly. It works against bullets, punches, and laser beams, somewhat like armor does. A Physical Shield may have an Armor Value and a Damage Capacity. The Armor Value subtracts from the damage inflicted by an attack. The Damage Capacity acts like a cushion, deflecting some of the energy of an attack, but getting weaker with every attack it dissipates. Each Essence Point used in this effect gives the character either one point of Armor Value or five points of Damage Capacity.

Damaging attacks on the character are reduced by the Armor Value and Damage Capacity of the Shield. Remaining damage is applied normally. The maximum Armor Value possible equals the character's Invocation level times 10; no limit exists on the Damage Capacity of the Shield.

For example, Jana has Shielding 3. She is about to rush into a firefight, so she decides to put 45 Essence Points into protecting herself. She can have a maximum AV 30 (her Invocation level x 10) so she spends 30 points to that purpose. The remaining 15 points she puts into Damage Capacity, for a total of 75 points. When she ventures out, the Churchies open fire, and she is hit 17 times in a deadly fusillade. Out of the 17 shots, 14 inflict less than 30 points of damage (less than the AV), and so they bounce off her! The other three shots do 34, 42 and 41 points of damage, respectively. Subtracting 30 points from each produces four, 12 and 11 points, respectively, for a total of 27; these 27 points of damage reduce the Damage Capacity of the Shield from 75 to 48 (75 - 27). Jana is completely unharmed—for now.

Physical Shields do not stop the effects of the Magician's movements or actions. She can walk without bouncing off walls or people, and can shoot or attack without interference from the Shield. However, the Magician could also run into a spike and impale herself, and the Shield would offer no protection. For the same reason, Shields are of no use against falling damage.

Soulfire

Pure Essence can be used as a weapon. To the mundane, the bolts are invisible; the Gifted see them as swirling streams of blue-white energy. Soulfire is extremely lethal when used against supernatural beings. Against humans, it causes Essence loss, which may be dangerous (see p. 141). Like all destructive magicks, Soulfire attacks used maliciously require Dismissal Tasks.

Soulfire Blast
Variable Essence

Soulfire damage is D6(3) x the Essence Points spent. Corporeal supernatural entities (like Seraphim and manifested spirits) take Life Point and Essence Point damage at the same time (if 10 points of damage are inflicted, the target loses 10 Life and Essence Points). Immaterial spirits (like ghosts) lose Vital Essence. Soulfire is less effective against human beings; they lose one Essence Point for every three points of damage inflicted by the attack. Soulfire can strike any target within line of sight. Mundanes cannot Dodge the attack, because the Soulfire is invisible; Gifted and supernatural beings can see Soulfire, and may Dodge normally.

Spirit Mastery

Calling on spirits is a fundamental part of Magic. The Spirit Mastery Invocation allows the Magician to summon, bind, and dismiss spirits. Many sorcerers prefer to use the powers and abilities of spirits rather than their own. These specialists in the Arts of summoning often have meager Magical talents in other areas, but their mastery over a host of different spirits makes them tremendously powerful. The same Invocation can be used to banish a spirit from an area or to exorcise it from a human body.

There are many kinds of spirits, including ghosts of the dead, nature spirits, elementals, the Ethereals (lesser spirits of good said to be the servants of angels), Fiends (the Ethereal's evil counterparts) and more. Each type of spirit requires a different type of Invocation. Thus, a Magician might have Spirit Mastery (Fire Elementals) and Spirit Mastery (Angelic Ethereals), or only one of the two.

After a spirit is summoned, or if the spirit was already present, the Magician must secure its aid. Some Magicians prefer to work out an informal agreement, in which the spirit agrees to help the Magician in return for a future favor. Others like to have a very detailed and "legal" relationship with their spirits. This is known as a Compact (if the spirit goes along willingly) or a Bond (if the spirit is coerced by force). Compacts and Bonds have very specific language, and the spirits must follow the agreements to the letter, but often interpret them in unexpected or malicious ways.

When a spirit is invoked and convinced or coerced to aid the Magician, she automatically knows all the spirit's various abilities and powers, and may instruct (via voice or telepathic link) the spirit to use any of its powers.

Bond
Variable Essence

When a Magician wants to control the actions of a spirit, she must either Bind it, or she must enter into a Compact (see below) with it. Binding a spirit is both difficult and dangerous; spirits do not like to be bound. First, the spirit must be subdued or restrained (a Ward usually keeps the spirit in one place; see p. 223). Binding the spirit costs one Essence Point for every 10 Energy Essence Points in the spirit's Pool (the maximum points, not the current amount). Obviously, the more powerful the spirit, the greater its Essence and the more difficult it is to bind.

The Magician must state exactly what the service is, its length and conditions. Essence spent on the Bond cannot be regained until the spirit is released from the character's service.

Compact
2 Essence

A Compact is a formal agreement between the Magician and a spirit. It only costs two Essence Points to create a Compact, but the spirit must be willing to enter into the agreement. As the Compact is formulated, the Magician specifies what the conditions and term of service are, and the payment for those services. Then, both the Magician and the spirit swear on their True Name and Power. This oath is binding; breaking it not only breaks the contract, but it automatically drain the guilty party of all her Essence (this is a temporary loss, regained normally), plus it permanently reduce her Essence Pool (or Energy Essence Pool if applicable) by two points.

Dismiss
Variable Essence

This is a special form of the regular Dismissal, with the difference being that in this case the Magician is attempting to dismiss a living, thinking being. Dismissing a willing spirit costs five Essence Points. If it does not wish to go, it costs 10 Essence plus one-fifth of the spirit's Energy Essence Pool. Further, a Resisted Task must be performed, using the spirit's Willpower and Spirits Skill against the character's Focus Task result.

Remove Malicious Spirit
Variable Essence

This effect forces a spirit out of an area it has claimed as its own. This requires an Essence expenditure equal to one-third of the spirit's own Energy Essence (rounded down) and is resisted by the Willpower and Intelligence of the spirit.

Summoning
Variable Essence

Summoning costs five Essence plus one-fifth of the spirit's Energy Essence Pool, rounded up. If the spirit is summoned unwillingly, a Resisted Task between the spirit's Willpower and Spiritus Skill (see p. 298) and the Focus result is made. This effect has a +4 bonus if the Magician summons a specific spirit using its True Name.

Tap Emotions

Prerequisites: Affect the Psyche

Magicians with this Greater Invocation can actually absorb the Essence of those around them, provided the people involved are experiencing strong, positive emotions. Normal Gifted Magicians can only tap onto positive emotions like love, glee or excitement. Black Magic practitioners have an equivalent Invocation that allows them to absorb Essence released by any emotion, including anger, hatred or terror. Some of these sorcerers become hatemongers, inciting crowds into a frenzy to feed on their dark emotions. The main drawback of this dark version of the magic is that the negative emotions affect the Magician's personality, turning her into a bitter creature, unable to experience happiness.

Absorb Power
Variable Essence

This effect requires that the Magician be surrounded by a crowd and that its attention be wholly focused on her. Most Magicians "hide" their Invocation as part of the performance itself, thus avoiding the problems of having to overcome the disbelief of the crowd (see p. 206). The people in the crowd must be feeling positive emotions towards the Magician; this is usually achieved through mundane means, using their performance skills. If the crowd is not pleased by the performance, this Invocation is ineffective.

To tap into the Essence of the crowd, the Magician must first spend her own Essence. The larger the crowd, the more expensive the process is. Use the nearby Crowd Essence Effect Table. For example, tapping into the energy of a crowd of 60 people costs seven Essence Points. The number of people involved also makes the Invocation more difficult. The Task must achieve an additional Success Level for each 20 people above 40 (rounded up). In the example above, the Invocation Task attempt must achieve three Success Levels to work. Most magical performers prefer to work crowds of under a hundred, or focus the Invocation only on a portion of the audience.

If the Invocation succeeds, the Magician collects one Essence Point per person in the affected crowd. This Essence can power other rituals, replenish the Magician's Essence Pool, or be held until needed (although holding onto a lot of Essence can be dangerous, see p. 204). Most of the time, the Magician is only able to tap into a fraction of the Essence released.

Crowd Essence Cost Table

Number of People	Required Essence
10-20	1/5 per person
21-50	4 plus 1 per 25 people
51-100	6 plus 1 per 50 people
100+	8 plus 1 per 100 people

All Essence amounts rounded down

Warding

This Invocation creates a field of Essence that blocks magical senses and the passage of supernatural beings. Most Wards are drawn, painted, or sketched on the ground. Often, a Symbol of Power is used in the design to add to the available Essence. Common symbols include the circle, pentagram, and hexagram (also known as the Seal of Solomon). The Warding acts as an invisible barrier against most otherworldly beings, spirits, characters using Soul Projection, and similar creatures. Most spirit summoning is arranged so the spirit appears within the warded area.

Once created, a Ward remains in place until Dismissed by its creator(s), or until the drawing on the ground is erased or destroyed. Spirit entities cannot physically affect the Ward in any way, although a human could. As long as the Ward is in place, the Magician must keep it fueled by temporarily reducing her Essence Pool by 5 points. These 5 points cannot be regained until the Ward has been Dismissed or destroyed.

Create Ward
10+ Essence

This effect creates a Ward with a Strength Rating, which represents its power and the amount of Essence spent on it. Spirits or supernatural beings trying to cross the Ward (either to leave or enter it) must win a Resisted Task, using their Strength and Willpower against the Strength of the Ward, doubled. If the supernatural being loses the contest, it is barred from crossing, suffers D4(2) points of Essence (Vital Essence in the case of spirits) damage and is wracked by pain (-4 on all Tasks/Tests for the next Turn or two).

The Ward also interferes with any location or sensory power trying to peer through it, but does not affect other Metaphysical Powers and abilities. The base Strength of a Ward is five; this costs 10 Essence Points and includes the five points that cannot be regained until the Ward has been Dismissed or destroyed. The Strength can be increased by one for every additional four Essence Points spent.

The base Ward fills an area with a radius equal to the Magician's Willpower in yards (meters) but can be made smaller as desired. Larger Wards (sometimes used to protect buildings or houses from supernatural intrusion) cost one additional Essence Point per extra yard (meter) of radius.

Weather Lordship

Prerequisites: All four Elemental Invocations

Through this Greater Invocation, the Magician can control and manipulate the weather. Upsetting the balance of the weather is often tricky, however, leading to unexpected consequences. Even minor changes in one place may lead to major upheavals somewhere else. For instance, a Magician's rain making in Arizona could create a devastating hurricane in Florida. The karma cost of such upheavals eventually come back upon the Magician. Unless properly Dismissed, failing a Weather Lordship Focus Task causes a great deal of chaos and anguish. Many freak storms, tornadoes and worse have been triggered by careless Magicians—and they have been tracked down and punished accordingly.

A sorcerer can minimize the effects of her use of this Power by a careful balancing act, restoring conditions to their previous state after she no longer needs the weather effect she has created. This is costly and time-consuming, but the price of not doing so is often catastrophically high.

Affect Weather
Variable Essence

The Essence cost of this effect depends on the area of the weather change and how extreme the change is. Causing a tiny downpour to drench a victim in the middle of a cloudy, overcast afternoon is a lot cheaper than causing a monsoon in the middle of Death Valley. Affecting an area larger than a few hundred feet costs so much Essence that only a large group of sorcerers can hope to do so.

An area with a radius of one yard (meter) per level of Willpower of the sorcerer can be affected for a base cost of four Essence Points (modified by the extremity of the weather change). A larger area (10 yards/meters per level of Willpower) has a base cost of eight Essence Points. A significantly large locale (100 yards per level of Willpower) has a base cost of 16 Essence Points. A huge area (one mile per level of Willpower) cost 32 Essence Points as a base. Each additional mile adds eight Essence Points to the base cost.

Small, imperceptible changes in weather (causing a cloud to temporarily cover the sun) halve the base cost given above, rounded down. A small but definite change (causing a light drizzle to stop, starting a light rain during an overcast day, or reducing the intensity of a storm by one level) uses the base cost. A significant change (starting a good, hard rain during a clear day, changing a storm into a mild rain) costs double the base cost. A great change (starting rainfall during the dry season in a normally temperate climate, stopping or starting a thunderstorm from scratch) costs triple the base cost. An extraordinary change (starting a downpour in an arid desert, stopping a hurricane in its tracks) costs quadruple the base cost. The effects are felt only in the area affected; outside that area, weather conditions continue to operate normally.

This Invocation lasts five minutes per Success Level or until Dismissed, whichever comes first. However the spell ends, the Magician has the choice of trying to restore the natural weather she has disrupted before it does so. This requires an Essence expenditure equal to one third the cost of the initial upheaval, rounded down. Thus, if the Magician spent 60 Essence Points altering the weather, 20 points are needed to bring it back to normal. The Magician then makes a Willpower and Weather Lordship Task attempt. If the Magician cannot restore the situation to normal, penalties of -1 to -4 (depending on how extreme the change in the normal weather was and how large an area was effected) are applied to an immediate mandatory Dismissal Task.

Messing with the weather of a large area may be noticed. Any Magician within 10 miles of the affected area who knows any Elemental Invocation or Weather Lordship can sense the disturbance on a Perception and Invocation Task. The source of the disturbance can be tracked down by a series of these Tasks.

The Sight

Since humankind gained the gift of self-awareness (and perhaps before then), some people have been blessed with senses and abilities beyond the physical. A select few have always been able to see into the minds of others, to catch glimpses of the past and future, and even to affect the world directly with no tools but their strength of will. These powers have long been known as "the Sight" or "the Second Sight," since many such abilities involve sensing or seeing things beyond the scope of the five senses. Science has also labeled these powers, calling them ESP (short for Extra-Sensory Perception), and psychic or psionic abilities. By the early 21st century, psychic powers have been thoroughly documented. The military started actively recruiting Seers after the war started, and only the most fanatical skeptics doubt their existence. Many people still hate and fear people with unusual powers, however.

The Sight does not require rituals or Invocations, although some Seers have Magical training and can use both. Unlike Magic, the Sight does not involve invoking outside forces to perform Tasks; the power is entirely internal. Also unlike Magic, mundanes cannot neutralize these abilities.

Seer Powers

Each Seer Power is a branch of the same tree. All the powers are related, and all Seers have the potential to develop all such abilities. They include telepathic abilities (the power to directly communicate with and control other minds, such as Mindsight, Mindtalk, and Mindrule), psychokinetic powers (the power of the mind over matter and energy, such as Mindhands and Mindfire), and the ability to see into places and times where the normal senses cannot reach (Mindtime, Mindview).

Each Seer ability has two elements: Strength and Art. The Strength of the ability represents the raw power the psychic has. This governs how far away the Seer can reach others with her abilities, the amount of damage she can inflict, and how lasting the effects she creates are. The Art represents the degree of expertise a psychic has in using her abilities.

The Effects of Strength

All Seer Powers have a table that shows the limits of the ability at each of the Strength levels. The higher the Strength level of the power, the more far-reaching and impressive those abilities are. In the world of *Armageddon*, the number of powerful Seers in the world has increased exponentially. To reflect this, the cost of each Strength level is three points during character creation, and six experience points during play.

The Effects of Art

The Art of a power determines how skilled the Seer is at its manipulation. Most Tasks use the Art level of the power added to the appropriate Attribute (typically a mental Attribute). Each Art is learned as a Special Skill, costing two points per level until level five, and five points per level thereafter during character creation. The cost is five and eight respectively after character generation.

Seer Powers and Range

Most Seer Powers have an effective range equal to line-of-sight. This works exactly like Invocations and line of sight (see p. 209).

Defenses Against Seer Powers

Mundanes can resist some Seer Powers, like Mindrule, by using their Willpower. The effects of other powers, like Mindsight and Mindtalk, can be felt with a Difficult Perception Test (with at least three Success Levels), but normal humans cannot resist the use of such powers.

Gifted may use their Magic or Seer Powers to resist intrusion. Magicians and Essence Channelers can project Essence to interfere with psychic attacks (see p. 202). An Essence Shield also counters the use of Seer Powers. Most Seer Powers can be used defensively against mental intrusions or attempts at mind control. Each entry has a description on how to use that power defensively. The Inspired can resist any Seer powers with a Simple Willpower Test.

The Gestalt Effect

A Gestalt is a group of psychics using their powers together to increase their overall Strength. If the Seers involved know the power being used, the group adds their combined Strengths together. Seers who do not have the power being used add

half of the Strength of their weakest power (rounded up) to the total. The Seer with the highest Art level in the power being used becomes the leader of the Gestalt, and all Tasks use the leader's Art and appropriate Attribute.

For example, Julienne, Doug, Mark and Perin are locked in a basement, slated to be the next sacrificial victims of a satanic cult. Before trying to escape, the group attempts to communicate with a Coven of witches that lives in the city. The four characters all have Seer abilities. Julienne, Doug, and Perin have the power of Mindtalk with a Strength 4, 3 and 6, respectively. Mark does not have Mindtalk but is a powerful Seer with Mindsight 8 and Mindhands 4. Perin has the highest Art in Mindtalk (level 6), so she is the Gestalt leader. The combined Strengths equal 13 for those with Mindtalk, plus two levels from Mark (who adds in only half of his weakest power)—a total of 15. The range of Mindtalk at Strength 15 is twenty miles for every level of the group's Strength plus the leader's Willpower (level four). As long as the group remains connected, they can communicate with the Coven if it is within 380 miles of their location.

Essence and Seers

Most Seers do not use Essence directly, but their powers have the side effect of strengthening their spiritual energy. A Seer's Essence Pool gains an additional point for every level of Strength and Art in any and all Seer powers she possesses. For example, a Seer with a Mindsight Strength 4 and Art 3, and a Mindrule Strength 3 and Art 6 would add a total of 16 Essence Points to her Pool. For the most part, however, a Seer's enhanced Essence is more of a curse than a blessing, for it makes her more easily detected by other Gifted, and it renders her more desirable prey for supernatural predators.

Some Seers also learn Magical Invocations, and are greatly feared for the combination of these powers. Others have the ability to channel Essence, and it gives them a huge edge, as they can strengthen their Seer powers with it. Characters with Essence Channeling can temporarily raise the Strength of any of their Seer Powers by spending Essence. Each two Essence Points spent raises the Strength of a power by one during its next use. Only the amount of Essence the character can channel for one Turn can be used to increase a Seer power, however. Unlike Invocations, a character cannot spend several Turns building up Essence to augment a Seer power.

Seer Powers Descriptions

The following pages describe the most common Seer Powers, their advantages and limitations, and some of the things a skilled user can do with them. Most of the powers also have a Strength table (and a few have Art tables) to determine the result of successful Tasks. A Seer of a higher Strength or Art level may choose to use the effects of a lower level.

Mindfire Power

This power (also known as pyrokinesis) converts the inner strength of the subject into pure energy. Fire is the most common manifestation of this power. Cases of spontaneous combustion have been the result of malicious psychics using this power on their enemies, or Seers who misjudged their abilities and accidentally set themselves on fire. Mindfire is a dangerous power, for all the Essence that is transformed into fire acquires a mischievous, destructive character. The psychic must learn to keep her power in check, lest it turn on the innocent or herself.

Using Mindfire

Mindfire Tasks use Willpower and the Mindfire Art. If the Task is successful, flame manifests itself somewhere within line of sight of the psychic. If the Seer uses the power extensively over a short period of time (continually over a minute or so, for example), she must pass a Simple Willpower Test to make sure the fire does not run rampant. Add the Success Levels of the last Mindfire Task to that Test. On a failure, a random flame effect occurs, with a Strength level of 1-4 (roll D4 or Chronicler's determination). If the failure occurred as the result of a roll of one, the random effect affects the psychic directly!

The psychic can make the fire she manifests appear right on top of a victim. No Dodge is possible, but targets of such an attack can use a Difficult Willpower Test to resist the effects. If the victim wins the Resisted Task, the Mindfire Power fails—pushed away by the latent psychic powers that exist in every human. Igniting something near a target cannot be resisted, but the victim may try to Dodge away. Dodges are possible against jets or balls of flame.

Mindfire Strength Table

Strength	Abilities
1	A small flame, about the size a match makes, is created. It can ignite highly flammable substances. Inflicts one point of damage, if used on a person.
2	A torch-like flame inflicts damage of D4(2) per Mindfire Strength level. It can ignite flammable substances (oily rags, dry leaves—anything that a lit match would ignite).
3	The flame ignites clothing, wood, or anything that continuous contact with an open flame would ignite.
4	A jet of flame, doing D6(3) points of damage per level of Mindfire Strength is created. Range is equal to Willpower and Mindfire Strength in yards (meters)
5	A ball of fire doing D4(2) points of damage per level of Mindfire Strength can be tossed. Range is equal to (Willpower + Mindfire Strength) x 10 in yards (meters). Range modifiers are as per handguns (see p. 153).
6	Flames in a radius of one-yard (meter) per Mindfire Strength level can be extinguished.
7	Can cause a person to be engulfed in flames, causing D6(3) points of damage times the Mindfire Strength level.
9	Anything even vaguely flammable (wet wood, flame-retardant fabrics) can be ignited, and metal can be melted.
10+	Can ignite fires over an area with a radius of 1-yard (meter) per Willpower level. Anybody in the area is engulfed, taking the damage listed for Mindfire Strength 7.

Using Mindfire Defensively

The character can surround herself with an aura of incredibly hot air that melts bullets, burns anybody trying to touch the psychic, and deflects other flame or energy attacks. While this ability is activated, no other uses of Mindfire are possible. This fire shield reduces the Damage Multiplier from any flame or energy attack by one (if reduced to zero, no damage is inflicted) for every level of Mindfire Strength. It also has an Armor Value of two times the Mindfire Strength level against bullets, arrows, or small objects that can be burned off (a character with a Mindfire Strength 3 would have six points of damage subtracted from those attacks). Finally anybody coming within 2-5 feet (in the area of a meter) of the character suffers D6(3) times the Mindfire Strength level of the psychic in damage. Mindfire does not protect against Essence-based attacks, like Soulfire (see p. 221).

Mindhands Power

This is the power to move, throw, or even manipulate objects with the mind alone, called telekinesis or psychokinesis by psychic researchers. A highly skilled psychic can play the piano at a distance, or use a typewriter without having to touch it physically. The most powerful psychics can casually toss cars around, crush objects, and people with "invisible hands" and bring down houses.

Using Mindhands

Moving an object in a relatively straight line uses Intelligence and the Mindhands Art. Any object within line of sight can be grabbed by Mindhands. The maximum weight that can be lifted and moved (slowly) is determined by the Strength of the power. In this case, the Strength of the power works just like the Strength Attribute (see p. 59).

To determine the speed of the object being moved, subtract the Strength level needed to lift the object from the total Mindhands Strength. Take the difference (rounded up) and multiply it by 10; that is the Speed of the object in miles per hour. For example, a character with a Mindhands Strength 5 can lift up to 250 pounds (125 kilograms). A 10-pound (5 kilogram) object requires less than Strength 1, so the psychic gets to use her full Strength 5, multiplied by 10—she can move the object up to 50 miles per hour (75 kph). Using the same method, the psychic can levitate herself. If the character weighed 200 pounds (100 kilograms; which requires Strength 4), the character could fly (or rather, float) around at a speed of 10 miles per hour (15 kph).

Tossing objects uses Dexterity and Mindhands Art. Thrown objects can be dodged normally. Small objects (hand-sized or smaller) inflict D4(2) x Mindhands Strength points of damage. Long distance throwing suffers range penalties (use the ranges for handguns, see p. 153).

Massive objects (which require a large Mindhands Strength level to throw around) cause D6(3) to D12(6) points of damage multiplied by the Mindhands Strength level minus the Strength Level needed to lift the object in the first place. Heavy objects do not fly as fast, inflicting less damage. See the Mindhands Thrown Object Damage Table for the damage inflicted by objects of a given weight, and the minimum Mindhands Strength needed to lift them. If the character's Mindhands Strength is too low, she may be able to lift and move the object around very slowly, but cannot inflict damage by tossing it.

For example, Scannin' Joe has a Mindhands Strength Level 9. She can throw a small object (an 8 lb. rock) at very high speeds, inflicting D4 x 9(18) points of damage. She could lift a 200-pound bag of gravel and toss it more slowly, inflicting D8 x 5(20). The Multiplier (5) is the result of subtracting four (the minimum Strength needed to lift the bag) from her base Mindhands Strength 9. And she could toss a 650+ lb motorcycle, but barely fast enough to inflict damage—D10(5) (no Multiplier).

Dropping objects is also possible. Falling objects cause damage based on the minimum strength needed to lift them plus falling damage. Calculate the Strength needed to lift the object, then add +1 to the Multiplier based on the number of yards (meters) it falls towards its target (so, for example, a 200-pound object dropped from 10 yards would inflict D8 x 14(56) points of damage; the Multiplier comes from the Strength to lift the object (4), and the number of yards it falls (10), for a total of 14). Hitting the target is tricky, however. A stationary target can be hit with a Mindhands and Willpower Task, but a moving target (any living being not being restrained somehow is considered to be moving) is at –4 to be hit, and they can dodge (if they are aware of something dropping on them) with a +3 bonus.

A Channeler can fight being picked up through a Resisted Task. He uses Willpower plus a bonus equal to the amount of Essence released. The Seer uses Willpower and Mindhands Art. Also, anyone with a Shielding Invocation (see p. 220) active is granted a Resisted Task against being lifted with a bonus equal to the Strength of the Physical or Essence Shield.

The Seer can also toss invisible "punches" by projecting hard streams of telekinetic energy. These blows use the Mindhands Art and Brawling to hit. Mundanes cannot see the blows coming, and cannot defend against them except by jumping around and hoping to make the psychic miss (their only defense becomes a Difficult Dexterity Test, and that only if they realize what is happening). Gifted characters can see the Essence in such attacks, and can Dodge or defend normally. Telekinetic punches inflict 1 point of damage per Mindhands Strength level.

It is possible to use Mindhands to manipulate weapons and machinery at a distance, but this requires a high degree of concentration and proficiency. The Chronicler determines what skill is necessary. This works like a Task, but the character uses the Mindhands Art (replacing the normal Attribute) and a skill. Such uses have a penalty of -1 to -6, depending on how complex the Task is. Using a weapon, for example, requires the Mindhands Art and the weapon skill, at a penalty of at least -2 (for a hand weapon like a sword) to -4 (for a gun or similar firearm). Lock picking might have penalties of -4 to -5 if performed at a distance.

Alternatively, the Seer may use Mindhands to supplement her own physical abilities. So, a character trying to lift something with her hands can add her Mindhands Strength to her physical Strength. A character can similarly boost her physical Strength for combat purposes, including punches and hand-to-hand attacks.

Mindhands Thrown Object Damage Table

Object Weight	Base Damage	Minimum Mindhands Strength
Less than 10 lbs (20 kg)	D4(2)	0
Up to 50 lbs (25 kg)	D4+1(3)	1
Up to 100 lbs (50 kg)	D6(3)	2
Up to 250 lbs (125 kg)	D8(4)	3-5
Up to 650 lbs (325 kg)	D10(5)	6-7
Up to 1,250 lbs (625 kg)	D12(6)	8-10
Above 1,250 lbs (625 kg)	D12+1(7)	11+

For heavier objects, determine the power level needed to lift the object, and subtract it from the Multiplier for damage purposes.

Using Mindhands Defensively

Mindhands can be used to deflect physical attacks. A telekinetic "parry" uses the character's Dexterity and Mindhands Art, and can deflect any attack the Seer can see (arrows can be seen, but bullets are too fast). Alternatively, the psychic can concentrate on projecting her telekinetic power around herself like a bubble that acts like invisible armor. This is a Task involving Intelligence and the Mindhands Art; each Success Level increases the field's duration for one minute. The energy bubble has an Armor Value of D4(2) times half the Mindhands Strength; it slows down and interferes with any physical attacks. Keeping a Mindhands shield active requires concentration, although not as much as a full action. While it is up, other actions attempted suffer a –1 penalty.

Mindheal Power

Healers who can undo wounds, make the crippled whole again, and cure terrible diseases have been the subjects of countless legends among the people of every culture. Some healers use Magic, while others use the strength of their faith. Some have the inborn ability to take the pain and suffering of others and absorb it into themselves. Mindheal is extremely powerful, and at its highest levels it can make the psychic nearly immortal. Healing the wounded is always a very draining process; even healing oneself is exhausting, both physically and emotionally.

Using Mindheal

When curing a wound or disease, the psychic must be in physical contact with the patient. Healing somebody requires a Willpower and Mindheal Art Task. The degree of healing possible is determined by the Strength of the power (see the Mindheal Strength Table).

The healing process is extremely painful, however, because the healer must feel the agonies and suffering of the victim. Even if the patient is sedated, the healer feels the full torment that the anesthetics have masked. Although psychics soon learn to detach themselves from the pain, doing so is a draining experience. After the Mindheal Task is concluded, the character must make a Difficult Willpower Test or lose one Essence and one Endurance Point for every two points of damage healed (rounded down). Each additional healing attempt on the same person in the same 24-hour period adds a cumulative penalty of -1 to the Willpower Test.

Curing a disease also risks draining the healer if the Willpower Test is failed. Mild diseases (a cold, the flu) drain two points, Moderate diseases (smallpox, simple pneumonia) five points, Serious diseases (tuberculosis, malaria) 10 points, and Terminal diseases (cancer, AIDS) 20 points from both Essence and Endurance. These losses are recovered normally.

Healing oneself is also possible, but the Willpower Test to resist draining incurs a -2 penalty. More subtly, a Perception and Mindheal Art Task adds a +1 to any medical skill Task for every Success Level achieved; this is done by using the power as a diagnostic tool.

Mindheal Strength Table

Strength	Ability
1	Wounds are healed at the rate of one Life or Endurance Point per Mindheal Strength level. Minor diseases can be healed.
4	Wounds are healed at the rate of D6(3) Life/Endurance Points per Mindheal Strength level. Moderate diseases can be treated and cured. Crippled or lamed limbs (as the result of a recent injury) can be healed.
8	Wounds are healed at the rate of D8(4) Life/Endurance Points per Mindheal Strength level.
10+	Complete cellular reconstruction is possible. Crippled limbs (regardless of when they were injured) can be brought to full activity, although missing ones cannot be regrown. A recently dead body can be resuscitated (Resuscitation, p. 140).

Past the level 10, the character can actually stop the aging process, making herself effectively immortal. The character merely stops aging at this level; she cannot reverse her current chronological age, and she could still be killed, by accident or design. Beginning characters with this level of Mindheal (assuming the Chroniclers allows such Mindheal Strength levels in her game) can purchase the Age Quality (see p. 79).

Mindkill Strength Table

Strength	Abilities
1	One point of Life, Endurance, or Essence damage (pick one or split among the three) per level of Strength can be inflicted.
3	Pure pain can be inflicted which drains Endurance normally (determined by the Mindkill Strength) and gives a Task/Test penalty of -1 per point of Endurance damage. The pain lasts for one Turn for every three Success Levels in the Task (rounded up).
5	Damage inflicted is raised to D4(2) times the Mindkill Strength level, which can be allocated among Life, Endurance, or Essence Points, as desired.
8	The victim's heart can be stopped. This does no actual Life Point damage, but the victim is incapacitated and dies in (D10(5) + Constitution) minutes unless CPR (First Aid) is administered.
10+	Life Point damage (D4(2) x Mindkill Strength) manifests in burst blood vessels, torn flesh, and even exploding heads if enough damage is inflicted to kill the victim!

Using Mindheal Defensively

Mindheal can counter any supernatural power or attack that directly affects the psychic's body and health. Curses that afflict the body, the Mindkill Power, and other harmful powers can all be resisted by the psychic's Mindheal Strength and her Willpower. While in combat, a psychic can try to regenerate damage as it is inflicted. This counts as an action, and other activities in the same Turn require the character to divide her concentration (see Multiple Actions, p. 128).

Mindkill Power

This deadly power is the reverse of Mindheal. This psychic power can break down the body of the victim, causing lethal effects ranging from heart attacks to exploding heads! This power can also be used against supernatural creatures by targeting their Essence directly or by breaking down their material bodies. The main drawback of this powerful ability is that it requires intense concentration, and, like Mindheal, it drains the psychic physically and emotionally. Although the connection between the psychic and the target is not as intense with Mindkill as it is with Mindheal, enough of the agony the psychic inflicts reflects back on her to exact a toll.

Using Mindkill

The target must be within line of sight of the psychic. A Mindkill attack is resolved as a Resisted Task, using the psychic's Willpower and Mindkill Art against the victim's Willpower and Constitution. Mindkill can also be resisted by any power or Invocation that heals damage, obstructs mental probes, or restricts the flow of Essence. The psychic can opt to inflict Life, Endurance, or Essence Point damage; the degree of damage is determined by the Mindkill Strength level (see the Mindkill Strength Table).

The psychic does not escape unscathed after harming her target. She feels some of the pain her victim is suffering, and may lose some Endurance and Essence as a consequence. The Seer must pass a Difficult Willpower Test or lose one Essence and one Endurance Point for every two points of damage she inflicted (round down). Multiple attacks do not incur cumulative penalties, but if the victim is killed by a Mindkill attack, the Willpower Test suffers a -3 penalty.

Using Mindkill Defensively

Mindkill is primarily an aggressive power. It can help resist an enemy's Mindkill attack (using Willpower and the Mindkill Strength level), but otherwise it is useless as a defense.

Mindrule Power

This is the power to control the minds of others. Seers with Mindrule can command others to do their bidding, and even force people to do things they would never normally do. Making people do something that goes completely against their personality (making someone murder a loved one, for example) is much more difficult to accomplish than pushing somebody into doing something they were considering doing anyway (like convincing an already-scared attacker to run away). At higher Strength levels, Mindrule allows the Seer to completely take control over the target, becoming her puppet master.

Mindrule Strength Table

Strength	Abilities
1	Can cause a person to hesitate for a few seconds before doing something, or to follow a fairly reasonable suggestion.
3	Can stop the person from doing something, or force her to obey a one-phrase command like "Freeze" "Run away" or "Don't bother me."
5	The victim follows a one sentence command to the letter.
8	The victim can be made to follow detailed instructions.
10+	The Seer can replace the victim's mind with her own, taking total control for 1 Turn. During the Turn, the Seer completely dictates the words and actions of the victim. At the end of the Turn, another Resisted Task is needed to maintain control.

Using Mindrule

Seers using Mindrule must be within line of sight of the target. The victim must also be able to look into the psychic's eyes or hear her voice. If eye contact is used, the psychic must Mindtalk to communicate her desires telepathically; otherwise, the orders or suggestions must be spoken out loud.

Mindrule is a Resisted Task, using the Seer's Willpower and Mindrule Art against a Difficult Willpower Test on the part of the victim. Gifted may be able to replace the defensive Test with a Magical, Essence, or psychic defense. If the orders are totally contrary to what the victim would normally do, the victim gets a bonus of +3 to +7 to the Willpower Test. This is left to the Chronicler's discretion. Keep in mind that it is much easier to suggest "These are not the androids you're looking for" than it is to order "Use your gun against your partner, then kill yourself."

The Strength of the power determines how powerful the commands can be, and how extensive the control achieved is (see Mindrule Strength Table).

Using Mindrule Defensively

The same power that lets a Seer control others allows her to maintain control over herself. When attacked by any form of mind control (including an enemy's attempt to use Mindrule), the Seer resists with her Willpower and Mindrule Strength level.

Mindsight Power

Thought is an expression of Essence; basically thought waves operate on the same wavelength as the flow of Essence. This means that any Seer Power that works on the minds of others has similar effects on creatures and constructs of Essence, including Magical effects. Characters with Mindsight have the ability to see the thoughts of others; they can also see the normally invisible flows of Essence and spirit beings. Even one Mindsight Strength level is enough for the character to see any spirit entity within 10 yards (meters) of the character, unless the entity is trying to remain hidden (a Resisted Task using the Seer's Perception and Mindsight versus the spirit's Simple Willpower Test is needed).

Mindsight Strength Table

Strength	Abilities
1	Must touch a person to sense her thoughts; can see large concentrations of Essence and spirit beings within 10 yards (meters).
2	Can reach the minds of others, up to one yard (meter) for each level of Willpower plus Mindsight Strength.
3	Range increases to five yards (meters) for each level of Willpower plus Mindsight Strength.
5	Range increases to 50 yards (meters) for each level of Willpower plus Mindsight Strength. Line of sight is no longer necessary. The Seer can scan an area looking for a particular mind, as long as she has telepathically contacted that mind in the past.
6	Range increases to 100 yards (meters) for each level of Willpower plus Mindsight Strength.
10	Range increases to one mile (1.5 kilometers) for each level of Willpower plus Mindsight Strength.
15+	Range increases to 20 miles (30 kilometers) for each level of Willpower plus Mindsight Strength.

Mindsight Art Table

Level of Success	Result
1	Can sense emotions only.
2	Can sense surface thoughts (whatever the subject is thinking at the moment).
3	Can delve deeper into the mind of the target. Any one simple question (i.e., anything that can be answered in one sentence or less) can be asked of the subject, and the information plucked from her mind. Each additional Success Level adds one more answer.
4+	Can get a clear picture of the subject's personality, find memories, and get any information the target has, provided the Seer specifically asks for it.

Using Mindsight

The most common use of Mindsight is to peer into the minds of others. The target of the mind probe must be within range (which is determined by the Mindsight Strength of the psychic) and within line of sight of the Seer, unless previously contacted (see Mindtalk). This Task uses the Seer's Perception and Mindsight Art level. The Success Levels of the Task determine how deep the psychic sees into the target's mind.

Mundanes who pass a Difficult Perception Test can sense something strange, a feeling of being watched or a disturbance at the back of their minds, but unless they are experienced and knowledgeable in the area of psychic phenomena, they do not know exactly what is happening. Gifted characters and supernatural beings may resist the intrusion in a number of ways. In such a case, treat this as a Resisted Task, with the target using Seer Powers, Magic, or other abilities to fight off the mind probe.

Most of the time, Mindsight produces short-lived flashes of information. A successful attempt reveals images and words from the subject's mind. Prolonged contact can be attempted, but it is fatiguing and difficult. To maintain mind-to-mind contact, the Seer must succeed at a new Willpower and Mindsight Art Task. Each Success Level allows for one minute of constant supervision. Each minute of mind contact drains the Seer of D4(2) Endurance Points, and requires a great deal of concentration. Should the Seer be attacked or distracted, the contact is lost. During this time, the psychic can peruse the target's thoughts and memories at will.

Using Mindsight Defensively

Characters with Mindsight can try to resist mental attacks. Any Magic, Seer Power, or ability that controls, probes, or influences the mind is resisted by using Willpower and the Mindsight Strength level. This works as a Resisted Task against whatever force is being used to attack the character.

Mindtalk Power

Seers with this power can project their thoughts at others, causing them to be heard as words inside their heads. Once contact has been established, the Seer can also hear any mental reply from her target. Only thoughts deliberately sent to the Seer can be perceived; to delve into another person's mind requires Mindsight and a different set of Tasks.

Using Mindtalk

Sending a mental message uses the character's Intelligence plus Mindtalk Art level. The psychic can converse mentally with the target for one minute per Success Level. The range of this power is determined by the Strength level of the Seer. Mindtalk uses the same Strength/range table as Mindsight (see p. 231).

Mindtalk can be used for more than simple communication. By making the mental voice sound strange or unearthly, the Seer can scare those who do not know about psychic abilities. Some evil Seers have also manipulated disturbed and weak-willed humans by telling them to commit crimes repeatedly, until the victim finally decides to do what the voices tell her.

At Strength 4 or higher, the Seer can use Mindtalk to send a deafening psychic scream that inflicts some damage and overloads the victim's mind. Psychic screams are treated as a Resisted Task, using the Willpower and Art of the psychic against a Difficult Willpower Test by mundanes. Gifted characters and supernatural beings can resist this power in a variety of ways, such as Defensive Essence expenditure (see p. 202) and the Shielding

Invocation (see p. 220). At worst, they use a Difficult Willpower Test with a +2 bonus.

This scream attack drains the psychic of one Essence Point every time it is used. A successful attack inflicts D4(2) points of damage for every four levels of Mindtalk Strength (rounded down). Further, the victim loses all of her actions for one Turn, and suffers a penalty of -4 on all Tasks and Tests for one additional Turn per Success Level of the attack. The range of the scream is limited to two yards (meters) per Strength level.

Using Mindtalk Defensively

Mindtalk can be used to block any attempt to communicate with or probe the Seer's mind. The character basically throws up a wall of noise around herself, disrupting any mental communications. When using Mindtalk in this way, the psychic resists powers like Mindsight and Mindrule, as well as Invocations like Affect the Psyche (see p. 209). The Seer uses her Willpower and Mindtalk Strength (not Art) in such Resisted Tasks. While the power is used in this way, other uses of Mindtalk are impossible.

Mindtime Power

Seers were particularly valued in the past for their ability to peer into the past or future. The Mindtime Power lets the psychic see past the curtains of time. Characters with this ability are prone to flashes of insight and visions of doom. Experience has also shown that the future is not immune to change; precognitive flashes only show the most likely future (which is also the hardest to change), and active determination is often enough to alter the course of events to come. In general, events involving mundanes are harder to change than those involving the Gifted or supernatural beings. Mundanes tend to be more tied to the decrees of Fate; the Gifted and supernaturals, although subject to the vagaries of Fate, are more capable of defining their final destiny.

Using Mindtime

Many uses of Mindtime are spontaneous and not under the control of the psychic. Chroniclers are advised to make a special note of any characters with this ability, as psychic flashes and premonitions have an important part to play in many *Armageddon* campaigns. Typically, the Chronicler tells the player to use the character's Perception and Mindtime Art in a Task. The level of success of the Task and the Strength of the power determines how much detail is made available to the player. If the Task fails, the Chronicler simply says that the character feels a vague uneasiness, as if she had something important on the tip of her tongue but cannot quite remember it.

Sometimes, the character attempts an active use of the power, trying to force a vision about the past or the future. Those attempts use the same rules above, with the power's Strength and Success Levels determining the outcome.

Looking into the past is easier than looking into the future. The Chronicler may impose penalties on attempts to see the future, depending on how inevitable the future is. If the issue hangs in the balance, the future vision might only reveal uncertainty.

Using Mindtime Defensively

Characters with a high Mindtime Art level can try to use their power in combat. By knowing what their opponents may do beforehand, the psychic can sidestep or avoid the attack. Treat this as a Difficult Attribute Test, using Mindtime

Mindtime Strength Table

Strength	Abilities
1	Vague premonitions about important events or vague feelings about objects and places where memorable events took place are seen.
3	Short flashes of future events or flashbacks about the recent past (one week for each Perception level) are seen.
5	The visions are more detailed and last longer; the images make more sense and are easier to interpret. Visions of the past reach back one month per Mindtime Strength plus Perception level.
7	Visions of the past reach back one year per Mindtime Strength plus Perception level.
9	Clear visions that replay past or future events with crystalline detail are seen.
10+	Visions reach back up to one century per Mindtime Strength plus Perception level.

Mindview Strength Table

Strength	Abilities
1	Only brief glimpses of events are seen, equivalent to the blink of an eye. The range of a viewing is one yard (meter) per level of Perception plus Mindview Strength.
3	A few seconds (1 Turn) are seen of the scene or vision. The viewing range is 10 yards (meters) per level of Perception and Mindview Strength.
6	A whole scene, lasting a few minutes, can be seen in a vision.
8	Viewing range is equal to 100 yards (meters) per level of Perception and Mindview Strength.
10	Detailed, extended visions are possible. Viewing range is equal to one mile (1.5 kilometers) per level of Perception and Mindview Strength.

Art as an Attribute. This counts as one action in a Turn. If successful, each Success Level of the Test adds a +2 bonus to the psychic's attack and defense rolls for the next two Turns, representing the ability to react to attacks before they get started. If the attempt fails, however, the character is overwhelmed by the possibilities flashing through her head, and she suffers a -4 to all Task attempts during the next two Turns.

Mindview Power

This power allows the psychic to transcend the limits of the senses. Characters with Mindview can perceive things unimpeded by distance or barriers. Usually, these visions are triggered by intense emotions or releases of Essence. The psychic often sees crimes being committed, supernatural beings preying on helpless humans, and other disturbing events and incidents. Generally, these visions also have a purpose—many times, the psychic is in a position to do something about the situation she sees. Gifted of a religious bent see Mindview as messages from God or orders from Fate. The more cynical consider this to be a curse where the victim has two choices—get involved in dangerous and horrifying situations, or live with the terrible images of the things she allows to happen.

Mindview can also be used actively by the character. These clairvoyant effects allow the psychic to see through walls or containers. The ability is thus very useful for spies and investigators—provided they accept the terrible price for these powers.

Using Mindview

All characters with Mindview are subject to random visions of danger and horror; this power works in many ways like Mindtime, and the Chronicler should make use of it in this fashion. Mindview is a powerful Chronicler tool in guiding the characters. Visions may alert Cast Members to possible threats and enemies, and, if interpreted correctly, may provide valuable clues and information. Random Mindview flashes are also a burden, as the character is often plagued by visions of vicious crimes and disasters. As they occur while the character sees them, often she can do nothing to prevent them.

Mindview Tasks use Perception and Mindview Art. There are two types of activities possible, visions and viewings.

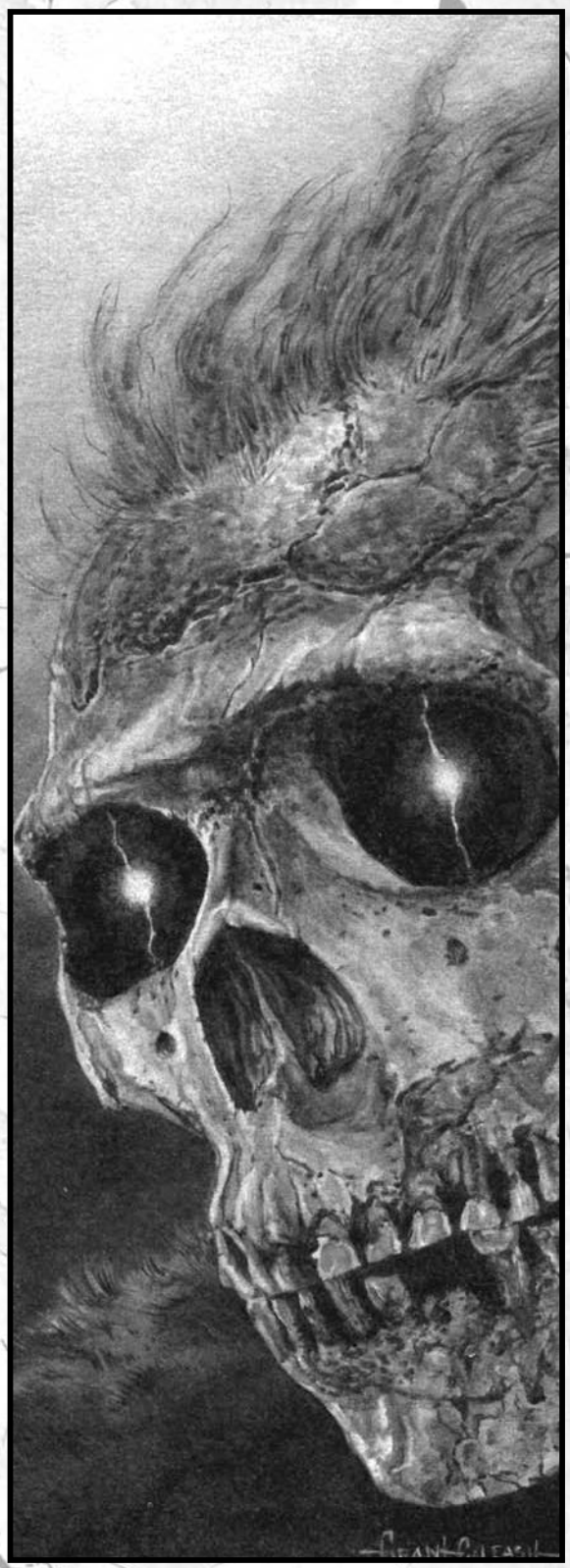
Visions are flashes of insight about ongoing events controlled by the Chronicler. Often, the character sees through the eyes of a victim or perpetrator, or from a worm or bird's eye view. Each vision works differently, but the point of view is often confusing, and most visions are short. Typically, the character gets multiple related visions, each adding a little more information to the overall puzzle. The range of the visions is irrelevant; if the Chronicler believes the character is in a position to be involved in the related events, the vision could be of events occurring halfway across the world.

Viewings are attempts to see past barriers or beyond the range of the normal sense of sight—looking inside a safe, or a place the character has never seen but knows about. The range of viewings is based on the Strength of the power.

Using Mindview Defensively

Characters with Mindview often get flashes of nearby danger or threats—a sniper on a roof, a group of assassins waiting for the character to come out of a building, a speeding car just turning the corner. The Chronicler may warn the psychic of any such danger by requiring a Perception and Mindview Art Task. Even if the Task fails, the psychic should have the impression that something is going on (just as the player does, having just been required to perform a Task).

Necromancy
The Speech of the Dead



Necromancy evokes visions of dark magic, the raising of the Dead for unspeakable purposes, and worse. In reality, for most of human history, Necromancy was merely a form of divination, involving communicating with the spirits of the dead to learn about the past, present, or future.

Necromancy is the power Mediums use to traffic with the spirits of the dead. Necromancy at its lowest levels is mostly used for information on the past, and to some degree about the future. More powerful Mediums can also control spirits, harm and even destroy them, and tap into their power. In the world of *Armageddon*, Necromancy is not inherently evil, nor does it involve dealing with demonic forces. Like all other Gifted Powers, it can be used for good as well as evil.

Necromancy combines some elements of Magic with aspects of the Sight. At its root, it is an inborn power. One can either work Necromancy, or one cannot. At the same time, however, developing the Art requires learning and achieving a greater understanding of the forces of the cycle of life and death. The higher-level powers of Necromancy are enabled by Essence, which requires either Essence Channeling or the use of rituals and other mystical aids. Further, all the Sources of Power, and all things that benefit or hinder Essence in Magic also help or bother Necromancers. Unlike Magic, most Necromantic powers only work on the spirits of the dead, not on elementals, nature spirits, and the like. Unless specified otherwise, assume that a given Necromantic power only affects the dead.

This Art has four major specialties, each of which is purchased as a separate power, and a basic Necromancy Skill that applies to the use of each power. The four elements of Necromancy are Death Lordship (the ability to command and control the spirits of the dead), Death Mastery (the ability to manipulate the very forces that rule life and death), Death Speech (communications with the spirits of the dead), and Death Vessel (the ability to let spirits of the dead inhabit the Medium's body).

Purchasing Necromantic Powers

The Necromancy Skill is purchased at a cost of two points per level until level five, and five points per level thereafter. Each Necromantic element is purchased as a separate power, at the cost of three points per level until level five, and six points thereafter. This price must be paid for each power; it is possible to have Death Speech 5 and Death Control 2, for example. Beginning characters can choose between buying relatively low power levels in all four Necromantic elements, or specializing in one or two of them at high levels.

Using Necromantic Powers

The power level of each Necromantic element determines what a character can or cannot do—the higher the power level, the greater the range of abilities available. Most Necromantic Tasks use the Necromancy Skill and a mental Attribute. Some of the Tasks can be resisted by spirits of the dead who oppose the Necromancer.

Death Lordship

Death Lordship is the power to manipulate the Essence of spirits. The Necromancer can use this power to either reward good deeds (by paying the spirit with Essence Points) or force spirits to do her bidding. At beginning levels, the character can force spirits to depart an area, to perform simple actions. Higher power levels allow for greater control, as well as the ability to harm the Essence of a spirit, which may cause permanent destruction.

All Death Lordship Tasks use Willpower and Necromancy, and they cost Essence Points. Reluctant Spirits resist these powers with a Simple Willpower Test.

Level 1—Expel Spirit

The Medium can try to force a spirit to leave an area. This ability costs two Essence Points per attempt. Non-human spirits (like elementals or Fiends) may also be commanded, but the spirit gains a +2 bonus to resist, and the attempt costs four Essence Points.

Level 2—Enforced Obedience

The Medium can command a spirit to perform one specific action or task. This activity may not last more than a few minutes. Possible actions include scaring somebody, accepting Communion with the Necromancer, or lending her Strength (see the Death Vessel Power, p. 238). Note that powerful spirits are able to resist Death Lordship Powers and do not take kindly to attempts to control them. This costs five Essence Points.

Level 3—Rule the Dead

The control can be maintained over the spirit for one hour. During that time, the spirit does whatever the Necromancer tells it to do, except facilitate its own destruction (the spirit resist such orders with a +6 bonus). Forcing the spirit to perform Tasks it does not wish to do may beget a grudge or a feud, however. This costs 10 Essence Points per hour.

Level 4—Dominion

As in level three above, but control lasts for an entire day and night, at the cost of 20 Essence.

Level 5—Necromantic Bolts

The Medium can weaken and damage spirits, inflicting D4(2) x Death Lordship level damage directly to the Vital Essence of the spirit. This power affects any incorporeal spirit (including elementals) and undead at full strength. Each bolt costs three Essence Points; the multiplier level can be increased by one per additional Essence point spent.

Corporeal supernatural beings can also be damaged, but at half strength. The power manifests itself as bright bolts of fiery red energies. These bolts are invisible to mundanes but clearly visible to the Gifted. They can be used to inflict Essence damage on humans as well; every two points of damage rolled or determined reduces the victim's Essence Pool by one. This power can be resisted by any protective Magic or power that restricts the flow of Essence.

Death Mastery

Death Mastery is perhaps the most powerful ability available to Necromancers. With it, power over the forces of Life and Death can be brought to bear, to heal and to destroy both spirits and living beings, human or otherwise.

Level 1—Delay/Accelerate the Departing

The Necromancer can pull or push the soul of a person near death, either to snuff her life out, or to keep her alive a while longer. Use Willpower and Necromancy in the Task; each

Success Level keeps the subject alive for one extra minute, or reduces her life expectancy by a like amount. In the latter case, however, the Task is resisted by the victim's Willpower and Constitution. This costs five Essence Points.

Level 2—Death Sight

This power is as much a curse as a blessing, as the Necromancer becomes acutely aware of the futile race against the inevitable coming of Death. The Medium can sense if somebody is in imminent danger of dying by noticing the shadow of a spiritual avatar of Death, approaching the person or animal.

The Death Sight also allows the character to readily identify killers and predators, for their auras glow darkly while the power is active. This vision may allow the character to do something to cheat the Reaper and save a victim's life (that person, of course, could be the Medium herself).

While this power is active, the character sees everything through Death's eyes—all living things seem to be decaying rapidly. Every person appears as a corpse in the beginning stages of decomposition. In some cases, the Medium sees the future causes of their death—for example, a cancer bursting through the stomach of that man, a pulsing brain tumor on the head of that woman, the blackened lungs of a smoker hideously displayed on the chest of the man reading a newspaper. A Simple Willpower Test is needed to avoid being shocked and depressed by these revelations—and the Medium should avoid looking in a mirror.

Activating this power uses Perception and Necromancy, costs four Essence Points, and lasts for one minute.

Level 3—A Taste of Death

The Necromancer can, for a brief moment, push a person's soul out of her body, giving her a momentary out-of-body experience, and causing physical and spiritual damage. This Task uses Willpower and Necromancy, resisted by the target's Willpower and Constitution, and costs six Essence Points. If the Medium wins, the victim "dies" for one second. This inflicts D4(2) Life Points damage, D6(3) points of Endurance and Essence loss (roll separately for each), and shocks the victim for one to four Turns, imposing a -3 penalty to all Tasks. Gifted and supernatural characters may resist this attack with any power or Invocation that counters psychic intrusions or mind control.

Level 4—Death Projection

The Medium gains the power to separate her Essence from her body and send it forth as a ghostly force, connected to her body by a psychic link. Activating the power uses Intelligence and Necromancy, and it lasts for one hour per Success Level. The character must leave a minimum of five Essence Points behind to anchor the spirit to its body, and astral travel drains one Essence Point per hour spent away from the body. While in spirit form, the Necromancer can travel through walls and other obstacles, and fly at speeds of up to 100 mph (150 kph) per Willpower level. The character can use powers while incorporeal, but anything other than detection and sensory powers affect only other spirit/astral entities, not the material world. This applies to all forms of astral projection, be they the product of Magic, Necromancy, or other powers.

Level 5—Wishkill

If the Medium wants to kill somebody, she can do so by merely wishing it. The Wishkill Power is dangerous, however, for it attracts the attention of the Grim Reapers (patrolmen of the Death Realms, see Mystery Codex, p. 193), and they may decide to take the Necromancer as well. This power calls for a Resisted Task using the Medium's Willpower and Necromancy and the victim's Constitution and Willpower. Gifted or supernatural powers can resist this power directly as well. If the Necromancer wins, the victim takes D6(3) Life Points of damage per Success Level in the Task. This base damage costs no Essence to use. Additional damage can be inflicted by spending Essence: increase the multiplier by one for every Essence point spent. Further, the victim suffers terrible agony, suffering a -2 penalty to all actions per Success Level in the Task, for one Turn.

Death Speech

Death Speech is the basic power of the Necromancer, allowing her to communicate with and perceive the spirits of the dead, and to summon specific spirits from the Otherworlds to Earth. A spirit that is called may answer questions about her life and death, and can provide any knowledge she had in life. Spirits who have traveled to the Otherworlds are also able to see the future, or the most likely future.

Level 1—Glimpse the Dead

By spending one Essence Point and using a Perception and Necromancy Task, the Medium can see a spirit within the range of the power, and mentally hear what the spirit says to her. The range is five yards (meters) for each level of her Willpower. The Glimpse lasts for one minute per Success Level of the Task.

Although the Gift Quality (see p. 82) allows a character to sense the presence of a supernatural being like a spirit, Death Speech pinpoints the appearance and location of the spirit.

Level 2—See the Dead

The Necromancer can see spirits of the dead without needing to spend energy or make Perception Tasks, unless the spirit is trying to make itself invisible, in which case a Resisted Task (using the Medium's Perception and Necromancy versus the spirit's Willpower and Intelligence) is necessary.

Level 3—Recall the Dead

The Medium can try to summon and communicate with the spirit of a recently dead person (no more than three days after her death). This costs three Essence Points. If the attempt is made in the presence of the body of the deceased, the Task has a bonus of +3; many spirits linger near the location of their bodies for some time after their deaths. The Task uses Willpower and Necromancy. If the spirit is unwilling, treat this as a Resisted Task, and the spirit uses a Simple Willpower Test. Once summoned, the spirit can be asked questions. Most answer willingly; those who refuse may be forced, but this is only possible at higher levels.

Level 4—Command the Dead

The Necromancer can summon the spirit of anybody who died within the previous month, at a cost of five Essence Points. She can also compel an answer from a spirit. This Resisted Task uses the Medium's Willpower and Death Speech and the spirit's Willpower and Intelligence, and costs six Essence to perform. If the Medium wins, each Success Level guarantees one answer to one question. In all cases, the spirit only answers with either "Yes," "No," or "I don't know." Only simple questions are answered; asking an improper question (at the Chronicler's discretion) still counts as a question.

Level 5—Summon the Dead

The Medium can call upon any spirit of the dead dwelling on Earth in incorporeal form, or any spirit who has died within the past year. This process costs eight Essence, which is fed to the spirit to keep it talking, or 10 Essence if the spirit must be forced to speak. More detailed answers can be sought; spirits answer in the form of one sentence per question.

Death Vessel

By using this power, the Medium voluntarily surrenders her body and allows a spirit to inhabit it. This surrender is temporary, although there is always the risk that a malicious spirit may try to make it permanent and shove the Necromancer's soul into the Otherworlds. At low levels, this channeling leaves the Medium helpless and gives total control to the spirit. Still, the possession typically only allows the spirit to speak and perform some minor actions. At higher levels, the Necromancer remains in control of her body, and can actually tap into the power of the dead, using the spirit's knowledge, skills, and Attributes.

Level 1—Invite Spirit

The Medium temporarily surrenders control of her body and allows a spirit to inhabit it. The spirit can only stay in the Medium's body for 1 to 4 minutes, after which time it is forced to depart. During that time, the spirit can answer questions (as per Death Speech) and converse with other people. The Necromancer remains in a state of stasis during this process and retains no memory of the event. This Task uses Intelligence and Necromancy. This ability has no Essence cost.

Level 2—Aware Possession

At this level, the ability works the same way as in Invite Spirit, but the Medium is aware of what is happening while the spirit is in her body. Still, she has no control over the entity's actions or those conducted with her body. Again, this power has no Essence cost.

Level 3—Communion with the Dead

At this level, the Necromancer communes with the spirit inhabiting her body. While the Communion lasts, the Necromancer "knows" and can use any and all of the spirit's skills and memories. Spirits often accede to this limited form of possession so they can once again

perceive the body as a creature of the flesh. This Task costs 10 Essence Points and uses the Medium's Willpower and Necromancy. The effect lasts five minutes. At the end of this period, another 10 Essence must be spent and a new Task must be performed. If the spirit tries to contest ownership of the body, a Resisted Task is conducted pitting the Medium's Willpower and Necromancy against the spirit's Willpower, doubled. A sure way to deal with this problem is to use Death Lordship (see p. 236) to ensure the spirit's cooperation.

While the Communion lasts, the spirit can speak inside the Necromancer's head, and may give advice, make jokes, or curse her. The Chronicler decides what the spirit's attitude and personality are, and roleplays it for entertainment value or dramatic effect.

Level 4—Transferred Communion

The Medium can perform a Communion with the Dead on another person. The human subject must be willing (the spirit can be forced into obedience by Death Lordship). The process works as described for Communion with the Dead, but costs the Necromancer a total of 20 Essence Points.

Level 5—Strength of the Dead

The Medium can use the spirit's energy to increase her physical Attributes. The spirit's Willpower and Intelligence can be distributed among the Necromancer's Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution. Attributes can be raised beyond the normal human maximum of six through this method. This also temporarily raises the character's Life and Endurance Points (but not her Essence Points). This Task works as per Communion with the Dead (and has the same risk), but it costs 15 Essence Points. If both the Communion and Strength of the Dead Powers are used at the same time, the Essence cost stacks up to 25 Essence for a five-minute duration.

For example, Rudolf the Medium has Strength 2, Dexterity 2, and Constitution 1. He performs the Strength of the Dead rite with a spirit of Intelligence 3 and Willpower 5, for a total of eight levels that can be used by Rudolf. Rudolf puts five points into his Strength, raising it to seven, two points into Dexterity, raising it to four, and one point in Constitution, raising it to two. For the next five minutes, he is gifted with greatly enhanced strength and dexterity.

Divine Inspiration

The Divinely Inspired have access to an assortment of abilities allegedly derived from the connection of the character to the Creating Agency. Some occultists claim that these powers come from inside the Inspired, and are nothing more than the channeling of their own Essence to fuel their religious fanaticism. No matter who is right, without their Faith, the Inspired would not be able to perform their incredible feats. To use a Miracle, the character must firmly believe that she is fighting the forces of evil in the name of her God. Otherwise, she will be left with nothing but her own meager strength.

Acquiring Miracles

Miracles are not skills; they are learned through mystical revelation by the Inspired. To acquire Miracles, the character must first buy the Divine Inspiration Quality (which has its own Gift Quality prerequisite, see p. 80). Miracles cost five character points each during character creation, and 10 points apiece thereafter.

Additionally, the Inspired often have large Essence Pools as a result of their connection to the Creator. The Inspired may have Seer Powers, although such combinations are rare. No Inspired can acquire Necromantic or Magical abilities. Even when such powers are not considered to be tools of Satan (as many Inspired believe), they are seen contemptuously as distractions from the righteous service to the Deity.

Using Miracles

The Inspired use Miracles by channeling Essence into the effects they desire. The Inspired have no limits as to how much Essence they can use. The Inspired can use up their entire Essence Pool in one Miracle if it seems necessary. Essence is regained at the rate of one point per Willpower level every five minutes.

Miracles cannot be used at the whim of their wielder. Only extreme situations, where lives are at stake or supernatural powers have manifested openly, warrant the use of Miracles. An Inspired who tries to call upon the Strength of Ten to win a bar fight will fail; even worse, the blasphemy of trying to use God's powers to do profane work may cost the character her Inspired Powers, perhaps permanently! In most cases, the Inspired must try to solve their problems through mundane

means. Only when confronting beings who are clearly agents of an unnatural power is using one's abilities justified. Even trying to fight mundane evil may not warrant using Miracles.

Within these parameters, the use of Miracles is relatively easy. If enough Essence is available to power the Miracle, it automatically manifests itself. Some Miracles may need additional Tests or Tasks to fulfill the intended goal, but there are no Miracle-related skills.

The Denial

In addition to their repertoire of Miracles, all Inspired can use their Essence to neutralize any Gifted or supernatural power that uses Essence. The Denial (as this power is called) consists of projecting Essence against the Gifted or supernatural being using the special power. If the Inspired spends more Essence than the target does, the power fails. In the case of a Seer Power, each level of Strength is the equivalent of three Essence; thus, neutralizing a Strength 4 Seer Power would require an expenditure of more than 12 Essence Points.

When Miracles Clash

What happens when the Inspired of two different religions run up against each other? In the past, such individuals might face off, each confident of being the servant of the one True God. Even then, however, more often than not, Miracles of either side would not work against another Inspired, regardless of their religious persuasion. In recent times, this is almost always the case.

It may appear (and many Inspired believe this) that the members of every monotheistic religion are worshipping the same Deity, and that their differences are meaningless in His/Her/Its eyes. Inspired who have publicly said such things, however, have often found themselves excommunicated or shunned as a result.

Tests of Faith

Unlike other metaphysical powers, Inspired Miracles can be lost at any moment. Should the character lose her Faith, her powers become nothing but memories. Falling from Grace is a terrible tragedy for the Inspired. Pride (which "Goeth before the Fall"), temptation, greed, lust, and cynicism are among the many pitfalls that await the Inspired in their war against the forces of darkness. Some beings, demons and Fiends in particular, take a perverse delight in tricking the Inspired into making that fatal mistake, which costs them their state of Grace.

Sometimes the moral dilemmas are truly harrowing. Should the Inspired save an innocent or take the opportunity to destroy a being who, left to its own devices, will surely kill again? Should the character break her word if given to a supernatural monster, even if the monster seeks to twist the meaning of the promise? Is accepting a reward for one's actions a sign of greed, or is turning it down one of pride? The Inspired must come up with the right answer or risk losing it all.

Chroniclers should throw these and similar quandaries in the path of Inspired characters, although they should take care not to purposefully trip them up. The temptation of the Inspired can make for powerful Story devices, but try not to be too cruel implementing them. Reviewing a few books on philosophy and morality might not be a bad idea to prepare interesting and devious tricks.

Miracle Descriptions

These are some of the most common Miracles among the Inspired.

Binding
Variable Essence

This is the power to restrain supernatural beings, at least temporarily, by using Essence. The Inspired orders the creature to halt in the name of her God. The Binding only works against supernatural creatures, not the Gifted.

This Miracle costs two Essence Points per Strength and Willpower level of the supernatural creature. The Inspired may not know how much Essence is necessary. If she does not have enough, her Essence Pool is drained and the Miracle does not take place.

In addition to the Essence cost, the Inspired must win a Resisted Test involving Simple Willpower rolls from both the Inspired and the creature. If the being is not truly evil (as determined by the Inspired's religion or the Chronicler), it gains a bonus of +2 to +5 in the Resisted Test. If the Inspired wins, the creature is bound for one Turn per Success Level on the Willpower Test. During that time, the creature may not attack or defend itself, and cannot move from the spot it was bound.

Call Ethereal
10 Essence

Some Inspired can call forth heavenly creatures to fight at their side. These beings are not true Seraphim, but Angelic Ethereals (see p. 299). These beings only come to the aid of the Inspired if she is battling supernatural foes and if the odds are clearly against her. A group of monster-hunters who have cornered a young vampire will not do—a lone Inspired facing a family of vampires or a powerful Fiend will. The summoning costs 10 Essence Points and takes a few seconds (two Turns). Once it appears, the Ethereal battles against all supernatural monsters in the area (the entity may attack supernatural allies of the summoner as well, if they are not "pure" enough). When the fight ends (assuming the Ethereal was not destroyed), it heals the Inspired and any allies who were injured before departing. The Inspired can only summon one Ethereal at a time.

Divine Sight
5 Essence

This Miracle allows the Inspired to find the Truth in everything she sees. Although this ability is very useful in uncovering the presence of the supernatural, the Divine Sight sometimes shines a light on some unwanted truths as well. While the Miracle is activated, the Inspired sees not only invisible spiritual entities and the strange auras of supernatural beings, but also the true nature of human beings. In a world of hypocrisy and lies, this ability often shows taint among pillars of the community, respected leaders of Church and State, and other seemingly benign and honest people. Inspired with the ability to invoke the Divine Sight sometimes remove themselves from their original Church, unable to deal with the complacency and greed that can mar such institutions. Many start to develop a cynicism that clashes badly with the Faith necessary to carry on the good fight.

Activating this Miracle costs five Essence Points, and it lasts 10 minutes. Unless the creature or person is protected from scrying or mental probing (such protection can be perceived by the Divine Sight), her nature, personality and goals are clearly seen by the Inspired.

Exorcism
5 Essence per Test

This is the power to banish spirit entities and demons from both places and people. Exorcisms often take a long time, and are risky undertakings. To conduct an Exorcism, the Inspired must stand next to the possessed person, or nearby/inside the place.

A series of Simple Willpower Tests follow. The first Test costs five Essence Points and forces the possessing creature to reveal its identity. Some are Fiends (see p. 300), while others are hostile spirits of the dead. Sometimes, they are creatures so strange and alien that they defy explanation.

The next several Willpower Tests encompass an effort to push the offending being out of its current dwelling. The Inspired has to accumulate a total of 10 Success Levels to remove the entity. Since one Test is unlikely to accumulate that many successes, the Inspired must keep making them until the necessary number of Success Levels is accumulated. Each Test costs an additional five Essence Points and takes D10(5) minutes of preparation.

In the meantime, the possessing spirit is rarely a passive spectator. Most of the time, the Exorcism process protects the Inspired from direct attack; the creature must pass a Difficult Willpower Test (at a -4 penalty) to attack the Inspired once the Exorcism has begun. However, the creature may try to intimidate, cajole, or seduce the character away from her labors. Fiends and ghosts are the best at these tactics. Their abilities allow them to see into the Inspired's mind and soul, and they can bring painful or shameful aspects of the character's personality to light. Insults and threats are often made. The Inspired may need to pass Willpower Tests to see if she can continue the Exorcism without losing her temper or composure.

If the Exorcism is successful, the being is removed from the body. If it lingers and the Inspired can see it, she can attack it with other Miracles or drive it away through the use of Prayer and holy symbols (see p. 243). Most of the time, however, the entity flees to the Otherworlds where it was spawned—bearing a deadly grudge against the human (and any of those like him) who thwarted it.

Holy Fire
20 Essence

This powerful Miracle calls down divine retribution upon the forces of evil—in the form of a blast of blinding white flames, or a bolt of lightning from above. This attack can only be attempted on supernatural beings. Sometimes, if the being in question is not truly evil or is somehow part of the mysterious ways of the Deity, the blast does not inflict full damage, or inflicts no damage at all. Such an event clearly demonstrates that the Inspired is not meant to destroy the creature—for the time being, at least.

This power costs 20 Essence Points and inflicts D8(4) points of damage times twice the Willpower of the Inspired. For example, an Inspired with Willpower 4 inflicts D8 x 8(32). The base damage can be increased, at the rate of one additional Multiplier level per Essence Point spent. The above Inspired could spend 24 Essence and inflict D8 x 12(48).

Any being within line of sight can be targeted. No attack roll is necessary; the power zeroes in on the selected target. Mundane body armor does not protect against this power, but Essence-based shielding may. Dodging (automatic -4 penalty) is possible but only if the target knows where the person calling the fire is located; this is not a Resisted Task, the target merely needs to succeed at a Difficult Dexterity Test, or a Dexterity and Dodge Task.

Strength of Ten
15 Essence

This ability allows the Inspired, when confronted with evil, to summon the strength of the righteous, temporarily transforming her into a nearly unstoppable warrior of vengeance. The Inspired becomes inured to pain and fatigue, gains inhuman levels of strength, and can fight until killed. This display of power is only possible under the most extreme situations, however. Only when facing overwhelming odds should the Strength of Ten be summoned.

This Miracle costs 15 Essence Points. The Inspired gains +5 to Strength (which also raises her Life Points by 20 points), and is immune to shock and pain until the battle is over. This means the character can keep fighting even when reduced to zero Life Points or below (he still needs to pass Survival Tests after -10 Life Points to stay alive, however). Once invoked, the power lasts until the threat is gone or until the Inspired succeeds in martyring herself.

Touch of Healing
Variable Essence

This is the ability to cure fatigue, wounds, disease, and disabilities. In the past, most Divinely Inspired people were healers; now far too many are warriors. The Miracle costs one Essence Point to heal D4(2) Life or Endurance Points. Mild diseases cost two points, Moderate ones five points, Serious diseases cost 15 points, and the cost is 25 points for a Terminal disease (see p. 136).

The Touch of Healing may only be used under extraordinary circumstances, and is generally used only on the faithful. The Inspired may elect to make exceptions for non-believers who are nonetheless fighting the good fight (interestingly enough, some among the Inspired are actually a lot more tolerant than the mundane leaders of many Churches).

Visions
0 or 5 Essence

Through this Miracle, the Inspired opens herself to the Deity for guidance and advice. The Inspired is often visited by flashes of insight about places and people in the form of dreams or sudden visions that may strike at any time, without warning. Sometimes, the Inspired prays for guidance and is rewarded with a sign of some kind. Most of the time, the visions are ambiguous. For example, the Inspired might see the face of a man, a famous politician. Is the man a tool of evil, or is she being threatened by the forces of evil? The Inspired would have to find out somehow.

This ability costs five Essence Points when the Inspired actively seeks guidance. The Inspired's prayers may or may not be answered, depending on what the Chronicler feels is appropriate to the moment, although such attempts should usually be successful—provided the Inspired is appropriately humble in her petitions. When the Chronicler sees fit to visit a spontaneous Vision upon a character, however, there should be no Essence Point cost.

The actual details of the visions vary widely. Some may be a single image, while others may give more clues as to places, people, and circumstances. The nature of visions should always be determined by the needs of the Story.

Prayer

In the modern world, a simple prayer has more power than most scoffers could imagine. As a focus of the faith and willpower of a person, Prayers can be as effective as an Invocation under the right circumstances. The Inspired can use Prayer to convert Essence into Miracles, and even to gather more Essence. Mundanes with enough piety and strength of will (one does not work without the other) can also make use of Prayers to focus some of their Essence into actual defenses or even attacks against the supernatural.

Prayers only have an effect if the character's life shows enough devotion and respect to her religion. Most people only pay lip service to their beliefs; that will not do at all. In the course of a game, however, a character might "discover religion" as part of the often traumatic events that make up most Stories. A character undergoing such a revelation might be able to make use of Prayers.

Some may find the use of Prayer as a game mechanic to be controversial. As with any and all material in this game, feel free to disallow this entire subject if it upsets or offends any players.

The Inspired and Prayers

The Inspired may find additional strength through Prayers. If the character spends at least an hour in deep prayer and meditation, she may find herself replenishing Essence at double the normal rate. The use of prayers in the course of a Miracle is considered to be part and parcel of such a Miracle. A Christian Inspired would be expected to quote from the Bible, just as a Muslim one might recite a line from the Qur'an. This conveys no special bonuses or penalties, beyond the increased Essence recovery.

Mundanes and Prayers

Mundanes are the main beneficiaries of the power of Prayer. The ancient chants of religious scriptures hold a great deal of power for those who truly believe. A faithful character who prays may gain unexpected strength in her time of need. Treat this as a Task using Willpower and Humanities (Theology). Modifiers for the character's piety range from -10 (for a foxhole convert who is just trying to save her skin) to +10 (for a truly saintly individual, rare in today's world). Each level of success in the Task releases a point of Essence from the character's Essence Pool. Each Essence Point released confers a +2 bonus on any Resisted Task or Test against a supernatural ability of any kind. Essence Channeling is inapplicable in prayer; unlike the defensive use of Essence (see p. 202), this ability is limited only by faith.

Holy Symbols

From the legends of antiquity to Hollywood movies, the power of holy symbols is part and parcel of many stories about the supernatural. The myth goes that anybody with a cross has nothing to fear from a Vampyre, or that by wielding the right holy symbol a righteous man can banish demons and scare off spirits. But the power lies not in the symbol, but within its wielder. A character using a holy symbol (be it a Cross, an Ankh or any similar object) for protection must pass a Simple Willpower Test, with the same modifiers used in Prayer Tasks. Each Success Level allows the character to focus one Essence Point through the holy symbol. Supernatural beings confronting the charged holy symbol must make a Difficult Willpower Test, at -1 per Essence Point focused through the symbol, or feel pain and fear when faced with it. The creatures hesitate to come near the wielder, let alone attack her; even if the monster does not flee the symbol, all its actions suffer a -4 penalty.

Spirit Patrons

Some characters forge a relationship with a supernatural or spiritual entity. These entities include Guardian Angels, the Genius of Roman religion, nature spirits, the pagan deities and, in the case of Black Magic, demons or the Mad Gods. The relationship varies widely, depending on the goals of the character and the entity, and the terms of the exchange. Some entities grant power in return for services, or for an oath of servitude at a later date. Others are content with the worship of the character, or aid her because she is pursuing an agenda that serves the spirit's purposes.

Dealings with spirits can be treacherous. Patrons can offer great power, however, and many accept the risks and consequences inherent in such deals. The relationship between a character and a Spirit Patron is defined by the Boons conferred by the Patron and the Obligations due in return. Boons are special powers; Obligations range from simple demonstrations of respect to binding oaths of service or sacrifice.

Spirit Patrons and Supernatural Creatures

Spirit Patrons are not restricted to Gifted humans, although most supernatural beings are somewhat restricted as to the types of Patrons they may have, and some cannot have any. Avatars and Inheritors can have Spirit Patrons, although they are usually limited to their original pantheon, although not necessarily the same god. Incarnates, Seraphim, and Kherubim, and their Fallen counterparts cannot have Spirit Patrons of any kind. True Immortals are unable to forge bonds with spirit entities; their transformation into supernatural beings has somehow cut them off from the spirit realms. Neither can the Nephilim.

Spirit Patrons, Miracles and the Creator

The most powerful Spirit Patrons available are the Seraphim and the Old Gods. The Creator cannot be a Spirit Patron. In fact, the Inspired rarely take Spirit Patrons, and when they do they are restricted only to the Seraphim and the Ethereal. Even then, for some reason, any patron-bestowed powers do not work when an ongoing Inspired Miracle (like Divine Sight or Strength of Ten) is active. Also, no Obligations that control the Inspired character's behavior can be taken; the Inspired must always have free will.

Combining Patrons

It is possible to have more than one Patron, but the risks increase radically. Unless the two Patrons share similar or identical goals, they resent the divided loyalties of the devotee. Even two gods of the same pantheon are unlikely to accept such arrangements. For the most part, Boons granted by one Patron do not work while Boons from another Patron are active, but all Obligations remain in effect. If the two Patrons have a conflict of interest at any time, the vassal risks losing one or both of them.

Spirit Patrons and Game Balance

Spirit Patrons can be abused if the Chronicler does not keep a firm reign on the roleplaying aspects of this mystical relationship. The players should always remember that Patrons are not simply a source of powers, but represent serious responsibilities as well. Spirit Patrons are usually not generous, gullible, or even strictly fair. Any slight or offense, real or perceived, may cause them to withdraw their favor or even to punish the vassal. Gods and spirits can be petty, unreasonable and vindictive. They also look out for their interests—many Patrons adopt a "what have you done for me lately" attitude. Characters should often have to choose between serving their best interests and following the dictates of their Patrons. Evil or malicious Patrons are not recommended for Cast Members, as their goal is to inflict misery on the character and those around her. They work best for Adversaries or Supporting Cast, unless a tragic storyline is being developed. The Fallen Seraphim and the Mad Gods eventually destroy and consume those who deal with them.

Gaining a Patron

Forging a relationship with a being of power is not an easy undertaking. First, a means of contacting the patron is necessary. Magicians with the proper Spirit Mastery Invocation have the easiest time making contact, but magical abilities are not the only path. In theory, anybody may be able to contact spirit beings. In practice, contacting some spirits requires specialized knowledge. The name of the spirit is often needed; knowing the True Name of certain entities can confer enormous power over them. Also, most Patrons only forge the Bond with vassals who will help advance the entity's agenda in some way. Contacting the spirit is not enough; most entities exact some price from the devotee, often a price higher than most people are willing to pay.

Sometimes, it is the Patron who approaches a worthy candidate; this person might have even been a mundane human until some experience brought her into contact with the supernatural. A near-death experience, a supernatural event (or even witnessing such an event), or an act of devotion are among the situations which might attract a prospective Patron's attention. Many Associations (the Pantheons, the Heavenly Host, and the Infernal Legion chief among them) grant Boons to mundanes.

A Spirit Patron is a Supernatural Quality, acquired by the expenditure of Quality or Metaphysics Points. To find the value of the Spirit Patron, total up the value of the Boons (special powers given by the Patron) and Obligations (the tasks or gifts required to appease the Patron). Obligations reduce the value, while Boons add to the value. No matter how many Obligations are taken, however, the Boons' cost cannot be reduced below one half their original cumulative value.

Boons

These are benefits that Spirit Patrons can provide. These Boons cost character points, which counted towards the point total of the Spirit Patron Quality. The list below mentions some of the most common Boons granted by Patrons. Unlike normal Gifted powers, Boons come from an outside source, and they can be rescinded, limited, or lost much more easily.

Immortality

This misnamed boon confers near eternal youth, and may also grant supernatural resistance and incredible recovery powers, but it does not shield the character from all harm. The cost of the Boon varies with the number of abilities attached to it, as listed below. So, a boon of Longevity (two points), Fast Regeneration (six points), and two levels of Hard to Kill would be worth a total of 10 points.

Forever Young: The character's aging process stops altogether. **Cost:** Four points.

Hard to Kill/Resistance: These separately purchased Boons work just like the corresponding Qualities of the same name (see pp. 73, 77). Boon levels are cumulative with any normal Quality levels the vassal has, to a maximum of eight levels total. **Cost:** One point per level and may be purchased up to level five.

Longevity: The character's life span is greatly increased. Aging progresses at one tenth the normal rate. **Cost:** Two points.

Regeneration: The character regains one Life Point per Constitution level every minute. **Cost:** two points. Alternatively, the same amount of Life Points are regenerated every Turn. **Cost:** Six points.

Life Touch

This healing touch allows the character to cure injuries and diseases in herself or others. This Boon heals two Life or Endurance Points for every Essence Point spent (the maximum amount of Essence that can be spent in one Turn is equal to the character's Willpower, unless the character has Essence Channeling at a higher level). **Cost:** Three points.

Magicks

The Spirit Patron grants the character the ability to perform Invocations. In this case, the character does not learn the spells or rituals involved, but the knowledge is magically granted to by the Spirit Patron. This is a powerful Boon, which allows even beings who cannot learn magic normally (like Inheritors) to use Invocations. The value of the Magicks is equal to the cost, at character generation, of the Invocation and Essence Channeling levels granted by the Patron. For example, if Insight 2, Soulfire 4, and Essence Channeling 3 were gained, the cost would total 18 points.

Necromancy

This Boon gives the character the ability to contact and control the dead; this gift is usually granted by the Death Gods. **Cost:** The charge, at character creation, of the Necromancy Skill and the Necromancy powers granted. So, if Necromancy 4 and Death Vessel 2 were bequeathed, the cost would total 14 points.

Power

One of the most common Boons, Power gives the character extra Essence that can be used as if it were part of the character's Essence Pool. The amount of Essence given is available for a day, and does not renew itself until midnight or noon each day (one or the other); unused Essence is lost. Whether the renewal occurs during the day or night is usually determined by whether the entity is night/moon-oriented or day/sun-aligned, although there are exceptions. Use common sense: spirits of the dead and the nature spirits of nocturnal animals are night-oriented, while most plant spirits and most Old Gods are day-oriented unless otherwise specified. **Cost:** Each 15 Essence Points given by the Spirit Patron costs one point.

Prophecy

The character can see glimpses of the future, or receive illuminating visions about the present. These visions, flashes of insight, or danger strike without warning, leave the character stunned for several seconds and drain her of D10(5) Essence Points. Most prophetic visions deal with grave dangers that threaten the character (or her Patron's interests), approaching momentous events (good or evil), and similar significant situations. **Cost:** Three points.

Qualities

Some Spirit Patrons bless their charges with Qualities, usually physical or supernatural in origin. A common example of this is Beauty (Appearance and Charisma bonuses). Some spirits may also grant social qualities, especially Resources. **Cost:** The point costs of the Qualities at character generation.

Spirit Speech

Through this Boon the Spirit Patron can (and often does) communicate directly with the devotee. This Boon is commonly given by minor and middling Patrons, but is very rarely granted by the more powerful ones (like most gods, who have better things to do than have chats with mere mortals). Remember, even good advice can be given in mysterious or ambiguous terms if the spirit is hostile or malevolent. Further, the spirit provides information to the best of its knowledge—it may be flat wrong under some circumstances.

If the Spirit Patron can say whatever it pleases, and only helps the character when it desires, this Boon costs one point. If the Patron usually gives good advice, this Boon costs two points. If the Patron is obligated to give advice that serves the character's best interests, the cost is three points.

How often the communication is available also adds to the cost. Of course, the patron may decide to speak more often than the limits given below, but that is up to the Chronicler. If communication occurs once per week, no points are added to the cost of the Boon. If communication can happen as often as once a day, one point is added. If the character may contact the Patron once every hour, three additional points are charged.

Vigor

This provides a temporary increase in the character's physical Attributes. The maximum bonuses available are +6 to Strength, +3 to Dexterity and +5 to Constitution. These bonuses affect Life Points, Endurance Points, and Speed, but not Essence Points. Once activated, the Boon lasts for one minute or the duration of a fight—whichever is less. Activating this Boon requires a Simple Willpower Test. If the Boon is requested more than once per day, each additional request is at a cumulative -1 penalty (i.e., the second petition is at -1, the third at -2, and so on) to the activation Willpower Test. **Cost:** One point per +1 bonus (so, +1 Strength would cost one point, while +2 Strength, +2 Dexterity and +2 Constitution would cost a total of six points).

Other Powers

Other Gifted or supernatural abilities are never given out by entities as Boons. Seer and Inspired Powers are inherently human abilities, which cannot be granted by the gods. Neither can the Enlightened Quality. The Old Gods can sometimes grant versions of their Primal Powers to devout followers. However, humans with Primal Powers must use Essence Channeling to empower them, since they lack the Titans' ability to freely release Essence.

Obligations

Outlined below are some of the Obligations commonly demanded by Spirit Patrons. They have a negative point value, just like Drawbacks, but they do not count towards the Drawback limit. The extra points can only be used to pay off the point cost of the Boons granted by the Patron. Even if the Obligations are worth more than the Boons, the character gains no extra points. Furthermore, Obligations, no matter how extensive, cannot reduce the Boon cost below half their value. So, a Spirit Patron that offered 10 points in Boons and -10 points in Obligations would still cost 5 points.

Many Spirit Patrons demand no specific Obligation, but withhold or even remove any Boons granted if the character behaves in ways the entities consider offensive or inimical.

Beholden

This obligation is the same as the Supernatural Drawback of the same name (see p. 80). The cost depends on which level is chosen.

Conditional Boons

These Obligations apply directly to all Boons granted by the Patron, restricting their use to situations where the Patron considers them appropriate.

Limited Portion of the Day: The Boon works only at night or during the day, for example. **Cost:** -2 points. Something more limiting (one hour a day, one day a week, during the Full Moon, and so on) is worth -4 points.

Only Works Against Enemies of the Patron: The Boon can only used against people, entities, or institutions that the Patron hates. **Cost:** -1 point.

Only Works in the Service of the Patron: The Boons can only be used to further the Patron's ends. The Chronicler is the final judge as to whether a given course of action qualifies. **Cost:** -2 points.

Gifts of Kind

This is a material gift of some sort. Food, money, precious metals, even drugs, alcohol, and tobacco can be used as gifts. The gifts must be sacrificed (destroyed) in an offering to the entity. Apparently, some beings (like Ghosts) actually enjoy gifted sacrificed to them in this manner. If a week without offerings goes by, the character loses her Boons unless the Patron is somehow convinced to give the character some time to make amends. **Cost:** -1 point for every $100 that must be offered to the entity every week.

Gifts of Kin

This is a euphemism for the sacrifice of living beings, animals, or human. Human sacrifice is the domain of evil entities, Fallen Seraphim, and the Mad Gods. **Cost:** -1 point if animals must be sacrificed at least once a month. -2 points if human sacrifice is demanded.

Gift of the Soul

This is the classic "Soul Sale"—the character pays for her powers with her immortal soul. It may seem like a good bargain when the Boons acquired include Immortality, but the few deities evil enough to demand such payments have been known to arrange things so they can collect a lot sooner than expected. If the vassal dies (i.e., a failed Survival Test, before any attempt of resuscitation is made), the soul is immediately seized and transported to the Realm of the entity in question—in the case of the Fallen Seraphim, a certain hot and uncomfortable place in the Death Realms. There, the character is tormented, enslaved, or even totally devoured, depending on the predilections of the Patron. **Cost:** -4 points.

Oath of Duty

The Spirit Patron demands that the devotee work in furtherance of the spirit's goals. The entity's enemies become the character's enemies, and they must pursue the same goals. A deity dedicated to Justice could require that the beneficiary punish the guilty and protect the innocent. A Fallen Seraphim, on the other hand, might demand that the character works toward the corruption of the innocent and the destruction of all ideals and hope. Note that even if this Obligation is not acquired, the character is always expected to act in ways favorable to her Spirit Patron. **Cost:** -1 point (for a duty that takes at least ten hours a week for perform) to -4 points (a highly dangerous duty that consumes most of the character's time).

Oath of Servitude

Similar to the Oath of Duty, this Obligation implies that the character may be given orders that must be obeyed without question. The communication may come directly (if the character has the Spirit Speech Boon) or indirectly (in the form of dreams, visions, getting tomorrow's paper delivered every morning, talking animals, and so on). If the vassal does not obey the orders, she loses her Boons, and is further punished in some way. The frequency of those orders determines the price. **Cost:** -1 point (once a month), -2 points (once a week), or -4 points (once a day).

Qualities and Drawbacks

In some cases, Patrons demand certain behaviors from their followers, or only bestow their gifts to characters with the appropriate personality traits. These traits can be acquired as normal Qualities and Drawbacks (for example, a trickster god might only accept characters with the Clown Drawback, while a deity of love might only bestow gifts upon characters with a high Attractiveness level). **Cost:** As per normal character generation costs.

CHAPTER EIGHT: INHUMANS

Chapter Eight

The band was particularly lively tonight, Amadeus noticed. The rhythms were simple, the lyrics downright stupid, but there was an energy, a furious excitement that reminded him of happier times. The lead singer was a thin pale girl with a good voice and a sharp attitude. She tossed her head back, sending a thin spray of sweat towards the crowd. They shouted their appreciation. The two guitars and the percussion player behind her redoubled their efforts. The music became an irresistible force, a sweeping tidal wave, a tornado.

Unnoticed by the crowd, a tall man entered the club. Like Amadeus, he wore a dark trenchcoat and had long curly hair. There the similarities ended. While Amadeus was short and slender, the newcomer was well over six feet tall, with broad shoulders. He made straight for Amadeus, shouldering aside spectators, often earning a curse and a dirty look but little more.

Amadeus grimaced. "Hello, Galael," he said with no warmth.

"It is time," Galael said in a harsh whisper that carried through the noise of the band and the crowd. "You know the Taint is here."

Reluctantly, Amadeus nodded. He had sensed it from the moment the band had begun its first set. Underneath the sounds and the lyrics, he could feel—taste—the dark undertones, the rich, seductive voice that promised Power in return for Loyalty. The thin pale girl wore heavy makeup to cover it, but his eyes saw farther than the crowd. Prominent in the middle of her forehead, glowing darkly through the makeup, was the Mark of the Beast. She had talent and inner strength; Amadeus could also see that, as well as the inner demons that had made talent and strength worse than useless. She had been hurt young, betrayed and broken. Her edges were jagged and would cut others, if left alone.

For two weeks, Amadeus had tried to reach her, to make her change her path. Three days ago, she had her first Nightmare. Amadeus had hoped she might be one of the few who could resist the lure of Leviathan, who could deny It and Its works despite the Gifts offered. Now Galael had arrived, and time had run out.

"It must be done tonight," Galael insisted. "Now. Orders, you know."

"My father would have approved of you, I think," Amadeus said casually, his nonchalant manner a mask for the pain. "He was a pious, faithful man who never understood that while the road to Hell is paved with good intentions, the road to Heaven is paved with the corpses of a thousand holy wars. Orders," he spat, his mask slipping. "Have you ever thought about your orders, or are you like a good faithful dog, biting whomever the Master indicates?"

Galael's beautiful features became terrible with rage. "You refuse to obey, Kerubim?"

Amadeus smiled. "You would like that, wouldn't you? That would give you a chance to earn some more brownie points." He giggled, a ghastly sound that set Galael's teeth on edge. The good humor vanished a second later, replaced by an intense anger that matched the Seraphim's. "No, my Angelic superior. I will obey my orders. I was born an Austrian, but I will be a good German for you, nein?"

Galael nodded. "Good." He reached under his coat, grabbed the handle of the sawed-off shotgun hidden underneath. "It must be done Mundanely. Use your gun."

Amadeus grabbed him by the wrist. "What about them?" He gestured to indicate the crowd. "They are just children. A few are Tainted, but the rest just came to enjoy some music."

"Drug fiends," Galael retorted. "And harlots and fornicators. And if a few are innocent, what of it? The Lord shall take them into His fold."

"'Kill them all, let God sort 'em out,' is that it?" Amadeus said sardonically. "No, Galael. You are good enough to shoot only the Tainted. So am I. If an innocent is so much as grazed by a stray pellet, I will kill you. Understand?"

The Seraphim was a full head and shoulders taller than Amadeus. He could wield the Celestial Fire, and had lived for thirty millennia to Amadeus' two and a half centuries. Still, he cast his eyes downward. "No innocents. Only the Tainted. Those were the orders, anyway."

Amadeus nodded as his concentration focused on the band, the roadies, and the other Tainted. The same mad creativity he'd once used only frivolously, to entertain Emperors and, above all, himself, now started working on a symphony of battle, a death march. He took his own sawed-off shotgun from beneath his coat.

With a shout, Galael nimbly leaped over the bar. His first shot erased the face of the lead guitarist. His instrument made a hideous screech as he convulsed and fell. Amadeus' eyes met the pale thin girl's. "God have mercy on your soul," he whispered as he fired.

Then it was all chaos and pandemonium, as, side by side, the two angels strode forward, their guns making their own hideous kind of music.

Inhumans

Introduction

This chapter describes the major supernatural forces of *Armageddon*. The text begins with the Seraphim (angels and demons), and details their powers and abilities. Lesser powers tied to the Seraphim, the Kerubim and Nephilim, are then presented. Primal races derived from the old gods are covered next—Avatars, Incarnates, and Inheritors. Aspects and Primal Powers, which define the abilities of the Primal races, are listed. Reincarnated Immortals, the Atlanteans, are provided their own in-depth section. Finally, a short discussion of spirits rounds out the chapter.

The Celestials

Former messengers and enforcers of the Creator, the angels are beings of tremendous power and influence. Most consider themselves to be humankind's guardians and caretakers. Some see this duty as an honor, and love and cherish humans as a parent does a child. A growing number are more patronizing and even contemptuous toward their charges, and a large minority has developed an outright dislike for humans. For millennia, most angels remained removed from the affairs of humankind, coming to Earth only in small numbers, and leaving the business of helping people in the hands of the lesser-ranking Kerubim, angels who once were human themselves. The coming of the Dark Apostle and the war has forced angels to come to Earth in unprecedented numbers, to fight and to die in the name of the Creator.

Seraphim

The name "angel" comes from the Greek word angelos, meaning "messenger." The Seraphim are the descendants of an order of Sephyr (see p. 22) who carried out the will of the Creator during the birth of the Universe. They were the Deity's messengers and agents, and they carried the Word of God, the Metatron. Initially, they were beings of energy and potentiality, whose actions and thought processes moved at "cosmic" speeds—that is, so slow that the birth of a galaxy was to them a matter of mere "days." These messengers directed other Sephyr during the process of Creation, and also helped guard Reality from intrusions from Beyond, the alien dimensions of the Mad Gods. Another task was to curb the Naturas, living forces of reality who were created as the Universe was born.

The Sephyr started changing when life evolved on Earth. Orders from the Creator became less frequent and more ambiguous. The Sephyr became more like living beings, with individuality, cohesion, and free will. Some believe this was (and still is) some sort of test prepared by the Creator for His/Her/Its closest servants. Their ultimate mission remained clear, however. The evolution of life was part of the process of Creation—indeed, it was its ultimate goal—and the Seraphim, as the evolved messengers called themselves, were to help protect it. How they did this was up to them, and this free will has been their heaviest burden.

The evolved Sephyr were still beings of energy, but they had become similar to the humans they were charged to protect. Where once they were little more than complex energy patterns, they formed humanoid bodies and minds. They were now individuals, with their own personalities. Although incredibly strong-willed, the Seraphim could fall prey to the same flaws that affect people—pride, fear, and boundless ambition. Most of them are primarily concerned with their duty, although in their hearts many resent humans for their role in Creation.

Many of the stories about angels have a basis in truth. They are beings of great power, and in ages past they sometimes swept down from the skies and destroyed armies or decimated entire kingdoms to punish evildoers—or, some of the more cynic would say, to make sure humans stayed in their place. They have human shapes, usually shining with a bright inner light. Some of them sport wings on their backs, the more so after that shape captured human imagination and became an attractive "badge of office." They can be helpful guides or terrible avengers.

Divine Seraphim

The original angels of religious belief, the Seraphim are beings of great power, although they are neither the unstoppable avengers of myth nor the utterly benevolent pseudo-humans of recent folklore. During ancient times, the Seraphim were indeed invincible, a single one of them being able to kill dozens or even hundreds of mortals with relative ease. Faced with guns, jet aircraft and tanks, angels have been taught a harsh lesson in humility. Although some appear as soothing, kind figures, most of those have been the weaker, gentler Kerubim (see p. 261). For the most part, Seraphim are warriors and avengers, and many do not like humans much.

Angels and Demons Before *Armageddon*

Before the rise of the cult of Leviathan and the beginning of the Reckoning, angels and demons rarely ventured into the world, and even more rarely stayed there for long. In both cases, this was due to the actions of the High Archangels of the Heavenly Host.

The Infernal Legion: Infernal Seraphim and their cohorts were imprisoned in the Realm of Gehenna. They were not supposed to get out, and for the most part, that was the case. Only the power of Lucifer and the Demon Lords enabled their minions to venture forth, in small numbers and for short periods of time, before they were dragged back into their hellish kingdom. Before 2008's Munich Disaster (see p. 27), the Infernal Seraphim, as well as Qliphonim, could only remain on Earth without ill effect for one day per Willpower level. Every day after that, they started losing Essence at the rate of 10 points per day. This Essence was not regained until they returned to Gehenna for a full week. Only by becoming an Exile (see p. 266) could one escape this fate.

After 2008, the High Archangels have been forced to divert their attention and power away from Gehenna. Most of the more powerful demons are still unable to enter Earth. Greater Infernal Seraphim and lower-ranked creatures can be sent forward as normal, and they can stay up to five days per Willpower point before starting to suffer ill effects.

The Heavenly Host: The High Archangels have long been wary of allowing members of the Host to stay too long on Earth; they fear contamination by human vices. Until the war began, Seraphim were rarely allowed to venture forth; most missions were undertaken by the Kerubim. Even they rarely spent more than a full month's time on Earth without returning to Elysium to report (and be examined for signs of moral decay). Seraphim were even more restricted. They were not allowed to linger on the world for more than a week at a time, usually on brief, violent missions. The situation has changed a great deal, to say the least.

Infernal Seraphim

The differences between the Divine and Infernal Seraphim are largely philosophical and cosmetic. Even after Falling, the demons retain all their former powers. For example, they can wield the Celestial Fire, but its energies are twisted and blackened with hatred and rage, turning it into Hellfire. They have a Divine and Profane form, but the former is often monstrous (the exceptions almost outnumber the rule, however—many Seraphim are too vain to adopt hideous visages). Their Divine form can grow wings, but for the most part these are leathery constructs, more like bat-wings than bird wings. Many demons now favor Incarnations which combine flesh with leather, plastic, and metal piercing, imitating human culture.

In sum, any Seraphim power may be deemed to have an equivalent Fallen power. Also, as a general matter, the term Seraphim when used in the remainder of this section refers to both angels and demons.

Seraphim Ranks

All Seraphim are not created equal. They have gradients of power, each gradient more powerful than the previous one. The differences between them are not obvious to outsiders, however; a Lesser and Greater Seraphim may look equally impressive. Those with the power to see auras can tell that one of the two has a much larger Essence reservoir, but that is all.

Generally, the "racial" ranks of the Seraphim roughly correspond to their social status. This is not always the case, however. An ancient and resourceful Lesser Seraphim who attracts the attention or an Archangel may become an important leader. A Demon Lord who failed repeatedly may be demoted back into the ranks of common "soldiers."

The Lesser Seraphim and the Common Seraphim (or simply Seraphim) are the two most common gradients. The Lessers are the spear-carriers of the two rival armies. The Common are slightly more privileged, but they are still part of the rank and file. Both are fiercely loyal, and trust their leaders implicitly. The Greater Seraphim tend to be leaders, troubleshooters, and special agents. They are far more powerful than their brethren.

Common Seraphim Powers

The following abilities are shared by all Seraphim.

Celestial Fire

All Seraphim in Divine/Infernal form (see p. 254) wield the Celestial Flames, pure Essence that can be used to destroy physical targets, shred spiritual energies, or as a defensive aura of power. It most often manifests as a burning blade in the hands of the Seraphim (when used offensively) or as an energy aura, flaming shield, or golden body armor. For additional Essence cost, the Celestial Fire can also be projected in the form of blasts or beams.

Armor is little help against Celestial Fire. Instead of subtracting damage each time the wearer is hit, treat the armor's average Armor Value as Damage Capacity which must be reduced to zero first. Any remaining damage goes on to affect whatever is behind the armor, and the armor is destroyed. Celestial Shields, Essence Shields, and supernatural suits of armor, like those crafted by Atlantean Makers, work normally against these attacks.

Celestial Fire is also selective in its effects. Wielded by a skilled angel, it could burn a villain to a cinder without even singing the skin of an innocent he was using as a living shield. More importantly, the flames cannot harm the truly innocent, and the Divinely Inspired; most humans over the age of ten do not qualify as truly innocent, unfortunately. The more merciful Seraphim have been known to carve up jet aircraft while leaving their pilots alive and to the mercies of their ejection seat. In game terms, characters can determine who gets burned by the fire, even when firing upon a group of people. Armor and barriers that would block the attack must still be taken care of, however.

Celestial Fire Blade: Creating a Celestial Fire blade costs three Essence Points. Once activated, the blade can be used for five minutes before more Essence is needed. The Hand Weapon (Sword) Skill is needed to use it effectively, although Seraphim can use a Difficult Dexterity Test (without unfamiliarity penalties) instead. The blade inflicts D8(4) x (Strength + 4) points of slashing/stabbing damage.

Celestial Shield: This is a glowing aura, shield or suit of armor has an Armor Value of one per Essence point spent on it. The maximum Armor Value cannot exceed the character's Theophany Skill x 10. Additional Essence can be spent to give more "depth" to the armor, however, in a manner similar to the Shielding Invocation. Each point spent creates 10 points of Damage Capacity; damage that penetrates the Armor Value of the Shield depletes this Damage Capacity first. If exhausted, the Seraphim suffers any remaining damage. The armor protects against physical and magical attacks. The Essence spent in creating the Shield cannot be regained until the shield is no longer active.

Celestial Bolt: The bolts inflict D8(4) points of damage per Essence point spent. They have a range equal to 10 x Willpower yards (meters). The bolt uses the Magic Bolt Skill or a Difficult Dexterity Test with a +2 bonus.

Essence Recovery and Manipulation

Seraphim recover one point of Essence per level of Constitution and Willpower every minute. They can use Essence with no restrictions. In other words, they can channel any or all of their Essence reservoir to heal themselves, inflict damage, or activate any of their powers.

Flight

A Seraphim's Divine/Infernal Incarnation can fly at will. Wings are not needed, but they do help steer the character. More importantly, humans expect them, so most Seraphim sport them before taking to the air. Seraphim whose Divine/Infernal Incarnations have wings gain +1 to any Tasks or Tests involving flying maneuvers.

The Seraphim can fly at tremendous speeds in this state, matching all but the fastest jet planes. After being forbidden to display this power for centuries, the Seraphim now once again soar through skies of Earth, causing awe and wonderment—and all-too-often attracting anti-aircraft fire. Flying drains the angel of one Essence point per minute when traveling at speeds of up to 300 mph (almost 500 kph), or 12 Essence points per minute when traveling at supersonic speeds (the Seraphim can reach speeds of up to Mach Two—twice the speed of sound).

Incarnation

If they wish to manifest physically on Earth, the Seraphim must fashion a physical body for themselves. This process is known as Incarnation or Transcendence. Transcendence requires the Seraphim to leave his home Realm (Elysium or Gehenna, respectively). Under normal circumstances, only an Archangel or Demon Lord can bridge the walls between the realms. This means that Seraphim need the blessing of these powerful beings to travel outside their world. To leave without permission is to risk becoming an Exile (see p. 266).

Every Incarnation has two manifestations: Divine/Infernal and Profane. The Profane Incarnation is a human shapes assumed by the angel when trying to pass unnoticed by unaware mortals. The Divine/Infernal Incarnation is flashy and portentous. The angel can switch back and forth between Profane and Divine forms at will; the transformation takes only a few seconds (a combat Turn).

The Profane Incarnation of an angel is a unique creation, an embodiment of that Seraphim's Essence matrix. Thus, the actual shape and features of the body cannot be dictated or altered by the angel. A Seraphim does not know what his Profane Incarnation will look like until he performs it for the first time, and that form is as permanent as a mortal's hair or eye color. A curly-haired, blonde angel always Incarnates in that shape and hair color, and only disguises and make-up may alter that (plastic surgery does not work on the Seraphim; their bodies always end up reverting back to their true form). The Profane Incarnation of an angel is always extremely attractive in a slender but athletic way.

The Divine/Infernal Incarnation of an angel is far more malleable. Although a basic humanoid shape is preferred, it can have wings, horns, brilliant halos, and robes or body armor that are nothing but an extension of the angel's flesh. Most members of the Heavenly Host prefer the traditional form—a winged human, clad in robes or golden armor. A few are more original in their depictions, often devising elaborate tattoos and decorations, or fearsome features like claws or oversized fangs, or horns (although such manifestations are frowned upon among the Host). Of late, some Seraphim have started to adopt a more "techno" look, often sporting neon symbols carved into their flesh, or bio-mechanical attachments. For the most part, all

these enhancements are cosmetic, although Seraphim with claws or sharp teeth can use them to inflict slashing/stabbing wounds. Some phalanxes (see p. 178) mandate uniformity among their members; all the Seraphim in those units have similar (sometimes even identical) Divine Incarnations. Others tend to be looser or freer about such things. The final decision is up to the Archangel in charge of the phalanx.

The Divine/Infernal Incarnation can often terrify or awe humans. Mundanes facing a Seraphim in that shape, and Gifted and supernatural beings confronting such a being for the first time, must pass a Simple Willpower Test (under some circumstances, the Chronicler may wish to assign modifiers to the Test). On a failure, witnesses may be terrified, stricken by feelings of worship or religious rapture, or simply intimidated. Before performing any actions that the victim would believe are against the Seraphim's interests, they must pass a Difficult Willpower Test. This effect lasts for one Turn for every level of Willpower and Charisma (positive or negative) of the Seraphim (if there are multiple Seraphim present, use the highest level in the group).

Both forms have the same Attributes, Life Points, and Essence Pool as the un-Incarnated Seraphim. While in the Profane Incarnation, however, many of the flashier powers available to the Seraphim cannot be accessed. As a punishment, some angels have been forced to wander the Earth while trapped in their Profane Incarnation; these Exiles are shunned.

Incarnating is a lengthy process for the Seraphim. It takes about a month (45 days minus the Seraphim's Willpower and Intelligence Attributes), during which the angel enters a trance and remains largely unaware of his surroundings. At the end of the process, the Incarnate Seraphim is sent to Earth (or the target Realm) by the Archangel or Demon Lord. Returning to the Seraphim's home Realm requires one minute of concentration and the expenditure of 20 Essence Points, but may only be done while in Divine/Infernal form.

Providence

The Seraphim can manipulate the laws of chance and causality, although for the most part they disdain to do so (the Kerubim, on the other hand, use this power frequently). Through an expenditure of Essence, the Seraphim can make an improbable event happen by merely wishing it so. The more improbable the event, the more Essence it costs to make it happen. Specifics are provided on the Providence Essence and Providence Example Tables (see p. 256).

Making a gun jam, a car break down, or a dice roll come out as desired, is easy. Making every gun in an area jam at the same time, or determining the result of a hundred dice rolls in a row, is almost impossible, and costs a lot of Essence. Furthermore, more unlikely events (odds 1 in 500 or less) require a permanent Essence expenditure. The impossible cannot be made to happen; the event must have a chance, no matter how slim, of happening naturally.

This ability can also be used to help or hinder Tasks; every two Essence Points spent grants a +1 bonus or -1 penalty to any mundane Task occurring in the presence of the Angel. This cannot help or hinder supernatural Tasks, including the use of any Gifted powers or supernatural ability, however. This effect occurs automatically, simply by spending Essence. Humans who are aware of what is happening can resist if the event would affect them directly; this is resolved as a Resisted Test, using Simple Willpower Tests on both sides.

Using Providence is the only action that can be attempted in a game Turn, except when used to reduce damage.

Resistances and Immunities

Seraphim need not eat, drink, sleep, or breathe to survive. They are immune to narcotic and irritant poisons, but not corrosive ones. Disease does not affect them, either, unless they are supernatural in origin. This applies to Seraphim in both their Divine and Profane Incarnations.

While incorporeal, Seraphim have the same have the same resistances and immunities as spirits (see p. 297).

Armor Value: Both the Seraphim's Profane and Divine/Infernal forms have an Armor Value 2 for each level of Constitution. This armor protects against all forms of attack, and is not affected by armor-piercing attacks.

Destruction of the Body: Even if the angelic being is "killed," the consequences are usually not as serious as for normal humans. If his physical body is destroyed, a Seraphim must pass a Difficult Willpower Test. If passed, the Seraphim's Essence matrix appears in Elysium or Gehenna in five hours (reduce this time by one hour per success level in the Willpower Test, to a minimum time of one hour), at which time the

Providence Essence Table

Odds	Essence Cost (Permanent Essence Cost)
1 in 3	1(0)
1 in 10	3(0)
1 in 20	5(0)
1 in 100	10(0)
1 in 500	15(1)
1 in 1000	30(2)
1 in 10,000	50(3)
1 in 100,000	100(4)
1 in a million	200(6)
1 in 10 million	500(8)
1 in 100 million	1,000(10)

Providence Example Table

Odds	Example
1 in 3	$2 lotto win
1 in 10	$5 lotto win
1 in 20	Dud bullet in gun, car stalling; reduce damage by 1/2*
1 in 100	$20 win; tire blowout
1 in 500	Disabling car's engine or gun's firing mechanism; $100 prize
1 in 1000	$200 win; reduce damage to 1/5*
1 in 10,000	3-5 simultaneous machine malfunctions in the same area; $1,000 win
1 in 100,000	Highly unlikely event; $5,000 prize; reduce damage to 1/10*
1 in a million	$100,000 prize; being struck by lightning; 10 guns malfunction at the same time; reduce damage to 1/20*
1 in 10 million	Lotto win ($1-10 million); reduce damage to 1/50*
1 in 100 million	Powerball win ($10-100 million); Reduce damage to 1/100*

*** This represents a lucky break that somehow prevents an attack or accident from doing as much damage as it should—a lucky coin stops a bullet; the falling axe struck only a glancing hit; the ten story fall was broken by a mattress shipment being made down below; the poison was old and had lost most of its potency; the twisted metal of the crushed car served to shield, not impale the driver; and so on. Damage is divided as indicated (so, for half damage, divide any damage rolled by two). Damage cannot be reduced to zero, however—a minimum of one point is inflicted by the attack. This power cannot affect magical or supernatural attacks. It works against one attack during a Turn; using it counts as a defensive action.**

Seraphim can start rebuilding a new body. If the Test is failed, that means that the Seraphim's Essence has been temporarily scattered by the shock of disruption. This effect lasts D10 x 4(20) days, at the end of which the Seraphim is able to reconstitute and reappear in his home realm.

Essence Death: If an angel's Essence and Life Point pools are both reduced to below -30 points, the Seraphim must pass a Survival Test, at -1 for every 10 points below 0 on both pools. If this test is failed, the Seraphim is truly destroyed. Some occultists believe that even in that event a Seraphim's death is not permanent, and that the angel eventually re-knits his shattered Essence matrix. Since such a process is believed to take centuries or even millennia, however, the Seraphim would be as good as dead for game purposes.

Healing: Seraphim can heal damage almost instantly, regaining D10(5) Life or Endurance points per Essence Point spent for that purpose. This ability can be performed once per Turn, and does not count as an action. If a limb is severed, it regrows when Life Points are fully restored.

Life Pool: Due to their high levels of Primary Attributes, Seraphim have a very large Life Point pools, usually above 100 points (see p. [?]).

Survival Tests: Survival Tests (see p. [?]) are not needed until the Seraphim is reduced to -30 points. The penalties are -1 for every 10 points the Seraphim is below -30.

Taint Vulnerability: The anti-Essence generated by the Adepts of Leviathan and other servants of the Mad Gods can kill a Seraphim if the damage inflicted reduces him to -30 Life Points. Use the Survival Test rules above, but if the angel is killed, he is dead for at least centuries, if not forever.

Spirit Travel

The Seraphim can travel to Earth in spirit form. This form of travel has advantages. First, the angel is invisible to the eyes of mundanes (although the Gifted, numerous animals, and highly creative people have a chance to sense his presence), and is unencumbered by physical limitations (he can fly through walls and physical obstacles, and do so at tremendous speeds). Spirit travel does not require the lengthy preparations Incarnation does (see p. 254).

Possessing a mortal body is possible through Spirit Travel. This requires the expenditure of 10 Essence Points and a Willpower and Theophany Task (see p. 258). Mundanes resist with a Simple Willpower Test. Gifted and Supernatural characters resist similarly, with a +4 bonus, or can use any appropriate power or ability, also with a +4 bonus. Possession lasts for one minute per Success level in the Task, at which time a new Resisted Task is needed to retain control. The Seraphim has control over the possessed person's body, but has no access to the person's thoughts of memories. While possessed, the victim's Attributes are boosted, with bonuses equal one-third of the Seraphim's Strength, and one-fifth of the Seraphim's Dexterity and Constitution (rounded up); these bonuses also increase Life Points, Endurance and Speed accordingly. The risk of relying on possession is that if the victim is killed, the effect is identical to the destruction of the Seraphim's Incarnation (see p. 254).

Spirit Travel also has disadvantages. Absent possession, the angel can only affect the physical world by sending telepathic messages to humans and encouraging them to act. They can be approached and attacked by other spirit entities, although against those beings they can defend themselves and use the Celestial Fire (see p. 253). Even worse, Seraphim can be summoned and even bound by human Magicians. Due to these shortcomings, angels rarely use this form of travel.

Spirit travel costs no Essence to use. The Seraphim can enter the Earth at any location he chooses. While in spirit form, the Seraphim has no Life Points; all such points are treated as Vital Essence (see p. 297).

Supernatural Attributes

Lesser Seraphim receive a +3 bonus to all physical Attributes and +1 to all mental Attributes. Common Seraphim gain a +3 bonus to all physical Attributes and +2 to all mental Attributes. Greater Seraphim receive Strength +5, Dexterity +4, Constitution +4, Intelligence +3, Perception +3, Willpower +4

Secondary Attributes also depends on the type of Seraphim (Speed uses the normal formula).

Life Points

Lesser Seraphim: (Strength + Constitution) x 5 + 50

Seraphim: (Strength + Constitution) x 5 + 100

Greater Seraphim: (Strength + Constitution) x 5 + 150

Endurance Points

Lesser Seraphim: (Constitution + Strength + Willpower) x 5 + 30

Seraphim and Greater Seraphim: (Constitution + Strength + Willpower) x 5 + 100

Essence

Lesser Seraphim: Sum of Attributes + 60

Seraphim: Sum of Attributes + 65

Greater Seraphim: Sum of Attributes + 70

Supernatural Senses

Angels are primarily creatures of Essence, and their senses are more attuned to its flow than those of humans. The Seraphim have the same sensory abilities as Gifted humans.

Also, angels can see straight into the soul of most people, getting a sense of the person's personality, goals, shortcomings, and virtues. This is not mind reading, but simply a clear impression of what kind of people face them. Only barriers that block the flow Essence (like the Shielding Invocation, p. 220) block these senses. If the Seraphim spends several seconds (a game Turn) looking at a person, he can see into the target's Essence Matrix by passing a Simple Perception Test. Mundanes cannot resist this viewing. Gifted and Supernatural characters resist with a Simple Willpower Test, with a -2 penalty. Illusions resist with the Task used in creating the Illusion, also at a -2 penalty.

The Seraphim can also see into much higher and lower spectrums of light and energy than humans. They possess the equivalent of infrared vision, which lets them see heat, including that generated by living beings even in complete darkness.

Seraphim Theophanies

Theophanies are special abilities that Seraphim use to carry out their missions on Earth or in the Otherworlds. The Fallen call these same powers Maleficia. For simplicity's sake, both Maleficia and Theophanies are referred by the latter name in the remainder of this section.

Theophanies are partly learned skills, and partly natural avocations. Some angels developed one or more "knacks" during the period of transition between Sephyr and Seraphim. All angels have at least one Theophany, most have two, and a few three or more. These abilities also define the angel's area of expertise while conducting a mission. Thus, Binders are those angels who have the power to capture their targets, while Finders are hunters and searchers.

Seraphim have access to the more common Theophanies, as described below. A few angels learn other more specialized powers, often taught by specific archangels. The Kerubim have their own repertoire (see p. 264), some of which cannot be learned by any other angel, not even the Archangels. Greater Archangels know the High Theophanies, incredibly powerful abilities that can affect entire continents at a time. Some Archangels also embody a number of Aspects, just like their Titan counterparts. Unfortunately, the barriers separating Binah from Earth prevent the Archangels from using those powers effectively, leaving the job of fighting the war to the Seraphim and their lesser Theophanies.

Using Theophanies

The Seraphim all have a Theophany Skill. This skill is used to activate any of these powers. It is used in conjunction with the character's Attribute (usually Willpower or Perception). Theophany costs two points per level until level five, and five points per level thereafter, and is purchased with Metaphysics Points.

Theophany Descriptions

The following powers may be purchased by Seraphim characters during character creation using Metaphysics Points, or during a game using experience points.

Binder

6-point Power

Those in charge of capturing and banishing prey are known as Binders. Binders have the ability to capture both mundane and supernatural targets, and bind them with chains of Essence. Those captured in this manner can be dragged into other dimensions, or expelled back to their realm of origin. The power manifests itself as any form of bond, from mundane-looking chains or straps to barbed wire or glowing energy bands, that appears out of nowhere and surround the target. The strength of the bonds depends on the amount of Essence spent in creating them. The target must be clearly visible for the power to work, but it can use used on anybody within line of sight.

Binding: This effect uses Dexterity and Theophany. The target can try to evade, using either a Difficult Dexterity Test or a Dexterity and Dodge Task. The Strength of the bonds is equal to 1 per Essence Point spent; the maximum amount of Essence that may be spent is three times the character's Theophany Skill.

The bonds imprison both physical and ethereal beings (such as ghosts and spirits). Once a victim is bound, he can break free in only two ways: brute force (a Resisted Strength Test, using Simple Strength Tests from both sides) or finesse (a Difficult Dexterity Test or a Dexterity and Escape Task, with a penalty equal to the Theophany Skill of the Binder). The bonds can also inflict damage on the victim by becoming barbed. This costs an additional 5 Essence Points, and inflict D6 x Theophany Skill points of slashing damage when they first trap the victim, and each time the captive struggles against them (when using brute force or finesse to escape). The bonds remain in existence for as long as the Essence spent remains concentrated on that purpose—the Seraphim cannot regain those Essence Points until the bonds are gone.

Banishing: Binders can also banish their captives back to their plane of origin. For example, demons are thrown back into the Pit of Abaddon, ghosts into the Death Realms, and elemental beings into their alien dimensions. Each attempt costs 10 Essence Points. The Seraphim uses Willpower and Theophany. The target resists using a Simple Willpower Test with a +3 bonus. If the victim has been successfully bound, however, there is no bonus to the Willpower Test.

Destroyer

8-point Power

The most feared among the Seraphim are the Destroyers. Theirs is the power to eliminate things—or beings—considered a threat to humankind or even to Reality itself. This power has two effects, standard destruction and the Oblivion. The former causes damage, the latter nearly eradicates the target from existence.

Destruction: Destroyers can fire bolts that resemble blue-white lightning. They are more destructive than Celestial Fire, and their range is nearly unlimited (line of sight). These bolts inflict D10(5) points of damage per Essence Point spent. The attack uses Dexterity doubled, or Dexterity and Theophany (or Magic Bolt).

Oblivion: This effect is far more costly and tricky. It eliminates the target, leaving no physical traces, as well as removing the memories of the target from most Mundanes! Gifted humans and supernatural beings may remember, but even then the memories feel strangely hollow and meaningless, almost like remembering a character from an old, half-forgotten movie. Gifted or Supernatural characters get a Difficult Intelligence Test to remember. On a failure, their memory of the subject is eradicated.

The target must be in sight of the Destroyer. The base Essence cost is determined by the Oblivion Cost Table. In addition to this Essence cost, the Seraphim permanently sacrifices D8(4) points of Essence. This Essence loss can only be regained through experience points.

Living beings can resist this effect. Pit a Simple Willpower Test against the angel's Willpower and Theophany Skill. If the angel is successful, the target is struck by a bolt of pseudo-lightning, and the effect takes hold. If the angel fails the attempt, the victim remains and the permanent Essence loss on the part of the Seraphim is doubled! Generally, only an Archangel or higher-ranked Seraphim can authorize the use of the Oblivion on a human being; using it casually is a serious crime among the Celestial Host.

Eraser

5-point Power

Seraphim laws before the war mandated minimal contact with humans. As a result, most Seraphim groups that visited Earth had an Eraser with them. Erasers can wipe out or (more commonly) muddle the memories of human witnesses, and leave behind equivocal evidence of the angels' actions. For example, if an angel was shot in front of a crowd, and then got up and

The Oblivion Cost Table

Target Type	Cost
Object	Damage Points
Magical or Enchanted Object	Double Damage Points
Corporeal Being	Sum of Life, Essence, and Endurance Points
Spirit	Double Vital and Energy Essence Pools

walked away, an Eraser could "re-weave" the memories of the onlookers so they would "remember" that the angel was wearing a flak jacket. The human mind is very malleable to reasonable explanations, so it is easy to convince people that what they saw was not truly what they saw.

Using this power subtly has been more difficult after the war, since supernatural occurrences are far more common. In this time period, Erasers usually excise entire chunks of memory from those who witness something that might compromise or endanger the Seraphim. Angels working in the Conquered Territories often use this ability to hide their tracks from the Soul Police and the Knights of Leviathan.

Using this power costs two Essence Points per person affected. Erasing the memories of a crowd of thirty costs 60 Essence points, for example. The angel must pass a Willpower and Theophany Task, with a modifier based on how much he is trying to alter the memories of the targets. Making onlookers make a tiny leap of logic they might be willing to make on their own ("Yeah, he shrugged off that bullet 'cause he was wearing a Kevlar vest") would have a +3 bonus. Making the witnesses' minds "swallow" a near-impossibility ("But he was shot in the head . . . well, he must have been wearing a Kevlar hat, or maybe the bullet glanced off . . ") would have a -1 penalty. Completely re-tailoring a memory ("Hey, that guy was hit by a rocket launcher! Blew up half the store, and he walked out, not a scratch on him . . . um, was there a guy? No, that was a store dummy, I'm just imagining things.") would have a -4 penalty.

Erasers can also change or twist physical traces of angelic activity. Footprints can be erased, and photographs and video tapes can be altered. The cost of this physical alteration is 3 Essence Points per set of footprints or tracks, or per piece of recording equipment. If an actor being followed by paparazzi suddenly sprouted wings and flew, an Eraser would have to affect at least half a dozen cameras, costing 18 Essence Points or more. The degree of change determines the ease or difficulty of the Willpower and Theophany Task. Simply erasing or ruining negatives or tapes has no bonus or penalty. Leaving the photographs or tapes intact, but making them too blurry to see what is going on would also have no penalties. Changing the images to show no supernatural activity would suffer a -2 penalty. The most artistic Erasing—leaving the images relatively intact but adding proof that they used special effects and alterations to simulate a supernatural activity—would suffer a -4 penalty. The last is a favorite Erasing, since after an initial furor, an investigation always reveals the pictures to be fakes, thus making all claims suspect.

Gifted and Supernatural beings can resist the Eraser power with a Simple Willpower Test.

Finder

5-point Power

The hunters and trackers among the Seraphim are the Finders. Mystic bloodhounds, they are able to attune themselves to the Essence Matrix of an object or person and follow any traces left behind by the target, while at the same time getting a rough estimate of the direction and distance between them and their quarry. To start the hunt, a Finder must get a psychic impression of the target. This is best accomplished by seeing and touching the target, but this is unusual for obvious reasons. Instead, the angel acquires a "scent" by touching an object or person associated with the target, especially one with a strong emotional connection. A Perception and Theophany Task is needed to lock onto the scent of the target. This Task has modifiers based on how much access the Seraphim has to personal effects or people involved with the target. These modifiers range from +5 (the angel has actually seen or touched the target once before, or spends several hours in a house in which the target spent many years) to -5 (the angel only has access to a piece of clothing worn over a year ago).

If the Task is successful, the Seraphim gains a general idea of where the target is located. Given a map, for example, the angel can point to the country where the target is, and has a sense of the direction he needs to go to get closer. If the angel and the quarry are in the same country, the angel can detect the city or town the target is in, and if in the same city, the location of the target down to the street level. Without a map, the angel must travel physically towards the target. The closer the Seraphim gets to the target, the better a "fix" he obtains. This process is automatic, although if the target is moving, reaching it depends on the relative speeds of the quarry and the hunter.

Gifted humans and supernatural beings who know they are being pursued and wish to avoid discovery can resist. Use a Simple Willpower Test against the Finder's Perception and

Theophany Skill. Magical Shielding around the target adds a +6 bonus to this Test.

Healer

5-point Power

The equivalent of medics among the ranks of the Seraphim, Healers can treat both humans and supernatural beings. They can heal wounds very rapidly, faster even than most Seraphim can regenerate damage. Healing wounds costs one Essence Point, and heals three Life Points or Endurance Points per Willpower level of the angels.

Healers can also provide the Cure, a complete treatment that removes all traces of disease or injury. The Cure can regrow lost limbs, make old, crippling injuries disappear, remove scars and tattoos, reverse balding, even eliminate cancer or persistent viral agents like AIDS. The Cure costs 50 Essence Points. It undoes any condition short of death, and even revives living beings who have been clinically dead for less than thirty minutes.

Traveler

7-point Power

While all angels can materialize on Earth and travel back to their plane of origin, Travelers can bend space in a number of ways. Travelers can manipulate Essence to teleport themselves and others from place to place on Earth, and open gateways to other realms of existence.

While on Earth, Travelers can effectively teleport from place to place. The power requires several seconds (one Turn) of concentration, a Willpower and Theophany Task, and the expenditure of Essence. The amount of Essence depends on the distance traveled and how many "passengers" the Traveler is taking along. For up to one mile, the power costs five Essence Points, plus one Essence Point per additional person transported. For up to ten miles, the power costs 10 Essence, plus three Essence per additional person transported. For up to 100 miles, 25 Essence plus five per passenger must be spent. Greater distances cost 50 Essence plus 10 points per passenger. The destination must be known to the angel; he must have seen it, if only on live television (pictures and maps do not count). Most Travelers spend their first mission on Earth visiting numerous locations to imprint enough destinations to quickly reach any country and most major cities.

Using this power is not without risk, however. Gifted and supernatural characters near the arrival point of the Traveler (within 100 yards) may detect the sudden Essence discharge by passing a Simple Perception Test. With one Success Level the sensor feels a "disturbance in the Essence" nearby. With two to three Success Levels, he gains an idea about the distance and location of the event. Four or more Success Levels pinpoints the landing zone of the teleporting group.

Seraphim sometimes have to venture into other planes of existence such as the Death Realms or the Abode of the Old Gods to track down or spy on their enemies. Squadrons sent on such missions almost always have two or more Travelers in the group (one makes it risky, since if that particular angel is destroyed, the rest of the team would be stranded on an alien world). Traveling to other parts of the Otherworlds is an expensive and lengthy process. The Seraphim must concentrate of five minutes, and spend 50 Essence, plus five Essence per additional person transported. He can only travel to Realms he has visited in the past (usually, Travelers are taken to new Realms by more experienced angels, or use dimensional gateways).

Kerubim

After the Fall of Lucifer and the Celestial Wars, the Heavenly Host found itself in a quandary. After a few years on Earth, many angels stopped paying attention to their missions, often acquiring human vices or following the Watchers' Folly and fathering Nephilim children. Humans, due to their chaotic, unpredictable, and creative natures, seemed to change the very personality of the Seraphim. Many Archangels blamed Lucifer's murderous actions and Shemizael's betrayal on too much contact with humans. On the other hand, it was impossible to protect humankind without having agents among them. Humans were often used, but they were untrustworthy. Too often, they tended to follow their idea of what was right or wrong rather than the instructions of angels.

Then, sometime after the First Celestial War, something strange began to happen. The souls of dead humans started appearing in the Elyssian Fields. These newcomers were men and women of diverse backgrounds and histories. Some were downright saintly, while others had been sinners who seemed driven toward redemption. They

were able to survive Binah unaided, had a number of minor Seraphim powers, and could learn some Theophanies, but had only one human-looking form. The Council of Four decreed that the presence of these newcomers was the work of the Creator. Yet, their purpose remained unknown.

It was the Archangel Raphael, the Healer, who proposed sending them to Earth to help (and watch over) humankind. The solution seemed to work out well. The Kerubim walked among humans, and proved better able to deal with them without losing track of their purpose. Their only shortcoming was their inability to do anything that might endanger or harm innocent people. The Archangels soon learned that any mission in which humans (unless they were explicitly serving the dark powers) could be harmed, even if it was for the greater good, could not be entrusted to the Kerubim. Another, bigger problem was that the Seraphim held their once-mortal brethren in thinly disguised contempt; that Kerubim had a much higher success rate than their more powerful but less subtle brethren did not help matters.

Gabriel wisely kept all Kerubim from the Secret Plan (see p. 176). Most of the angels who followed Michele during the Schism and joined the Alliance are Kerubim. The ones who remain are closely monitored and often treated with disdain and suspicion by the Seraphim. Ironically, the war has made it necessary for Seraphim and Kerubim to work together, something largely avoided in the past.

Qliphonim

Some of the Damned get a chance to avoid the torments of the Pit, if they go to Earth and corrupt others to take their place. Many of them become as black-hearted as the worse Infernal Seraphim, and serve their demon masters loyally. Others find their crimes too much to bear, and end up rejecting their evil ways. Even before the war, some Qliphonim had established lively networks of rebels, which conspired against their masters for diverse reasons, ranging from the quest for redemption to the hunger for power. Although these rebels are often betrayed by informants and subject to horrible tortures if discovered, they continue to plot. All Qliphonim are dangerous and unpredictable, both for good and ill. Even those who claim to have loftier purposes often resort to the basest means to see them fulfilled.

The Qliphonim have powers similar to their Kerubim counterparts. Like them, they only possess one humanoid form, and have similar senses and recuperative abilities. Qliphonim can sense the evil in people, and any weaknesses they can exploit. Kerubim powers discussed below are fully applicable to the Qliphonim.

Humans In Hell

The Fallen Seraphim may have lost Elysium, but they gained something the Host never had: access to human souls. The Infernal Legion holds millions of captives in its hellish realm, where they suffer unspeakable torments. As a result, demons can create their own breed of human servants, the Qliphonim, while the Heavenly Host only gains Kerubim through some unfathomable mechanism. The only being who knows how to create Qliphonim is Lucifer; it is believed the former High Archangel learned the secret from a Death God shortly after his Fall, or perhaps the Fall itself, and his imprisonment in the Death Realms, provided him with the needed tools and knowledge. As a result, the Infernal Legion can create Qliphonim at will.

The only thing keeping their numbers in check is the demons' fear of having too many humans running around with Celestial-level powers. Fiends are more trustworthy servants, if only because they are more predictable and stupid.

Common Kerubim Powers

Some of the abilities of the Kerubim are identical to those of their Seraphim colleagues. They are fully described in the Seraphim section.

Essence Recovery and Manipulation

Kerubim recover Essence at the same rate as the Seraphim: one point of Essence per level of Constitution and Willpower every minute. They can use Essence with no restrictions; they can channel any or all of their Essence reservoir to heal themselves, inflict damage, or activate any of their powers.

Incarnation

Kerubim once were human, and when on Earth they assume the form they had while alive. They appear in the prime of life (about 25-30 years of age), regardless of when the Kerubim's human existence ended. Interestingly enough, former associates of the Kerubim cannot recognize him, although they sense some familiarity with the angel. Although the shape looks completely human, Kerubim are far more.

Incarnating on Earth from Binah takes some time and effort for the Kerubim, but less so than for the Seraphim. It takes under two weeks (15 days minus the Kerubim's Willpower level) for a Kerubim to create a human body for himself on Earth. The body appears on Earth at the location determined by the Archangel who sent him forth. Returning to that Kerubim's home realm requires one minute of concentration and the expenditure of 20 Essence points.

Providence

Kerubim can manipulate chance and probability. This ability works just like the Seraphim power of the same name (see p. 255).

Resistance to Celestial Fire

Kerubim are somewhat resistant to Celestial (or Infernal) Fire. This may be a result of their partially-retained humanity, and might be related to the Nephilim's invulnerability to such attacks (see p. 269). This inborn ability makes many Seraphim uncomfortable. They are not pleased that their most powerful weapon is not very effective against their junior partners.

Kerubim have an effective Armor Value of five points per Willpower and Constitution level against both Celestial Fire, the Destroyer Power, and the Primal Power Bolt of Destruction (see p. 282). Furthermore, halve any damage that makes it through this armor before applying it to the Kerubim's Life Point pool.

Resistances and Immunities

Kerubim need not eat, drink, sleep, or breathe to survive. They are immune to narcotic and irritant poisons, but not to corrosive ones. Disease does not affect them, either, unless they are supernatural in origin.

Kerubim can heal any injury by spending Essence, at the rate of D8(4) Life or Endurance Points per Essence Point spent. If any limb is

severed, it regrows when Life Points are fully restored. If they are "killed," their souls are catapulted back to the Sphere of Binah, from which they can build a new body (a process which takes time, however). Only if their Life Point and Essence Points totals are both reduced to -30 or worse is there any danger of permanent destruction. At that point, the Kerubim must pass a Simple Willpower Test, or his soul matrix becomes "unraveled" and his nature scattered and lost. This may or may not be permanent, but at the very least it takes centuries for the damage to be undone.

Survival Tests are not needed until the Kerubim is reduced to -30 Life Points. The penalties are -1 for every 10 points the Kerubim is below -30.

Supernatural Attributes

Kerubim receive the following Attribute bonuses: Strength +3, Dexterity +2, Constitution +3, Perception +1, Willpower +1.

The following formulae determine the Kerubim's Secondary Attributes (Speed uses the normal formula):

Life Points: (Strength + Constitution) x 5 + 50

Endurance Points: (Constitution + Strength + Willpower) x 5 + 30

Essence: Sum of Attributes +50

Supernatural Senses

Kerubim can see into the souls of people. Their senses can detect the flow of Essence, which they see as auras around people and objects. With but a glance, Kerubim can tell the emotional state of a person, and get a clear picture of that person's personality, character, and flaws. Kerubim also have very sharp physical senses, able to see in very low light. Unlike the Seraphim, however, they cannot see into the infrared spectrum.

Kerubim Theophanies

Kerubim can learn the Theophany Skill and gain certain of those powers. Some of them are the same as the powers acquired by the Seraphim, while others are unique to their kind. By the same token, the Kerubim cannot learn some of the less subtle Theophanies, like Destroyer or Binder.

Battler

7-point Power

Although the Kerubim tend to be gentler and less combative than the Seraphim, a few "holy warrior" types exist among their ranks. Many of these Battlers were soldiers in life, typically crusaders or some other type of zealot. Others were actually relatively mild-mannered during their Earthly existence, but later became lethal warrior angels.

Battlers can enter a Warrior Trance, a state in which their physical strength, reflexes, and combat skills are greatly enhanced. Entering the Trance requires a Turn of concentration, a successful Willpower and Theophany Task, and the expenditure of eight Essence Points. The Trance lasts for the duration of a fight, or until the Kerubim decides to return to normal. The Essence spent is not regained until the power is no longer active.

Entranced Battlers narrow their focus only to possible threats and ways to deal with those threats. They gain +2 to all Perception-based Tests or Tasks to detect movement or noises that might be dangerous (it is not a good idea to try to sneak up to a Battler, even if you are his friend). Also, they temporarily gain a +2 to Strength, +1 to Dexterity, and +3 to any combat skills they know (this Strength increase does not affect the Kerubim's Life Points, however). They can channel Essence into any weapon they hold in their hands (or to their bare hands if they prefer), at the cost of one Essence Point per minute. These weapons can affect incorporeal beings, or be made to inflict Essence damage instead of physical damage.

The down side to the Trance is the total concentration on combat and danger which makes it difficult for the Battler to deal with anything else. People are grouped into allies and possible or definite enemies. The first group is ignored (unless they move threateningly) and the second is dealt with summarily. All Tasks and Tests not directly related to combat or detecting enemies have a -3 penalty. Also, the Battler risks lashing out at innocents. If somebody makes a sudden move within 10 feet (3 meters), the entranced lesser angel must pass a Willpower and Perception (unmodified by the Battler bonuses) Test, or he attacks that person. The Battler realizes what happened right away, and the sudden shock cuts the Trance short and drains the character of D10 x 2(10) Essence Points.

Concealer

5-point Power

Sometimes people get caught talking to thin air, or claiming they hear voices from nowhere. While Seraphim using their Spirit Travel ability (see p. 257) have something to do with this, and a good share of these people are truly deluded, Kerubim with this Theophany are often to blame. Concealers can hide their presence from humans, becoming invisible and undetectable by most means. This invisibility can be selective. The lesser angel can choose to be seen by one or more members of a group, while concealing his existence from the rest. The Theophany allows the character to walk through crowds without bumping into people, by psychically prompting them to get out of his way without knowing why. Using this power costs five Essence Points (add two Essence points per additional person Concealed) and requires a Willpower and Theophany Task. The Concealment lasts for one hour, at the end of which a new Task and Essence expenditure are required.

While mundanes cannot see Concealers, science and supernatural beings can circumvent this ability in a number of ways. The Gifted and most beings able to sense Essence flows detect the presence of a Concealer, and can pinpoint his location on a Difficult Perception Test. While cameras and motion sensors are also fooled by this Theophany, infrared goggles automatically pick up a faint shimmering outline if the Kerubim is moving. Such goggles cannot detect the angel if he is standing still unless the observer is actually looking for him, and passes a Difficult Perception Test at -3. Special abilities and Invocations that allow the detection of the supernatural can also be used to detect the Concealer. The Kerubim resists those attempts with Willpower and Theophany Task.

Dreamer

5-point Power

The Kerubim can weave powerful dreams meant to educate, punish, or give hope to humans. These dreams are more than mere visions or illusions, however. They transport the Dreamer and as many as ten other people to a place of "what-ifs" and "might-have-beens." This power takes the Kerubim body and soul into the Dream Realms, in the Sephiroth of Hod. There reality is fluid, determined by emotion and raw Essence.

The Kerubim has no control over what happens when he uses the dream. The events that transpire in Hod are determined by Fate, by the flows of Essence that determine causality. In the Dream Realms, past, present, and future are mutable and malleable. A Kerubim can examine the possible consequences of an action, even if the action has not been committed yet. For example, to punish a murderer, the Dreamer could drag him into a world in which his victims lived to show him the effect his crimes had on the lives of others. The criminal could interact with those people, could even harm or be harmed by them, but at the end of the vision he would be returned to the real world, unharmed but (hopefully) enlightened by the experience.

As a side effect of this power, the Dreamer and anybody else taken into the vision disappear from the real world for several hours. Using the power without a clear purpose (trying to escape an enemy in the real world is not a real purpose) sends the Dreamer and his fellow travelers into a random hypothetical universe—any injury acquired there carries over when the dream ends.

Creating a dream costs 15 Essence Points, which are not regained until the dream ends. The Kerubim has some control over the basic outline of the dream (showing a criminal the consequences of his actions, for example), but the actual elements of the vision are determined by the Chronicler. The dream can be a mundane, short-lived experience, although creative Chroniclers can use this opportunity to develop complex and entertaining scenarios. There is also the chance that the target's imagination and willpower may cause the dream to take an unexpected and even dangerous turn. Finally, the Dream Realms have spirits that may on occasion intervene for their own reasons (treat those beings as Fiends or Ethereals, see p. 299).

Eraser

5-point Power

This is identical to the Seraphim power of the same name (see p. 260). Erasers are fairly common among the Kerubim.

Healer

4-point Power

Kerubim healers are far more likely than the Seraphim to use their powers on humans and other outsiders. Otherwise, this is the same as the Seraphim power (see p. 261).

Revealer
4-point Power

Some Kerubim have the power to reveal secrets, hiding places, or deceitful facades. Revealers can ferret out all manner of hidden information, from the location of traps and concealed doorways to the darker side of any living being, mundane or supernatural. Illusions and lies are next to useless against these Kerubim. Unfortunately, seeing the Truth in all its brutal nakedness is a trying ordeal, and Revealers are very choosy about when and where to use their Theophany. Most angels do not like to be scrutinized by a Revealer; the Seraphim are particularly touchy about this. Also, many Revealers discover things about their friends and allies better kept hidden. Despite their usefulness, Kerubim with this Theophany are often treated with suspicion or even hostility by their peers.

Using Reveal requires a Willpower and Theophany Task and costs five Essence Points. The Revealer can uncover the truth for up to an hour before more Essence and a new Task are needed. The spent Essence is not regenerated until the power is no longer active.

Once the Theophany is active, the Revealer can detect lies, find hidden places, and detect the true nature of people or objects. A general impression is automatically obtained. To find the whole truth requires a Perception and Theophany Task. Each Success Level uncovers another layer of truth. Finding out if somebody is lying might only require one Success Level, discovering what the person is hiding might require four levels of success, and uncovering why the person is lying could require up to five Success Levels. Concealers or supernatural predators masquerading as human beings can be uncovered with two Success Levels.

While this ability is active, the Revealer risks discovering unwelcome truths among those around him. Petty jealousies, resentment, or envy among friends or close ones might be revealed, or hidden traumas that should not be forcibly uncovered. For that reason, Revealers tend to use their power only at times of need, and use them only for as long as necessary.

Exiles

All Seraphim (both Heavenly and Infernal) share one important trait: they are bound to their Realm, and can be recalled by their superiors with relative ease. Like deep-sea divers in the ocean, they can only visit Earth with some effort. In the case of the Fallen, they cannot stay on Earth for long. Exiles are Seraphim who have broken the bond with their heavenly or hellish Realm. By doing so, they forsake most of their powers and become Earth-bound creatures.

The reasons to become an Exile are varied. In many cases, they do so to escape punishment after committing some crime, or failing in some important undertaking. Other motives include a desire to experience the pleasures of Earth, a loathing of the restrictive environments of their home realms, or simply a profound disenchantment with their current existence. Becoming an Exile is the only way an angel can flee his superiors, since otherwise he can be easily found and brought back to Elysium or Gehenna. Exiles are regarded with hatred (or, at best, contempt) by their former colleagues. For the most part, they are considered traitors to the cause, and rarely trusted.

How Exiles regard their new status varies from individual to individual. Some quickly grow jaded with mortal life, and find themselves yearning for a return to their previous existence. Others cherish their new life, and try to avoid the machinations of supernatural beings at all costs. Exiles can be bitter or exultant, cynics or idealists. They may avoid the company of others, or may believe that only other Exiles can understand their plight. These outcast angels can be villains or heroes, or just trying to get along.

Becoming an Exile

Sundering the bond between a Seraphim and his home realm cannot be done lightly, or easily accomplished. It requires a tremendous effort of will and a sacrifice of Essence. The Exile Quality must be purchased (see p. 82). Alternatively, the character must pass a Difficult Willpower Test at a -4 penalty, and make a minimum sacrifice of five Essence Points. Each additional three Essence Points permanently lost adds a +1 to the Willpower Test.

If the attempt fails, the Seraphim's Essence matrix is marked by the attempt. Any Celestial being who sees the character realizes that he tried to become an Exile. The consequences for attempting to escape one's duties are not very pleasant—both the Host and the Legion punish such actions harshly, with sentences ranging from centuries of torture to the Unraveling of their souls.

If the character succeeds, few senses can reveal him to be a Seraphim. This anonymity has a price, of course—the Exile loses most of his angelic powers.

Ending the Exile

Only an Archangel (or his Demonic counterpart) can end a character's Exile and restore him to full Seraphim status. The Exile in question must have something very valuable to offer for that boon to be considered. Since Exiles are considered to be traitors of the basest sort, neither the Host nor the Legion will trust them. Only Exiles who have access to important secrets, or who can perform great services for the Archangel, have a chance. Generally, those wretches who try to make a deal are ruthlessly exploited and discarded as soon as their usefulness ends. An Archangel can undo the Exile, provided the Exile is willing and in the Archangel's presence. The character, when restored, regains all normal Seraphim abilities.

Exile Powers and Vulnerabilities

The following powers and vulnerabilities are part of each Exile's make-up.

Profane Form

Exiles no longer have a Divine/Infernal form. They only have a human shape, far stronger and more resilient than a normal human's, but still essentially human-like. The character retains the Attribute bonuses of their Seraphim variant (Lesser, Common, or Greater Seraphim). They no longer have the power to manipulate Celestial Fire, however, nor to use any Theophanies, even those that can be normally used in Profane form. The only power the Exiles retain is the ability to heal injuries by spending Essence.

One advantage the Profane form of the Exile has over their counterparts is the ability to hide from scrutiny. The Finder and Revealer Theophanies do not work against the Exile. Furthermore, the senses of supernatural creatures able to see Essence patterns are stymied. The Exile appears to be a normal human or, at best, a human with an unusually strong soul (i.e., large Essence Pools). Attempts to probe deeper using Perception and Notice Tasks, or such powers as the Insight Invocation are resisted by the Exile with a Simple Willpower Test, or a Willpower and Theophany Task (the only remaining use for the Theophany Skill).

Only other Exiles can sense the presence of their brethren. When another Exile is within 30 yards (meters) of the character, a Simple Perception Test reveals their presence. When looking at another Exile, a similar Test reveals the truth.

Resistances and Immunities

Exiles retain all the inherent resiliency of the Seraphim. Although deprived of the ability to manipulate Essence, they do not need to eat, sleep or breathe to survive. They are immune to narcotic and irritant poisons, but not to corrosive ones. Disease does not affect them, either, unless they are supernatural in origin.

Exiles are bound to their Profane form, but like all Seraphim, they are highly resistant to injury. They enjoy the same Armor Value, Healing, Life Pool, and Survival Tests benefits, and suffer the same Essence Death and Taint Vulnerability detriments. Only Destruction of the Body is slightly different.

Destruction of the Body: If an Exile is killed, but his Essence Pool has not been depleted, the Exile can slowly repair his body and return to life. The process takes one day for every 10 Life Points below -30 that the Exile suffered, and it permanently reduces the Exile's Essence Pool by five points. At the end of the process, the Exile's body returns to full health, even if it had been completely incinerated or torn to bits.

Ritual Magic and Necromancy

Many Exiles learn Magic or Necromancy if the opportunity presents itself, but such opportunities are rare outside the Watchers and similar organizations. However, Exiles cannot acquire Essence Channeling, so to empower any Invocations or Necromantic effects they must use Essence gathered through Rituals (see p. 199). To the Exiles, these tricks are a poor substitute for their former Celestial powers, but are better than nothing, and some older Exiles make extremely skilled magicians.

Other Powers

Exiles cannot acquire other Gifted powers. They cannot acquire Spirit Patrons, either, with one exception—Leviathan. Exiles, like the Seraphim, can become the servants of the Mad God. Some Exiles accept employment under an

Old God or other powerful entity, but they cannot gain supernatural powers through this service. On the other hand, such powerful beings can provide protection and other benefits.

Nephilim

They were among the heroes and giants of legend. Nearly immortal and very powerful, they were deemed Abominations by the Heavenly Host, and hunted down and murdered by the thousands. Their dual nature gives them a life of power and contradictions. The nature of the Nephilim is essentially human—they are as capable of selfishness and generosity, or kindness and cruelty, as any other person. On the other hand, their abilities open them to the temptation to abuse their power. Many of the tales of mythological heroes speak of men and women who did as they wished, often causing more harm than good. The worst extremes committed by these early Nephilim led to their persecution and near extinction. The Watchers did their best to inculcate among their progeny the understanding that with great power comes great responsibility. Overall, they have been successful, although there have been many tragic exceptions. Some rumors point to the crimes of Jack the Ripper and Springheel Jack as the actions of deranged Nephilim, actions that the Watchers covered up.

The Nephilim are born from the union of human and Seraphim parents. Two Nephilim have a small chance (about one in eight) of conceiving a Nephilim child; all other progeny are human, although a very high percentage of them (almost fifty percent) develop Gifted abilities. And, it has recently been discovered, some children of Nephilim and humans, or of humans who descend from Nephilim, develop the latent potential of becoming Nephilim themselves, a potential that was realized with the Magic Generation.

Initially, the Nephilim appear to be perfectly normal humans. They rarely contract any childhood diseases, however, and sometime between the ages of twelve and eighteen they experience an amazing growth spurt. Rare is the Nephilim who stands less than six feet (two meters) tall by the time he reaches adulthood. In ancient times, when the average stature of men was much smaller than it is today, the Nephilim's size led to their being called "the Giants." In the 21st century, on the other hand, the Nephilim's size is rarely noticed. Their physical appearance tends to favor the human parent. Some say this is Nature's way of giving those parents a measure of the immortality that their children experience.

By the time they reach maturity, the Nephilim's dual nature becomes evident. Their strength and other physical attributes become superhuman, and they recover from injuries at an amazing rate. Even lost limbs can be regrown very quickly unless their bodies are severely burned. Although they can be killed through mundane means, it is very difficult to do so. Furthermore, their aging process stops sometime after their early twenties, and from then on the Nephilim may continue to live forever (the oldest known Nephilim are over ten thousand years old).

Nephilim Powers and Vulnerabilities

The following are inherent powers and vulnerabilities of all Nephilim.

Fast Recovery from Injury

The Nephilim can heal injuries almost as fast as they are inflicted, and they can fully recover from all but the worst trauma. Life and Endurance Points lost through any means are recovered at the rate of five points per turn, or 60 points per minute. If a limb is severed, a replacement grows within an hour. Even beheading is not final, unless the Nephilim is otherwise crippled or restrained. If the character passes a Survival Test (see p. 139), and he can place the head back in its proper position within ten minutes of the beheading (finding one's head requires one or more Difficult Perception Tests, at the Chronicler's discretion and depending on the circumstances), the head reconnects and all will be well (the sight of a headless Nephilim looking for the lost body part is enough for a Fear Test at -5 for most people). If enough damage is inflicted to require a Survival Test, the Nephilim is at the same risk as a normal human (although if he passes the Test, the regeneration process takes care of the injuries).

Fire inflicts longer-lasting injuries, although even then the recovery is completed eventually. Fire-induced scarring or lost limbs take several days to heal. Keep track of fire damage separately; it regenerates at the rate of one Life Point per hour. Limbs lost regrow over a period of a week. Thus, it is easier to kill a Nephilim by completely consuming him with fire.

Lost Essence is recovered at the rate of two points per Willpower level, every minute.

Immunity to Essence-based Attacks

The souls of the Nephilim act as a repelling force against all forms of Essence-based attack. Magical Invocations, psychic powers, and even Celestial Fire cannot affect the Nephilim; such attacks simply fail. When the Seraphim hunted the first generation of Nephilim, they were forced to use crude weapons of iron and bronze to fight and kill them. Further, Celestial Shields and other Essence based protection such as the Shielding Invocation are ineffective against unarmed attacks by Nephilim. Neither illusions, spells of mind control, and the Essence-draining abilities of supernatural beings work against the Nephilim. Creatures of spirit like ghosts can only affect the Nephilim if they have materialized on Earth, or if the Nephilim has been somehow transported to another realm of the Otherworlds (for example, if a Nephilim stepped through a Gateway leading to the Death Realms, the spirits of the dead would able to strike at him physically). Even abilities like Taint and Dissolution, which are empowered by the alien energies of the Worlds Beyond, are useless against these demi-angels.

The side effect to this is that beneficial supernatural powers cannot work on the Nephilim, either. Healing magical powers, for example, do not affect them. Passive powers—like Insight or the Revealer Theophany—have a chance of working on the Nephilim. The Nephilim resists those abilities with a Simple Willpower Test and a +5 bonus.

Lack of Arts

Nephilim cannot perform Magic (not even the ritual magic available to mundanes), nor do they ever exhibit any of the Gifted abilities that all humans have the potential to develop. Furthermore, they cannot learn the Theophanies the Seraphim and Kerubim use. In fact, other than their basic senses, which are attuned to the flows of Essence (they enjoy the same perception abilities as the Gifted), the Nephilim cannot manipulate Essence for any purpose, except for the normal Essence loss that occurs during strong emotional episodes (see p. 125).

Supernatural Attributes

Nephilim receive a +2 bonus to all physical Attributes, and a +1 bonus to all mental Attributes.

The following formulae determine the Nephilim's Secondary Attributes (Speed uses the normal formula):

Life Points: (Strength + Constitution) x 5 + 30

Endurance Points: (Constitution + Strength + Willpower) x 3 + 30

Essence: Sum of Attributes +30

Supernatural Senses

The Nephilim can see the flows of Essence, although they cannot manipulate them. These senses allow them to detect the presence of spirits and soul-projecting astral travelers, as well as detect the use of magic. If the character passes a Simple Perception Test, he can uncover supernatural beings posing as humans. Their unique powers also render Nephilim immune to all forms of illusion and magical or psychic concealment.

Chapter Eight

Primal Beings

In the world of *Armageddon*, the Pagan Gods are not made-up entities, or mere ghosts of a collective unconscious. Instead, they are all too real and powerful beings, as likely to be cruel as charitable, often causing more harm than good. The Old Gods, Odin and Zeus and their ilk, share a common origin with the angels. They also descend from the Sephyr, although their ancestors were earthier elemental beings, the living tools used to fashion the universe, whereas the Seraphim's progenitors were messengers and observers.

When the Seraphim abandoned Earth on a desperate quest for the Creator (see p. 176), the Titans, as the entities called themselves, set themselves up as the rulers of the fledgling human civilizations arising after the Flood and the last stage of the Ice Age. The impact of the Titans on human culture survives to this day. Their immense power awed humans, and their occasional gifts gained their adoration and worship. Given their poverty and ignorance, it was easy for human cultures to believe that they could not control their destiny, and that they were helpless pawns in the hands of the gods. This idea survives to this day.

The relationship was not one-sided, however. The human worshippers of the Old Gods affected the flows of Essence. Even mundanes can affect the world, if enough of them believe strongly enough in one thing. The gods were altered by the very worship they demanded. Some acquired new powers to better enable them to fit in the roles they had assumed. Others found their very personalities and memories altered over time to satisfy the preconceptions of the mortals they thought they ruled. The collective Essence of the human race was more powerful than the will of the gods. In the end, humans reshaped the gods as much or more as the gods affected their perception of the world.

Avatars

An Avatar is a spiritual offspring of a god, a human being whose soul has been modified to more closely resemble the Essence matrix of a deity. The result is a being who shares many traits with his spiritual parent, from powers to personality, but who is an independent creature with his own free will and destiny. The link between Avatars and the gods who changed their natures is very strong. The gods can see through their eyes, or even attempt to seize control over

them. Some Avatars become resentful of this connection, and even rebel against it, while others establish a close relationship with their patron god.

The process of creating an Avatar occurs shortly before his birth. The god performs a ceremony that puts him into contact with the soul of a human about to be born. During the ceremony, the god imprints a portion of his own soul on the human's, modifying it to some degree. These modifications affect the newborn's appearance, personality, and inherent powers, although the child's original soul (including any karma or other baggage from previous existence) and his rearing and environment also have an impact. The result of this process is a strange mixture of human and divine, one that is less clearly defined than those that occur when an Inheritor (see p. 272) is born. One major difference between the two god-offspring is that Avatars, while more powerful in some ways than Inheritors, are not unaging, although their life span is greater than a normal human's. Also, an Avatar's personality is usually very similar to that of the parent deity, while Inheritors are no more likely to think like the gods who spawned them than any children of an absentee parent.

Avatars were widely ignored by most deities until very recently. Prompted by the signs that presaged the war, many Old Gods created several Avatars apiece to use as agents and servants in the conflict. Even when not directly connected to their Avatars, the gods could sense what was happening around them, making those men and women ideal sources of information. Unfortunately, their supernatural nature made them easy to find and destroy. When the Church of Revelations overran Europe, many Avatars were killed.

Avatar Powers and Vulnerabilities

The following are common to all Avatars.

Beholden

Avatars have a connection to the deity who transformed them. This can have some positive effects (the deity can communicate with the Avatar), but for the most part it is a burden. The god sometimes eavesdrops on conversations or even tries to take control. All Avatar characters have the three-point version of the Beholden Drawback (see p. 80). Some have the stronger, five-point one. Players who want their characters to have the five-point version of this Drawback only get two extra character points (the three points of the less severe version are already figured in the Avatar racial cost).

Essence Manipulation and Recovery

Avatars use Essence to activate their Primal Powers (see p. 280). They can channel as much Essence as they need, without the limitations most humans, even most Gifted, face when controlling this powerful force. They also recover Essence more rapidly, at the rate of two Essence Points per Willpower level, every minute.

Extended Life Span

Although not truly immortal, Avatars can live almost three times as long as most humans. Upon reaching their mid-thirties, Avatars seem to age not at all for 150-200 years. At some point after that, they start aging at a rough rate of one year per five years lived, eventually reaching a time of decline and death over the next few centuries.

Rapid Healing and Recovery

The strengthened bodies of Avatars are highly resilient, and can recover from all but the deadliest of wounds. Any damage inflicted on Avatars is regained at the rate of one Life Point per Willpower level every Turn. Lost Endurance is regained at the same rate. If any limb is severed, it regrows when Life Points are restored.

Resistances

Avatars need to eat, sleep, and breathe, although their supernatural constitution allows them to do without far longer than normal humans. Narcotic and irritant poisons affect them, but cannot kill them. Corrosive poisons retain their full force. Disease affects them, but cannot kill them, unless the disease is supernatural in origin.

Supernatural Attributes

Avatars receive the following Attribute bonuses: +4 Strength, +2 Dexterity and +4 Constitution. They also gain +1 to all mental Attributes.

The following formulae determine the Avatar's Secondary Attributes (Speed is as normal):

Life Points: (Strength + Constitution) x 5 + 60

Endurance Points: (Constitution + Strength + Willpower) x 5 + 50

Essence: Sum of Attributes +50

Supernatural Senses

Avatars can see the flows of Essence in both living and unliving things. They can sense the presence of Magic and other supernatural energies and creatures, including those invisible to the naked eye.

Incarnates

Incarnates are lesser Titans, and most of them are fairly young (less than 100 years old). Unlike Inheritors, there is no human blood in them. They are not true Old Gods, but they are fully of them.

Most of these beings live in the mythical Realms of Netzach, reared by other Incarnates. Those Realms, sealed off from Earth for centuries, are primitive places, where battles are fought with swords and brutality, and no technology higher than windmills or metalworking is common. As a result, Incarnates who visit Earth typically have utterly wrong ideas about the ways of mortals.

Incarnate Powers and Vulnerabilities

The following are common to all Incarnates.

Ageless

Incarnates do not age. They live forever, but can be destroyed in various ways.

Essence Manipulation and Recovery

Incarnates use Essence to activate their Primal Powers (see p. 280). They can channel as much Essence as they need, without the limitations most humans (even most Gifted) face. They also recover Essence more rapidly, at the rate of two Essence Points per Willpower level, every minute.

Rapid Healing and Recovery

Incarnates regenerate damage at the rate of one Life or Endurance Point per Willpower and Constitution level every Turn. If any limb is severed, it regrows when Life Points are fully restored.

Resistances

Incarnates need to eat, sleep, and breathe, although their supernatural constitution allows them to do without far longer than normal humans. Narcotic and irritant poisons affect them, but cannot kill them. Corrosive poisons retain their full force. Disease affects them, but cannot kill them, unless the disease is supernatural in origin.

Survival Tests are not needed until the Incarnate is at -30 points. The penalties are -1 for every 10 points the Incarnate is below -30.

Supernatural Attributes

Incarnates receive the following Attribute bonuses: Strength +6, Dexterity +3, Constitution +4, Intelligence +2, Perception +2, Willpower +2.

The following formulae determine the Incarnate's Secondary Attributes (Speed uses the normal formula):

Life Points: ((Strength + Constitution) x 5) + 150

Endurance Points: ((Constitution + Strength + Willpower) x 5) + 100

Essence: Sum of Attributes +75

Supernatural Senses

Incarnates can see the flows of Essence in both living and unliving things. They can sense the presence of Magic and other supernatural energies and creatures, including those invisible to the naked eye.

Inheritors

Much like the Watchers (see p. 191), many of the Old Gods became attracted to mortal humans, and had children with them. These hybrids inherited some of the basic abilities and powers of their Titan forebears. Inheritors have lived among humans for millennia, but only a relative handful. Most of them were either killed during the Second Celestial War, or fled to the Otherworlds with their pagan parents.

In the years approaching the Millennium, the Old Gods returned to Earth, warned by the signs of the approaching doomsday. In an effort to raise a new generation of warriors, many gods (mostly but not exclusively male) traveled throughout the world incognito, fathering or giving birth to hundreds, perhaps thousands, of

Inheritors. In some cases, the gods also left behind a small network of faithful humans to watch over the children. Sometimes, the network was made of fanatical cultists. In other cases, the humans were trustees charged with revealing the truth to the children when the time came. In many instances, however, the children were left to their own devices, either out of sheer callousness (some gods believed that if the child was fit to survive, he would endure the shock of discovering his nature) or mere carelessness. Some gods are even worse than humans when it comes to thinking things through.

These children grew up with no awareness of their true natures, although their instincts and personalities often reflected their divine halves. Sometime between adolescence and adulthood, however, their powers awakened. The Inheritors' bodies became stronger and more powerful. Some survived severe injuries that would have killed a normal human being, while others broke athletic records. More important (and shocking, both to the Inheritors and those around them) was the manifestation of Aspects, special powers and abilities that their godly parent embodied. Children of a war god, for example, developed an innate familiarity with all weapons, as well as amazing combat instincts that matched those of hardened veterans. The progeny of gods of fire often set their houses ablaze by accident. And many tragedies occurred when Inheritors whose legacy included the Aspect of Death became angered at somebody.

The fates of these children often depended on the arrangements their divine progenitors had left behind. The young demigods were often inducted into (or occasionally even kidnapped by) whatever local network or cult the god had set up for his child. In some cases, the revelation that the Inheritor's parent was a god was met with denial and disbelief, and even resentment or hatred. Some Inheritors want nothing to do with their divine parents, while others become loyal progeny. Those Inheritors left to their own devices faced many problems, however. During the pogroms that followed the New Age, many Inheritors were killed by angry mobs, or murdered by other supernatural beings who wished to avoid competitors or who found the idea of preying on a demigod too tempting to pass up. The lucky ones were discovered by a friendly organization (the Watchers sometimes adopted Inheritors, according them the same

respect they had for the Nephilim; some True Immortals also sensed in these demigods kindred souls, and took them under their wing). The unlucky ones were found by the Seraphim, the Combine, or the Church of Revelations, which at best meant a quick death for them.

As a result of this haphazard "breeding program," Inheritors are a mixed lot. Some have learned a great many secrets of their pantheon and the universe, while others have not the faintest idea of who and what they truly are. A few have been raised in the lap of luxury, much like their Nephilim counterparts (see p. 268), while others grew up in abject poverty. The only thing they have in common are their powers, and the dangers inherent in being a powerful force in a world at war.

Ancient Inheritors

Not all the Inheritors were born recently. Some have lived on Earth since antiquity, escaping both the wrath of the Seraphim and the fear of the mundane through cunning and caution. Most of these Inheritors had little interest in their pantheons of origin, and chose to pursue their own destiny. A few of these old and powerful demigods became involved in world-spanning conspiracies and the dealings of the Combine and the Watchers, but the rest lived as long as they did by avoiding such involvement. Unfortunately, the war allows for no indifference or neutrality, and these ancient beings, wiser in many ways than the gods who spawned them, have had to enter the fray, sometimes helping their younger siblings, or secretly aiding them.

Inheritor Common Powers and Vulnerabilities

All Inheritors share these special abilities. In addition to these powers, all Inheritors possess at least one Aspect of their parent deity (see p. 275); some have as many as three. Their powers are determined by those Aspects, although there is a great deal of variation between them.

Essence Manipulation and Recovery

Inheritors use Essence to activate their Aspects. This Essence is recovered at the rate of two points per Willpower level every minute. Inheritors can use as much of their personal Essence as they need, without the limitations normal humans, even those with channeling, have.

Rapid Healing

Inheritors recover very rapidly from injury. Any Life or Endurance losses are regained at the rate 1 point per Willpower level every turn. If any limb is severed, it regrows when Life Points are fully restored.

Resistances

Inheritors need to eat, sleep, and breathe, although their supernatural constitution allows them to do without far longer than normal humans. Narcotic and irritant poisons affect them, but cannot kill them. Corrosive poisons retain their full force. Disease affects them, but cannot kill them, unless the disease is supernatural in origin.

Restricted Supernatural Abilities

Besides Primal Powers, Inheritors never demonstrate supernatural abilities. Unless they have the right Aspect, they cannot use Magic, for example. Neither can an Inheritor acquire psychic abilities or become Inspired. Such powers are the province of pure humans. In a way, their godly half imposes limits on them that do not exist in humans, all whom at least have the potential to work Magic and other powers.

Supernatural Attributes

Inheritors receive the following physical Attribute bonuses: +3 Strength and +3 Constitution. They may also add +1 to one mental Attribute of their choice.

The following formulae determine the Inheritor's Secondary Attributes (Speed uses the normal formula):

Life Points: ((Strength + Constitution) x 5) + 40

Endurance Points: ((Constitution + Strength + Willpower) x 3) + 30

Essence: Sum of Attributes +20

Supernatural Senses

Inheritors can sense large concentrations of Essence, and the presence of supernatural beings, by passing a Difficult Perception Test with a +2 bonus.

Unaging

Inheritors do not grow old. Their aging process stops shortly after reaching full adulthood (sometime after their mid-twenties).

It is unknown whether they are truly immortal, or whether their life spans are so long that they seem so. Some known Inheritors are over five millennia old.

Aspects and Primal Powers

The Titans who came to Earth to be worshipped as gods eventually developed their own areas of specialty. A god might rule over the waters of the ocean, for example, while another would oversee the welfare of his worshippers' crops. As humans associated each deity to one or more areas of the world around them, their own faith somehow shaped the deities, giving them the appropriate powers to carry out their appointed task. These Aspects are areas of reality over which the deity, and those associated with it, has a great deal of power.

When creating a Primal character, the player decides which Aspects he has access to. For the most part, those Aspects can be any that the parental deity (or deities) themselves espouse.

Aspects in turn allow the character to have one or more Primal Powers. These are concrete manifestations of the Aspect's control over reality. Each Aspect has a number of associated Primal Powers. Powers often overlap—the power to Torment, for example, is the domain of both the Aspect of Justice, and the Aspect of Vengeance.

The Primal Skill

Characters with Aspects and Primal Powers have the Primal Skill, which is used for most Tasks involving those powers. This ability is purchased with Metaphysics Points. It costs two points per level until level five, and five points per level thereafter.

Aspect Descriptions

Each Aspect includes an introductory description followed by three special features. Mandatory Traits are Attribute limits, Qualities, Drawbacks, or Skills which must be acquired by the character. They are either prerequisites for having that Aspect, or side effects from the Aspect itself. Mandatory Traits must be purchased normally. Common Traits are other characteristics (Attributes, Qualities and Drawbacks, etc.) that appear with some frequency among characters with this Aspect. They are not mandatory, but serve as guidelines during character creation. Some possible occupations and lifestyles may also be mentioned in the Common Traits section. Finally, Primal Powers list the special abilities available to characters with the Aspect. At least one of these powers must be acquired during character creation.

Beast (Type)

Many gods adopt the shape or traits of some animal. The Egyptian god Set, for example, is associated with the crocodile and the scorpion, while Poseidon is the patron deity of horses in addition to being the god of the sea. Gods acquire animal affinities by communing with Nature Spirits. In some cases the god is the offspring of a Titan and a Nature Spirit.

Characters related to any god with an animal affinity may choose this Aspect. Typically, the Aspect applies to only one type of animal (crocodiles, cats, horses). The character's traits and personality should reflect the association with the animal.

Mandatory Traits: None.

Common Traits: Qualities and Drawbacks associated with the animal in question. Predators, especially felines, may be Cruel, for example, while those associated with the Eagle should have Acute Vision, and perhaps Delusion (Intolerance), thinking themselves high above other people.

Primal Powers: Awe, Beast Powers, Life, and Might

Death

Almost every pantheon has one or more Death deities, the keepers and lords of the Dead. They collect the souls of the deceased, and often judge or punish them. In some mythologies, their very presence can bring death and destruction. This Aspect is not necessarily malevolent, however. Death, after all, is part of the natural order of things. Many Death gods are simply part of the cycle of life and the changing seasons. They represent Winter, the time during which things die and descend to the ground, to be reborn in Spring. Several Old Gods have both Death and Fertility as their Aspects.

This Aspect is one of the most powerful and dreadful found among the Old Gods. They are a reminder to everyone (even other deities) that all things eventually come to an end, even if only to start anew. Their awareness of the cycle of life

and death often provides a perspective lacking among Celestials. To be connected to Death is to become aware of one's own mortality—the Death Gods know that even so-called immortals cannot expect to survive forever.

Mandatory Traits: Negative Charisma (-2 minimum; Attractiveness can be increased normally, however). People, even mundane humans, feel some atavistic measure of fear and discomfort in the presence of Death.

Common Traits: Mental Drawbacks (Delusions, Emotional Problems, Paranoia) are fairly common among Death-oriented characters. They also tend to drift into jobs where death is either a common occurrence or at least always a clear concern: morticians, emergency room doctors, paramedics, police officers, and so on.

Primal Powers: Awe, Darkness, Destruction, Fortune, Thanathos, and Torment.

Element (Type)

Many gods are associated with one of the Classical Elements: Air (the wind gods), Water (river and ocean gods), Fire (gods of destruction, as well as patron of such fiery crafts as metal forging), and Earth (gods of agriculture, building, and mountains). Titans with an Elemental Aspect have had dealings with elemental spirits, either as overlords or even relatives—some gods are the offspring of powerful elemental spirits and other Titans. This Aspect grants its wielders a great deal of power over the associated element. Each of the elements has certain special characteristics.

Earth: This element represents solidity, permanence, and strength. It is also associated with life and fertility. It is one of the primary Aspects of all Earth Mothers, the co-rulers of most pantheons. It is also a bridge between life and death. Earth appears cold and dead—like the corpses that are buried under it—and yet life springs from it. It is not always a passive life-giver, however. With tremors, earthquakes, and volcanoes, it can destroy just as effectively as the other elements. Earth's special powers are Earth's Bounty and Might.

Fire: Vanquisher of cold and darkness, relentless destroyer, friend and bane of humankind: fire is all that, and more. Fire can be voracious, cruel, and intense. It is also a tool of light and civilization. Fire is an element of contrasts and ambiguity. Fire's special powers are Destruction and Light.

Water: The source of life, this element is associated with healing and vitality. It can also be dangerous, its currents dragging off the unwary, and deceitful, its surface revealing little of what may lie underneath. Water is perceived as cold, perhaps unfeeling. It gives life, but can also take it away, unleashing destructive storms, floods and tidal waves. Water's special powers are Life and Storm.

Wind: In its common manifestation as the Wind, Air is the expression of movement and force. Ancient cultures feared its destructive power (in the form of whirlwinds and hurricanes). Air is also thought of as fickle, changing course without warning. As an unseen force that clearly affects the world, Air is also associated with Essence and invisible spirits. Wind's special powers are Nimbleness and Storm.

Mandatory Traits: None.

Common Traits: Some of the character's Mental Drawbacks should reflect the elemental nature he shares. Fire and Air-oriented characters tend to be Reckless, for example, while Earth and Water types are often Humorless.

Primal Powers: Awe, the appropriate Primal Power (Primal Earth, Fire, Water or Wind), and the appropriate special powers.

Fertility

The gods and goddesses of fertility were among the most popular in ancient cultures. Every civilization that developed agriculture put fertility goddess in a respected place. Their favor meant good harvests and full bellies; their anger could bring famine and death. Fertility deities are also linked to the simple lusts of life. Many goddesses of Love started out as fertility deities whose passions were refined into more complex emotions. Most fertility deities have reputations as promiscuous lovers.Fertility is a major trait of the Earth Mothers, the female leaders of most pantheons. Fertility deities are also often associated with the Life-Death cycle, symbolized by the yearly seasons. Their children tend to favor one of those Aspects over the other, however.

Mandatory Traits: The character must have a +1 in either Attractiveness or Charisma, and at least one level of Covetous (Lecherous).

Common Traits: Fertility-aspected characters tend to be attractive and healthy. Many of them find themselves in jobs or professions dealing with agriculture—farmers, agronomists, gardeners, and the like. Others explore the darker side of lust, as exotic dancers, escorts, or prostitutes.

Primal Powers: Awe, Earth's Bounty, Life, Love, Might, Primal Earth, and Vitality.

Forge

Metalworking is a relatively recent development in recorded history. It made a huge difference in people's lives, creating tools that did not break or chip as easily, and weapons of a quality that seemed magical. The craft soon acquired its own share of gods, the smiths and builders of their pantheons, makers of wonderful weapons and items. Since metal is worked with fire, a number of fire deities became associated with the forge; other new gods soon embodied fire powers as well as those of creation.

The Forge is a powerful Aspect, but gods who embodied it were commonly worshipped only by skilled craftsmen, a small minority of the population. Primal Smiths were likewise not honored by their fellow gods—Hephaestus, the Greek smith-god, for example, was generally despised by his fellows, except when they wanted him to make some new toy.

Mandatory Traits: Characters with this Aspect must spend a minimum of three Attribute Points in Strength and three in Intelligence, not counting any racial or power bonuses. They must also have the Craft (Weaponsmith) Skill, at a minimum of one.

Common Traits: Primal Smiths sometimes have Artistic Talent. Most make their living by working with metal—some may be hobbyist smiths, while more modern ones work in body shops, steel mills, and so on.

Primal Powers: Awe, Might, Primal Fire, and Smith.

Justice

This is the Aspect of law, order, and fairness. Gods of Justice embody the customs that bind a community, and prevent chaos and violence from shattering it. They help those who uphold law and order, and punish criminals and anarchists. When associated with the Death Aspect, they also pass judgment on people after they die, when their entire lives are measured for the good and evil they did. If found wanting, these sinners are consigned to some hellish afterlife as a punishment. Mercy is rarely considered by these deities; the strict interpretation of the law is paramount. This Aspect also regulates contracts, agreements, and oaths: when a god of Justice gives his word, he never breaks it, no matter what the consequences.

Mandatory Traits: Characters with this Aspect have a Code of Honor worth 2 points or more, as appropriate for their social and cultural background. An important part of the Code is that the character cannot break his word, as long as the oath was freely given.

Common Traits: Justice-aspected characters rarely have Mental Drawbacks that may lead to breaking the law—Covetous, for example, should not be taken above the first level. Humans affiliated to this Aspect often end up as law-enforcement and court officers,

Primal Powers: Awe, Discernment, Judgment, Psyche, and Torment.

Moon

The second great orb in the sky, the Moon brings light to the night and influences the tides. Its phases represent the cycle of life, waning into nothingness and then rising again. As a mirror of the sun, it fights the darkness and provides light. It is also associated with magic, and magical powers. In the *Armageddon* cosmology, the Full Moon is a time of power, where Essence flows more easily and creatures from the Otherworlds often manifest on Earth. Not coincidentally, the Moon is also associated with madness. Moon deities are often siblings or allies of the gods of the Earth, and as such have powers of fertility.

Mandatory Traits: None.

Common Traits: Some people associated with the Moon Aspect have a special version of the Emotional Problem (Depression) Drawback. The character suffers the effects of Depression during the new moon phase. During the three days of the dark moon, the character is morose and unable to concentrate on anything that is not an emergency. This is a 1-point Drawback. Humans affiliated to the Moon tend to be night people, and their jobs and lives reflect that.

Primal Powers: Awe, Dream, Life, Light, Magic, and Psyche.

Sea

The seas and oceans of the world have long caused both fear and fascination in humans. They provide wealth, food, and a fast means of travel, but they also bring death and destruction. The murky depths of the sea are linked to all manners of evil and frightful monsters. The Mad God Leviathan itself has been associated with the sea. Sea gods are patrons of sailors and travelers. Like the oceans they rule, they can turn murderous with little or no warning, so they are rarely loved.

Mandatory Traits: None.

Common Traits: Characters with this Aspect tend to find jobs that put them in constant contact with the ocean: sailors, oceanographers, divers.

Primal Powers: Awe, Bestial Powers (Sea Creatures), Primal Water, and Storm.

Sky

This is the primary Aspect of the male rulers of the Old Gods, the Sky Fathers. The Gods of the Sky are the weather-bringers, who allow rain to fall upon the earth, fertilizing it (the symbolic mating between the Sky Fathers and the Earth Mothers). They are also judges and tormentors of men, striking them down with lightning bolts, or unleashing storms and hurricanes upon those who offend them.

Mandatory Traits: None.

Common Traits: Most characters with this Aspect are leaders, or have leadership qualities. Lechery is also common among them.

Primal Powers: Awe, Destruction, Light, Might, Primal Air, Primal Water, Storm, and Vitality.

Strength

All Primals are stronger than mere mortals, but some focus much of their inner Essence toward the development of sheer power. Many deities associated with war or the Earth have this Aspect as well. Strength is valued by warriors, people who must work with their hands, and athletes.

Mandatory Traits: The character must spend a minimum of 3 Attribute Points on Strength, before any bonuses are taken into account.

Common Traits: Many characters with this Aspect tend to be Reckless. Common careers include professional athlete, construction worker, and soldier.

Primal Powers: Awe, Might, and Vitality.

Sun

The shining orb is the source of life in the world. It brings light and warmth; in its absence, all things wither and eventually die. As such, the sun was among the first things humans turned to worship, and among the first to have deities associated with it. The sun is associated with healing, life, and light. Many deities associated with it are the enemies of the darkness, and protectors of humankind. This Aspect also has a fearsome element. To stare at the sun directly courts blindness, making it a symbol of knowledge too powerful for most mortals to share. Many mythologies have tales of foolish mortals who got too close to the sun, or tried to steal or misuse the sun's powers, only to suffer horribly as a result. The Sun, after the Sky and the Earth, is the most common Aspect of pantheon leaders.

Mandatory Traits: None.

Common Traits: Many characters with this Aspect are healers of some kind.

Primal Powers: Awe, Primal Fire, Life, Light, and Magic.

Trickster

Loki, Coyote, Hermes: many cultures have a special fondness for the Trickster gods, the ones who achieve their goals using their wit and cunning rather than brute force. Using subtle magical abilities like shape shifting and invisibility (and in some cases actual Magic), these Tricksters often got the better of more powerful gods and other entities. Although they could be mischievous and even evil, they were still given a measure of affection. They were seen as the underdog, and mortals could identify with them easier.

Mandatory Traits: Characters must have either Clown or one level of Covetous (Greedy).

Common Traits: Many Tricksters are drifters, and rarely hold regular jobs. Many are criminals or entertainers.

Primal Powers: Fortune, Illusion, Magic, Nimbleness, Shape-shifting, and Thievery.

Vengeance

The flip side of Justice, Vengeance is the living embodiment of righteous rage, the punisher of evildoers, often exceeding the severity of the original crime. Gods of Vengeance are rarely loved, even by those who invoke them. They

cannot undo evil, just repay it with further violence and grief. Their names are typically only invoked in the midst of anger or misery. These entities are not uncommon, however, as anger and misery are common in the world.

Mandatory Traits: The character must have a Code of Honor worth at least two points.

Common Traits: Humorless is fairly common. Professions include District Attorney, police officer, and judge.

Primal Powers: Awe, Battle Rage, Judgment, and Torment.

War

Most people agree that war is a terrible thing. Many are nonetheless entranced by some of its trappings, by the camaraderie that only occurs when people face death together, or by the glory of a host arrayed for battle. The deities of War were rarely popular. In Greek culture, there were only a few temples dedicated to Ares, the warrior god. These deities are often cruel and erratic, much like the fortunes of war they embodied. Soldiers invoke them to gain more strength and skill in battle, or to demand the defeat of their enemies. Civilians preferred to avoid mentioning their names altogether.

Mandatory Traits: None.

Common Traits: Cruel, Reckless. Typical jobs include the military (national armed services or mercenary organizations), criminal (especially gang member), and professional martial artist or boxer.

Primal Powers: Awe, Battle Rage, Might, Nimbleness, and Weapon Mastery.

Wisdom

Some deities are considered founts of knowledge and good advice. They have a better understanding of things than most mortals or even other gods. Their wisdom includes both common sense and arcane knowledge. Their qualities are appreciated, even if, like most gods, sometimes they failed to use them for themselves.

Mandatory Traits: A minimum of three Attribute Points must be spent on Intelligence, before any bonuses are taken into account.

Common Traits: Code of Honor. Many characters affiliated with this Aspect work in some academic field.

Primal Powers: Awe, Discernment, Fortune, Judgment, Magic, and Psyche.

Primal Powers

The Primal Powers descriptions sometimes provide an introductory discussion, and always include a number of particular effects. The effects are separate powers which may be purchased for the character point cost indicated.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Primal Powers require a Willpower and Primal Skill Task (see p. 275). Modifiers and Success Levels are applied to that Task.

When a Primal character activates one of his powers, he "assumes the Aspect" of that power. This has no obvious effect, but people around the character may feel something different about him. Mundanes get a "weird feeling" about the character (assuming the character does not do something obvious with his powers, of course). Gifted and supernatural witnesses feel power being used, and on a Difficult Perception Test may sense what kind of Aspect is being invoked.

Essence Channeling and Primal Powers

Some Magic-based Primal Powers give characters the equivalent of Essence Channeling, typically at a level equal to the Willpower of the character. Characters can increase this base level by purchasing additional Essence Channeling levels. To figure out the cost, count the original free levels. For example, a character with Willpower 5 and a Primal Power that gave him an effective Essence Channeling level equal to his Willpower would buy additional Channeling levels at the cost of 5 points apiece. These extra levels (but not the "free" ones) also count towards the character's Essence recovery rate. In the example above, if the character purchased two extra Channeling levels (at the cost of 10 points), his total Essence Channeling rate (for Invocation purposes) would be seven, and he would regain Essence at an additional two points per minute.

Awe

Aura of Power

3-point Power

This ability unmasks the aura of the character, revealing him as a Primal Power. This rarely has any effect on Gifted and supernatural beings, but mundanes are often overwhelmed. People with no knowledge of the supernatural (a rare breed in the world of *Armageddon*) may write their feelings off as "animal magnetism" and the like.

Activating this power costs three Essence Points and it lasts for one minute per Success Level. Mundanes who see the character are struck by the force of his personality unless they pass a Difficult Willpower Test at a -2 penalty. If affected, they suffer a -2 penalty to resist any suggestion or order from the character. This affects social skills like Leadership, Seduction, or Smooth Talking. Opposing or attacking the character requires a Simple Willpower Test.

Gifted and supernatural characters are completely unaffected if they pass a Simple Willpower Test. Using this power automatically reveals the character's nature to those who can sense such things.

Dominion

8-point Power

This is the power to control the minds of mortals, and, for the most powerful Primals, of other supernatural beings as well. Each use of this power allows the character to issue a one-phrase command to one being. The Essence cost is equal to two points per Willpower for a mundane, or four points per Willpower level for Gifted and supernatural characters. The victim resists with a Simple Willpower Test; Gifted and Supernatural characters can replace the Test with any appropriate Task for that purpose. Like the Mindrule Power (see p. 231), this ability is more easily resisted when the orders are clearly something the victim does not wish to do. The Task or Test against such commands gains a bonus ranging from +3 to +7.

Emotion

Variable Power

The character can inspire emotions in those around him. Typical emotions include courage, fear, lust, and rage. Although the feelings are always the same, a victim's reactions may vary. Scared people may run away, or may start shooting wildly, for example.

Activating this power costs five Essence Points. The effect lasts for one Turn per Success Level in the Task. The base range of this power is one yard (meter) per Willpower Level. Mundane characters feel the emotion in question unless they pass a Difficult Willpower Test at a -2 penalty. Gifted and Supernatural characters resist with a Simple Willpower Test.

This Power costs five character points per emotion affected. Typically, only one emotion is picked, the one linked most closely with the character's Aspect (e.g., fear for Death, lust for Fertility). For additional range, one character point increases the range by five yards (meters).

Bestial Powers

These powers have three broad categories: one animal species, one basic type of animal (all birds of prey, all felines, and so on), and all animals. The cost is determined by which category applies to the powers.

Animal Control

3-, 5- or 10-point Power

The character can control animals and give them simple commands (more complex orders are possible if Animal Speech is also in effect). The power costs two Essence Points per animal, or per group of up to 10 small animals (like birds or rats), or as many as 100 tiny animals (such as insects or spiders) affected. Once activated, the power lasts 1 minute per Success Level, or until the command has been obeyed, whichever comes first. Dangerous commands—attacking people—have a penalty of -3 to the Willpower and Primal Skill Task. Suicidal commands have a -5 penalty.

Animal Shape

2-, 4- or 8-point Power

The character can assume an animal shape. He gains the abilities of the animal in question (birds can fly, for example). Attributes remain the same, but small creatures (bird or rats) take double damage from attacks, and tiny animals (mice or insects) take quadruple damage. The character cannot speak or use other powers while in animal shape, unless he spends an additional two points on the power (4-, 6-, or 10-points, respectively). Activating the power takes one Turn and costs 10 Essence Points (this Essence cannot be regained until the character reverts back to normal).

Animal Speech

1-, 2- or 5-point Power

This power allows the character to speak with animals of the given species. The animals are able to verbalize their emotions and feelings, but they otherwise behave normally. Activating the power costs two Essence Points and lasts for one minute per Success Level.

Battle Rage

Berserk

5-point Power

The character may call upon the wrath of the berserker, and become the ultimate killing machine. He can endure mortal wounds without being slowed down, and deliver destruction by all means possible.

Using this power costs 25 Essence Points and lasts for one minute per Success Level in the Task. The character's Strength and Constitution are increased by three each (this increase can exceed the character's normal racial limits), his Life Points are doubled, and his healing or regeneration rate triples. The character must attack or rush to attack somebody, anybody, every Turn. The character also does not suffer the effects of wounds, and can continue fighting even if reduced below zero points—until he fails a Survival Test, at which point he simply dies.

Actions not directly linked to combat are disallowed. A character in this state might attack enemies threatening an ally, but he could not pause afterwards to apply first aid to that ally. Even worse, if no enemies are left standing, the character needs to succeed at a new Willpower and Primal Skill Task, with a -3 penalty, or he continues to attack anybody still alive, be they friends or innocent bystanders. If he manages to shut down the Berserk Rage or the duration of the power elapses, his Essence and Life Pools are both reduced to zero (or less if the character's injuries reduced him below zero Life Points), and he falls into a coma-like state, unable to move or perform any actions for at least an hour.

Berserk Leader

5-point Power

Prerequisite: Berserk or Cold Fury

The Primal can infect others with his battle rage. Berserk leaders have drawn dozens or even hundreds into unstoppable charges. The people affected attack to the best of their skills, and do not suffer any stun effects from wounds.

Activating the power costs one Essence Point per target; anyone within line of sight who is on the same side can be affected. In general, mundanes with a lower Willpower than the Berserk leader are swept away by his power. Heroic Mundanes, Gifted and Supernatural characters can resist with a Simple Willpower Test. If they pass, they do not surrender to the berserk madness—although they can if they so wish. This power is activated at the same time as either Berserk or Cold Fury, with both the character and those around him going into a rage.

Cold Fury

10-point Power

This ability allows the character to gain the benefits of the Berserk power, but without the penalties. The power works as above, but the Essence cost is raised to 30 points.

Darkness

Dark Aura

4-point Power

This power dims or negates lights around the character. It may completely darken an area, making normal vision impossible. This power lasts for one Turn per Success Level in the Task. The Essence cost varies with the area affected and the amount of light negated. The radius of effect is one yard (meter) per Essence Point spent. Turning a starry night into total darkness costs two Essence; candle- or torch-light can be dimmed for four. A well-lit room, or a cloudy afternoon, can be darkened for eight Essence, and darkening daylight costs 12.

Dark Vision

1-point Power

The character can see in complete darkness, and is never affected by any lighting penalties.

Tendrils of Darkness

5-point Power

The character can create limbs of solid darkness to strike or grapple objects. The tendrils have a Strength equal to the amount of Essence put into them (maximum of three times the Primal Skill level of the character). They can reach out up to three yards (meters) per Willpower level. If used to strike, they inflict D4(2) x Tendril Strength points of damage; attacks are resolved using Dexterity and the Primal Skill.

Destruction

Bolt of Destruction

10-point Power

This attack has effective ranges of 20/100/450/1500/2000. The power uses a Dexterity and Primal or Magic Bolt Task (whichever is higher). The attack inflicts Life Point damage on corporeal beings, and Essence Damage on spirits or disembodied entities. The blast of energy inflicts D10(5) points of damage per point of Essence spent.

This attack can be made more destructive by increasing the base Multiplier (before extra Essence is spent). Each additional Multiplier level costs 5 character points. So, a Bolt of Destruction that inflicted D10(5) x (5 + Essence Spent) would cost 30 character points (the initial 10 points plus an extra 20 points for +4 Multiplier levels). A minimum of one Essence Point must still be spent.

Decay

6-point Power

This power causes inanimate matter to break down. It inflicts D10(5) points of damage per Essence Point spent to an object. The range of this attack is 20 yards (meters) times the Perception and Willpower of the character. The damage manifests itself as accelerated wear and tear, crumbling or rusting. A machine or engine that loses one quarter of its Damage Capacity from this attack ceases to function, as enough critical components have been damaged or destroyed to prevent it from working properly. If enough damage is inflicted to destroy the object, it crumbles into dust. The power has no effect on living beings.

Discernment

Combat Wisdom

5-point Power

By observing an enemy with a critical eye, the Primal can discover weaknesses in his defenses that may be exploited. This ability works best in hand-to-hand combat. After two Turns of combat, the character can try to gauge the enemy's strengths and shortcomings. This costs 10 Essence Points and uses a Perception and Primal Skill Task. Each Success Level gives the character a +2 to all attack and defense Tasks against that particular enemy, for the duration of the fight.

Sagacity
Variable Power
Prerequisite: any other Discernment Power

The character's Perception is raised to inhuman levels. This is reflected as a bonus to Perception, which is used only when the Aspect of Discernment is assumed. Assuming the Aspect costs five Essence Point per minute (which cannot be regained until the Aspect is dropped). This power costs double the bonus value (i.e., +1 to Perception costs two character points, +2 costs four points, and so on).

Sense Truth
3-point Power

This power costs five Essence Points to activate and lasts one minute per Success Level in the Task. When triggered, it grants a +5 bonus to any Task made to detect falsehood or see through someone's story. Interrogation and Notice Tasks benefit from this power.

Soul Sight
6-point Power

Characters with this power can read the minds of others. This powers shares a number of characteristics with Mindsight (see p. 231), but is not identical. To use Soul Sight, the character must make eye contact, and spend two Essence Points per level of Willpower of the subject (i.e., trying to see the thoughts of a character with a Willpower 4 would cost eight points). A Perception and Primal Skill Task is attempted; use the Mindsight Art Table (see p. 232) to determine how much information the character can glean in an attempt. Prolonged mind reading is possible, but the Essence cost must be paid, and the Task attempted, every Turn. The Success Levels of those Tasks can be combined to provide for deeper examination of the subject. If one Task is failed, however, the Success Levels from all previous Tasks are lost and the character has to start over. This power is resisted just like Mindsight.

Wise Choice
2-point Power

Sometimes, when someone is about to make a mistake, an inner voice warns them just in time. It may take a while to figure out what the character's instincts are saying, but once he does he rarely faults his own judgment. The Chronicler takes on the role of the character's instincts, warning him of a possible error or dangerous choice. The player then needs to figure out what the problem is, although the Chronicler might add a few hints (extra experience should be awarded to players who can figure things out with no help). The warning drains the character of 1 Essence Point, but no Task is necessary.

Dreamer

Dream Kill
8-point Power
Prerequisite: Dream Twister or Enter Dream Realms

The character can cause a victim to suffer any effects that happen to him in the dream. This does not necessarily mean death, although that is the most feared aspect of this power. People can be injured, sexually assaulted, or otherwise affected in the dream, and awaken with the physical trauma of those experiences. Using this power costs 20 Essence Points. The target must be sleeping, must be well known to the attacker, and must be within 1 mile (1.5 kilometers) per Willpower level of the character. To succeed, the character must win a Resisted Test, as per the Dream Twister rules (see below). If the character wins, he can inflict up to D10(5) x Willpower points of damage on the victim, or, if he used Enter Dream Realms to invade the dream physically, can do normal damage to the target. In the latter case, the victim can use any skills or powers he normally has to defend himself. The victim can also try to awaken; this requires a Difficult Willpower Test at a -2 penalty.

Dream Twister
3-point Power
Prerequisite: Enter Dream or Enter Dream Realms

A character with this power can manipulate a dream to suit his purposes. The dream cannot hurt the victim, although if it is fearsome enough, it can terrify the victim (see Fear Tests, p. 125). The dream should be described to the Chronicler. The Success Level of the Willpower and Primal Skill Task determines how effective the dream manipulation was, and the effect on the person. A Good or better Success Level results in a dream just as desired. The victim can resist, however. Mundanes use a Difficult Willpower Test; Gifted and Supernaturals use a Simple Willpower Test, or any powers that resist mental intrusions or

manipulations. Furthermore, the resistance Tests subtract their Success Levels from the Willpower and Primal Skill Task's Success Levels, diminishing the character's influence in the dream. This power costs 10 Essence Points to activate, and lasts one minute per Success Level in the Task (modified as above).

Enter Dream
2-point Power

This power allows the character to project his mind into a person's dream. The subject must be known to the character, and must be on the same plane of existence. The character has no power over the dream, but he can talk to the dreamer, and his words are always be remembered after the subject awakens. Activating the power costs two Essence Points, and lasts for one minute per Success Level.

Enter Dream Realms
8-point Power

Characters with this power can enter the Dream Realms in the Sephiroth of Hod. The Dream Realms are chaotic, ever-shifting places. Staying there for long is dangerous, as the character's own fears and lusts may come to life and assail him. Few deities venture into the Dream Realms, for there even gods can be killed by the lowliest mortal's imagination. This power can also be used to enter into a person's dream physically. While in the dream, the character can use all of his powers normally, but risks being destroyed by the dreamers' imaginings. This power costs 20 Essence to activate, and lasts one hour per Success Level, but the character can only enter into a person's dream for one minute per Success Level.

Earth's Bounty

Nurture Growth
3-point Power

The deity can accelerate the growth of any plant, even in places where a plant should be unable to survive, let alone thrive. A seed can be turned into a full-fledged plant in a matter of seconds (one Turn). This Aspect Task requires an expenditure of Essence based on the size of the plant in question. A dozen blades of grass or a small flower costs one Essence, a foot-tall plant costs two Essence, a shrub or small tree costs four Essence, a medium-sized tree costs eight Essence, and a large tree costs 15 Essence. Giant trees like sequoias or baobabs cost 30 Essence Points to force-grow. Growing trees can tear through concrete and cement.

Strength of the Earth
4-point Power

While standing on earth or dirt (but not concrete or any man-made structure where plants do not grow), this power calls upon the power of life within the Earth for strength and vitality. Activation costs five Essence Points and lasts one minute per Success Level. During this time, the character gains +4 to Strength and +20 Life Points. Furthermore, as long as his feet are in direct contact with the earth, the character regenerates damage at twice the normal rate.

Tree Shape
10-point Power
Prerequisite: Nature Growth

This power allows the character to become a living plant entity, with enhanced strength, resistance to damage, and healing abilities. Activating this power costs 15 Essence Points and lasts one minute per Success Level. While the power is active, the character grows to twice his normal size, and his body is covered with bark, small branches, and leaves. Any clothing, armor, or equipment on the character is absorbed and seems to disappear. While in this form, the character has +6 to Strength, +100 Life Points, and an Armor Value equal to Constitution x 5. The transformed character takes double damage from fire or heat, however, and if he suffers more than 20 points of flame damage (after subtracting armor) he catches on fire and take D8 x 2(8) points of fire damage every Turn.

Fortune

Curse
6-point Power

This powers works like the Lesser Curse Invocation (see p. 219), but it uses the Primal Skill and has an effective Essence Channeling level equal to the Willpower of the character.

Providence
6-point Power

This power is identical to the Providence ability of the Seraphim (see p. 255).

Stroke of Luck
6-point Power

This powers works like the Blessing Invocation (see p. 210), but it uses the Primal Skill and has an effective Essence Channeling level equal to the Willpower of the character.

Visions
6-point Power

The character can get a glimpse of the most likely future. The character must formulate a question in his mind, concentrate, and spend 10 Essence Points. The character goes into a trance, and sees a series of images related to the question. The more successful the Task, the clearer the vision. On a Very Good or better result, the character's vision is crystal clear. On anything else, the vision may be more ambiguous and open to interpretation. Also, the future in the vision represents only the most likely possibility. It can be changed, but sometimes it takes place in unexpected (and unpleasant ways), especially if the character is careless about the way to prevent or alter the outcome of the vision.

Illusion

Full Illusion
3-point Power

Prerequisite: Minor Illusion

This power creates an illusion to fool all the senses. It is not solid, however, and anything that inflicts over one point of damage shatters it. Simple things (inanimate objects) require only one Success Level in a Willpower and Primal Skill Task. Moving illusions require two Success Levels, and lifelike illusions (animals or people) require at least four Success Levels to be believable. People resist with Simple Perception Tests or Perception and Notice Tasks, with any sensory bonuses or penalties involved. The illusions cost five Essence Points per cubic yard (meter) of size and last for one minute.

Minor Illusion
3-point Power

This ability is like Full Illusion, but can only manipulate any two senses. The Essence cost is one per cubic yard (meter) of the illusion and lasts for one minute.

Temporary Reality
15-point Power

Prerequisite: Minor Illusion and Full Illusion

This illusion is real enough to endure damage—or inflict it. An illusory car can be driven (if the Success Level was good enough), and used to run over people (although the damage inflicted may not be as devastating as the real thing). These temporary creations have Damage Points equal to 20 per cubic yard (meter) in size, or the Damage Capacity of the real thing, whichever is lower. Damage inflicted is equal to D10(5) x Willpower. Essence can be spent to raise the Multiplier, at the rate of 1 point per +1 to the Multiplier. The illusions cost 15 Essence per cubic yard (meter) in size, and last for 1 minute.

Judgment

Decision
5-point Power

This power renders a fair judgment, based on the facts as the character knows them, and his own moral code. The player should be the first to suggest the decision, and the Chronicler should modify it as he sees fit. When the character renders judgment, the parties involved feel that it is right. Anybody who is unhappy with the decision must pass a Difficult Willpower Test to refuse accepting it; otherwise, the judgment is accepted without question. Activating this power costs five Essence Points.

Discover the Guilty
3-point Power

The character can use this power to discover the guilty party of a specific crime. The culprit must be in the presence of the character. This Task costs five Essence Points to activate, and uses Perception and the Primal Skill. The guilty, if mundane, resists with a Simple Willpower Test. Supernatural and Gifted characters have a +3 bonus to the Test, or can use any power that resists invasion of their minds, also with a +3 bonus. If successful, the character sees the guilty party or parties surrounded by a black aura, visible only to him.

Unbending Will
Variable Power

Prerequisite: Any other Judgment Power

Characters with this power gain a bonus to Willpower when the Aspect of Judgment is assumed. Assuming the Aspect costs five Essence Point per minute (which cannot be regained until the Aspect is dropped). This power costs double the bonus value (i.e., +1 to Willpower costs two points, +2 costs four points, and so on).

Life

Conception
2-point Power

This power costs five Essence Points. Every Success Level in the Task increases or decreases the chance of conception over the next month by 25% (four or more Success Levels makes conception inevitable or impossible). The target must still have relations to conceive, however.

Resurrection
15-point Power

Prerequisite: Touch of Life

The character can bring the recently dead. All the damage suffered by the character must be healed by other means first. The subject then must pass a Survival Test, with a -1 penalty for every six hours (or -4 per day) since his demise. The Resurrection power costs 20 Essence Points.

Touch of Life
5-point Power

This power heals one Life Point times the Task's Success Levels for every Essence Point spent. It can also cure disease: five Essence points for Mild diseases, 10 points for Moderate ones, 20 points for Serious, and 100 points and a permanent sacrifice of 2 Essence Points for Terminal diseases.

Light

Blinding Light
3-point Power

Prerequisite: Radiance

The character can create a globe of light intense enough to temporarily blind people or even cause some eye damage. This power costs five Essence to summon, and lasts for one Turn. People staring at the light must pass a Simple Constitution Test or be blinded for two Turns. If the light was summoned at night, the Test suffers a -4 penalty.

Call Upon the Sun
3-point Power
Prerequisite: Radiance

True sunlight can be created under any conditions. Plants are able to use photosynthesis under that light, and creatures that take damage from sunlight (like some Undead beings) suffer those effects. The light appears to come from a globe above the character. This power costs three Essence Points and lasts one Turn per Success Level. If 20 Essence Points are spent, the duration is one hour per Success level.

Light Bolt
12-point Power

This power fires a bolt of pure sunlight, with the intensity of a laser beam. Damage is D6(3) times the Essence spent, and range is 10/50/150/600/1000. The light bolt is armor piercing—divide any Armor Value or Barrier Value protecting the target by two—and does double damage after penetration. Use Willpower and Primal or Magic Bolt Skill to hit the target.

Radiance
1-point Power

This ability increases the light level around the character. Essence cost range from one (weak candlelight) to 10 (dazzling brilliance).

Love

Beauty
Variable Power

This ability increases the Attractiveness and Charisma of the character. Levels above +5 are unearthly beautiful, and viewers are emotionally affected by the character even if he is doing nothing in particular. The character point cost of this power is equal to the levels of Charisma and Attractiveness is grants.

Lust
2-point Power

This power can inflame a person's lust for another. It costs five Essence Points, and lasts for one hour per Success Level. The victims can resist with a Simple Willpower Test (Gifted and Supernatural characters gain a +3 bonus). If the character is successful, the victim feels a strong attraction towards the other person; his reactions vary depending on his personality. A shy person may just hover constantly around the object of his affection, while a violent criminal might try to satisfy his urges immediately, by force if necessary. If the character uses the power successfully on both sides of the relationship, the consummation of the affair is almost inevitable. People with good reasons to resist (such as being in love with another, or having a different sexual preference) may avoid acting on their impulses by passing a Difficult Willpower Test with a +1 to +4 bonus, at the Chronicler's discretion.

Passion
4-point Power

This effect makes a person feel love (or at least a strong infatuation) for another. The affected person will try to make their "love" happy; how well they succeed depends on their personality, intelligence, and resourcefulness. Duration and resistance are the same as per Lust. The Essence Point cost is 15.

Touch of Beauty
2-point Power

The character can temporarily increase a person's Attractiveness and Charisma. The effect is illusory, and lasts one hour per Success Level in the Task. The Essence cost is twice the level of the temporary bonus to Attractiveness or Charisma (choose one, or divide the bonus among the two).

Magic

Arcane Knowledge
Variable Power

The character can learn magic normally. He has an Essence Channeling level equivalent to his Willpower. Invocations are purchased normally, and are acquired through mystical revelation, not learned from a teacher. The cost of this power is six points, plus the cost of the Invocations.

Dissolve Magic
5-point Power

With knowledge comes understanding and ultimately power. The character can undo works of magic by unweaving the Essence patterns others have created. He can neutralize any ongoing magical effect, or prevent an Invocation from being cast, simply by spending more Essence than the amount used to empower the Invocation.

Might

Bounding Leap
3-point Power

The character can leap great distances. This power costs five Essence Points per use. It allows a high jump of one yard (meter) times the character's Strength plus any Success Level in a Dexterity and Acrobatics Task (or a Simple Dexterity Test, whichever is higher). Also, the character can broad jump five yards (meters) times his Strength plus any Success Level in a Dexterity and Acrobatics Task (or a Simple Dexterity Test, whichever is higher).

Enhanced Strength
Variable Power

Characters with this power can increase their Strength to amazing levels. This enhanced strength only appears when the character assumes his Aspect; this costs five Essence Points per minute (which cannot be regained until the Aspect is dropped). The power costs one point per +1 bonus to Strength. The maximum bonus is equal to the character's normal Strength x 2 (i.e., a character with a base Strength of 5 can gain a maximum bonus of +10, for a total Strength of 15 when he assumes the Aspect). This Strength bonus affects the character's Life and Endurance Points, but not his Essence Pool.

Iron Muscles
Variable Power

The character's flesh and skin are unnaturally hard. Characters with this power have an innate Armor Value, cumulative with any body armor worn by the character. For example, a character with Iron Muscles that provides an Armor Value 5, wearing a vest of Class I armor (Armor Value D6(3) + 7) has a total AV of D6(3) + 12. This power costs one point per Armor Value level. The maximum Armor Value allowed is equal to (Strength and Constitution) times two.

Nimbleness

Combat Speed
5-, 10-, 20-, or 35-point Power

The character can take additional physical actions in a Turn without suffering penalties. This costs five points for one extra attack, 10 points for two, 20 points for three, and 35 points for four extra actions (five actions per Turn total). No further actions per turn are available.

Enhanced Dexterity
Variable Power

The character's Dexterity is increased to inhuman levels. This bonus only appears when the character assumes his Aspect, which costs 5 Essence Points per minute (those points cannot be regained until the Aspect is dropped). The character point cost is double the bonus value (i.e., +1 to Dexterity costs two points, +2 costs four points, and so on).

Fleetness of Foot
Variable Power

This power increases the character's ground speed. Every +20 bonus to Speed grants a +1 bonus to Dodge Tasks. Like Enhanced Dexterity, this power requires the character to assume his Aspect, at the cost of five Essence Points per minute (which cannot be regained until the Aspect is dropped). The cost is one character point per +5 bonus to the Speed Attribute.

Primal Earth

Earth Incarnate
12-point Power

The character can temporarily transform himself into an elemental-like being. This power costs 20 Essence Points and lasts for one minute per Success Level in the Task. The character becomes a humanoid figure of earth, weighing 100 pounds for every level of Strength (including bonuses). While in this form, the character gains Strength +4 (this Strength bonus does not affect Secondary Attributes, however), an Armor Value equal to Constitution times two, and a flat bonus of 50 Life Points.

Earth Magic
10-point Power

Allows the casting of the Elemental Earth spell, with an effective Invocation level equal to the character's Primal Skill level, and an Essence Channeling level equal to the character's Willpower plus three.

Summon Elemental
6-point Power

This ability can call forth a being from the elemental planes. The Earth Elemental remains on the summoned plane of existence for one minute per Success Level, or until destroyed or dismissed. The creature obeys the character's

commands, unless clearly suicidal, in which case the elemental vanishes or even turns on the summoner. The Essence cost of the power varies with the raw power of the elemental: one half of the sum of the elemental's Primary Attributes, and one-fifth of its Energy Essence Pool. So, an Earth Elemental with 24 points in Attributes and an Energy Essence Pool of 50 costs 22 Essence Points to summon (half of 24, and 1/5 of 50).

Travel Through Earth

5-point Power

The character can move through earth like a fish swimming through water. Even stone and metal can be traversed, although at great cost. Using this power requires a Willpower and Primal Skill Task every Turn. Movement is relatively slow—divide the character's Speed by five (rounded down). This is the number of yards (meters) traveled per Turn. Most walls are thin enough to traverse in one Turn. Moving through earth and soil costs 10 Essence Points per Turn; stone or concrete costs 20 Essence Points per Turn; metal costs 40 Essence Points per Turn. The character does not physically tunnel through the material. When he emerges, no holes or damage appear. If the character fails the Task while traveling through a solid, he becomes trapped in the material, and loses an additional D10 x 2(10) Essence Points. He can attempt to resume moving through earth, but Tasks incur a -2 penalty.

Primal Fire

Fire Magic

10-point Power

Allows the casting of the Elemental Fire spell, with an effective Invocation level equal to the character's Primal Skill level, and an Essence Channeling level equal to the character's Willpower plus three.

Flame Incarnate

14-point Power

By calling the essential power of Fire upon itself, the character becomes a being of pure fire. This costs 20 Essence Points and lasts for one minute per Success Level in the Task. The character turns into a human-sized figure wreathed in flames. These flames inflict D4 x 6(12) points of damage to anything or anybody within three yards (meters). They also ignite flammable material. While in the fire shape, the character suffers no damage from regular fire, including flame-throwers and other incendiaries. Furthermore, he can fire flame bolts, inflicting D6(3) points for every Essence Point spent.

Flame Projection

8-point Power

A bolt of fire can be fired, inflicting D8 x Essence spent, with ranges of 10/50/150/600/1000. Willpower and Primal or Magic Bolt Skill are used to hit.

Flame Resistance

2-, 5- or 10-point Power

This power reduces damage from fire and energy attacks (like lasers, flame-throwers, and the like). Direct Essence attacks, like Soulfire, Celestial Fire, and Bolt of Destruction are only reduced by half, despite the level of protection acquired. The cost of this ability varies depending on the protection afforded: two character points for half damage, five points for one-fifth damage, and 10 points for one-tenth damage.

Summon Elemental

6-point Power

This ability can call forth a being from the elemental planes. The Fire Elemental remains on the summoned plane of existence for one minute per Success Level, or until destroyed or dismissed. The creature obeys the character's commands, unless clearly suicidal, in which case the elemental vanishes or even turns on the summoner. The Essence cost of the power varies with the raw power of the elemental: one half the sum of the elemental's Primary Attributes, and one-fifth of its Energy Essence Pool. So, a Fire Elemental with 24 points in Attributes and an Energy Essence Pool of 50 costs 22 Essence Points to summon (half of 24, and 1/5 of 50).

Primal Wind

Air Magic

10-point Power

Allows the casting of the Elemental Fire spell, with an effective Invocation level equal to the character's Primal Skill level, and an Essence Channeling level equal to the character's Willpower plus three.

Summon Elemental
6-point Power

This ability calls forth a being from the elemental planes. The Air Elemental remains on the summoned plane of existence for one minute per Success Level, or until destroyed or dismissed. The creature obeys the character's commands, unless clearly suicidal, in which case the elemental vanishes or even turns on the summoner. The Essence cost of the power varies with the raw power of the elemental: one half of the sum of the elemental's Primary Attributes, and one-fifth of its Energy Essence Pool. So, an Air Elemental with 24 points in Attributes and an Energy Essence Pool of 50 costs 22 Essence Points to summon (half of 24, and 1/5 of 50).

Wind Incarnate
12-point Power

The character invokes the elemental powers and becomes a humanoid whirlwind. This power costs 15 Essence Points to activate, and lasts for one minute per Success Level. While in this form, the character can fly as per the Wings of Air power (or, if the character has that power, add 20 mph/30 kmh to his flying Speed), and takes half damage from all physical attacks. As a living whirlwind, the character can smash or hurl objects, inflicting D10 x (Strength + 3) points of damage on any target he strikes. This attack uses Dexterity and Primal Skill, and can only be Dodged. While flying, the character is also very hard to see—Perception Tasks or Tests suffer a -3 penalty to spot him. Infrared devices do not sense the character; his heat signature is identical to the surrounding air. Radar may pick him up, but at a -3 penalty to Tasks rolls.

Wings of Air
5-point Power

The character can use the winds to fly through the air. This power costs 5 Essence Points per minute, and this Essence cannot be regained until the character ceases flying. The maximum Speed while flying equals the character's Willpower times 20 miles per hour (30 kilometers per hour).

Primal Water

Water Magic
10-point Power

Allows the casting of the Elemental Water spell (see p. 215), with an effective Invocation level equal to the character's Primal Skill level, and an Essence Channeling level equal to the character's Willpower plus three.

Summon Elemental
6-point Power

This ability can call forth a being from the elemental planes. The Water Elemental remains on the summoned plane of existence for one minute per Success Level, or until destroyed or dismissed. The creature obeys the character's commands, unless clearly suicidal, in which case the elemental vanishes or even turns on the summoner. The Essence cost of the power varies with the raw power of the elemental: one half of the sum of the elemental's Primary Attributes, and one-fifth of its Energy Essence Pool. So, a Water Elemental with 24 points in Attributes and an Energy Essence Pool of 50 costs 22 Essence Points to summon (half of 24, and 1/5 of 50).

Swimmer
4-point Power

The character can breathe underwater and swim, using his ground Speed. This power costs three Essence Points per minute, which cannot be regained until the character deactivates the power.

Water Incarnate
8-point Power

The character can transform himself into an elemental being of water. While in this shape, physical attacks causes half damage, and the character can swim as per the Swimmer power, at no additional cost. The character can hurl high-pressure streams of water towards targets, inflicting D4 x (Strength +1) points of damage, with an effective range of 3/10/20/60/120. If submerged, the character is virtually invisible (attempts to spot him visually have a -6 penalty as long as the character is not swimming or moving, and a -3 penalty when doing so).

Psyche

Gift of Tongues
4-point Power

This power allows the character to understand every language ever spoken on Earth, from English to High Atlantean. This knowledge comes unbidden whenever somebody uses a particular language in the character's presence. This power provides an effective skill of five in any and all languages spoken. It costs five Essence Points to activate, and lasts for one minute per Success Level in the Task.

Enhanced Intelligence
Variable Power

Prerequisite: any other Psyche Power

The character can focus his mind and perform tasks with genius-level intelligence. This enhanced Intelligence only manifests when the character assumes his Aspect: this costs five Essence Points per minute (which cannot be regained until the Aspect is dropped). The character point cost of this power is double the bonus value provided (i.e., +1 to Intelligence costs two points, +2 costs four points, etc.).

Prodigy
2-point Power

The character can temporarily learn skills, just by observing them. This ability costs 5 Essence Points, and the effect lasts for 1 hour per Success Level. The character must observe the performance of the Skill for at least one hour. Temporary skills have a level equal to the character's Intelligence Attribute, or the skill level being observed, whichever is lower.

Send Thoughts
5-point Power

This is the power of thought projection. The character can speak (and listen) to other people telepathically, in a manner similar to Mindtalk. The target must be in line of sight. 5 Essence Points per minute must be spent to initiate and maintain a conversation.

Shape-Shifting

Animal Shape
2-, 4- or 8-point Power

This is identical to the Beast Power of the same name (see p. 218).

True Mimicry
12-point Power

The character assumes the shape of any person or creature he sees. The transformation is total; size and weight are affected. Assuming the form of a subject costs 10 Essence Points and lasts one minute per Success Level in the Task. The character is limited to how many shapes he knows well enough to use instantly, however. The character can imitate any living shape after a few hours of concentration, or quickly shift into any memorized shape he knows. The number of shapes that can be memorized is equal to half of the character's Intelligence, rounded down.

Natural abilities (claws, flight, etc.) also carry over to the transformed character, but supernatural powers (the Seraphim flying powers, for example) do not. The character's attributes remain the same regardless of the size of the new shape, but small forms (like birds or rats) take double damage from physical attacks, and tiny forms (like insects) take quadruple damage from physical attacks. Imitating a human being results in a perfect facsimile in body shape and voice. Imitating the person's mannerisms and character requires study and practice, and the Acting Skill.

Smith

Smith Powers have two separate costs. The basic cost provides the power to make an item. A second, lower cost is listed in the text if the character merely wants to own one such weapon. Characters who are not Smiths may, at the Chronicler's discretion, be allowed to start the game with such items if their background allows it. Having those items incurs base cost below plus an additional five character points.

Weapon of Power
8-point Power

The character can create a weapon, charged so that it strikes harder, or attuned so that it can strike more precisely. Weapons of Power have bonuses that apply to either Combat Tasks (attacking, parrying and so on) or the Damage Multiplier of the weapon. Combat Task bonuses cannot exceed the character's Craft (Weaponsmith) Skill or +5, whichever is greater. Damage bonuses cannot exceed the character's Craft (Weaponsmith) Skill doubled.

Creating the weapon takes a week, plus an additional week per bonus (combat Task or damage) of the weapon, minus the character's Craft (Weaponsmith) Skill in days. So, a character with a Craft (Weaponsmith) Skill 5 could make a sword with +1 to Combat Tasks and +1 to the Damage Multiplier bonuses in 16 days (three weeks, minus his Skill in days). A Willpower and Primal Skill Task is required as well as the Craft Task.

When creating the weapon, the character invests a number of Essence Points equal to the bonuses of the weapon. These Essence Points are part of the weapon, and can only be regained if the weapon is destroyed by the Smith who created it. Weapons of Power are indestructible for all practical purposes. Only the most powerful entities, or the actual creator of the item can unmake them.

Owning a Weapon of Power costs two character points per +1 to combat Tasks, and one point per +1 to the Multiplier.

Armor of Power

6-point Power

This ability may be used to create a suit of armor harder than normal. For every five extra points of Armor Value gained, one level is added to the armor's Multiplier, if any. For example, a suit of chain mail (normal Armor Value of D6 + 6(9)) infused with five levels of Armor of Power has a total AV of (D6 x 2) + 11(17).

Creating the armor takes one week, plus an additional week per extra Armor Value point, minus the character's Craft (Armorer) Skill in days (the armor above would take a total of 30 days for a skill five Smith—five weeks, minus five days). Furthermore, one point of Essence per Armor Value point is permanently invested in the armor, and cannot be recovered unless the Smith who created it destroys it.

Only metal suits of armor can be enchanted in this manner; modern suits of Kevlar and composites cannot. On the other hand, archaic suits of armor empowered in this way eliminates the doubling that normal bullets gain after they penetrate armor (see p. 152; armor-piercing bullets work normally).

To own a suit of Armor of Power, the cost is one character point per Armor Value bonus.

Enchanted Item

Variable Power

This powerful ability allows the Smith to create a metal item (weapon, armor, tool or jewelry) with almost any Primal Power conceivable (and by extension, Magical Invocations and Necromantic Powers). The only exceptions are Armor Value bonuses (use the Armor of Power ability instead).

Creating an Enchanted Item takes a great deal of time. Add the character point cost of the Primal Power (or powers) being imbued in the item, and divide by two; this is the base number of weeks it takes to build the item. Then subtract the character's appropriate Craft Skill, in days. An amount of Essence equal to the character point cost of the powers is also imbued in it. This Essence cannot be recovered unless the Smith who made the item destroys it.

Any Primal Powers imbued are fueled by the Essence of its wearer, unless the item has its own Essence Pool (use the Extra Essence Quality, which is acquired as an additional power).

The point cost of this ability is determined by the maximum power of the items the character can create. For example, if the character can imbue an item with up to 10 character points' worth of powers, this costs 10 character points. Owning an Enchanted Item has the same cost as the value of the Primal Powers in the item, minus three points (to a minimum of one).

Storm

Lightning Bolt

8-point Power

The power allows the character to throw bolts of lightning that inflict D8(4) points of electrical damage for every Essence Point spent. Range is 10/50/150/600/1000. A Willpower and Primal or Magic Bolt Task is necessary to hit.

Lightning Storm

15-point Power

The character can stir an electric storm in the skies. This is particularly deadly against aircraft or flying creatures, who find themselves caught in a maze of lightning bolts jumping from cloud to cloud. Assembling the necessary clouds takes from one minute to one hour, depending on current weather conditions (i.e., one minute in the middle of a rainstorm, one hour on a cloudless day). The power costs 20 Essence Points and the lightning storm lasts for 1 minute

per Success Level in the Task. The area affected has a maximum radius of one mile per level of Willpower. Any flyers in the area have a 1 in 10 chance every Turn of being struck by a bolt of lightning. The damage inflicted is D10 x 10(50) to living beings, and D10 x 20(100) to aircraft.

Thunderbolt

15-point Power

This power calls down a lightning strike against your enemies. Each thunderbolt costs 12 Essence Points to summon, and may strikes any target within line of sight. The damage inflicted is D10(5) times (Willpower x 2); additional Essence can be spent, increasing the Multiplier by one level per Essence Point spent. Unless the target is running around or zigzagging, the bolt strikes automatically. If the target is moving around (and he knows he is being attacked), he can attempt to Dodge with a -3 penalty.

Thunderclap

6-point Power

The character can unleash a deafening blast of thunder over an area, staggering anybody within it. Each use of this power costs 5 Essence Points. The power can be used anywhere in line of sight, and the blast affects an area as small as one square yard (meter) or as large as 2 square yards (meters) per level of Willpower. The shockwave knocks down anybody with a Strength of 2 or less and inflicts D6(3) points of damage on every living being in the area (as well as shattering most glass objects). Normal body armor does not protect, and natural Armor Value is halved against this attack. Further, targets must pass a Difficult Constitution Test to avoid being stunned for one Turn. After the first strike, the blast of thunder still knocks people down and injures them, but no longer stuns them—the initial blast has temporarily deafened them. Also, if used in the middle of a modern battle, especially during or after an artillery barrage, the stun effect does not work—the noise of the explosions have already deafened the targets.

Weather Lordship

12-point Power

This power is equivalent to the Greater Invocation of the same name (see p. 224), using the character's Primal Skill level, and an Essence Channeling level equal to the character's Willpower plus three.

Thanathos

Death Gaze

10-point Power

This is the power to kill with a glance. Death Gaze requires eye contact for a few seconds. This ability does not work past 30 yards (meters). Using this power is resolved as a Resisted Task against a Simple Willpower Test by the victim (Gifted and Supernatural characters can resist with any healing or mental resistance power instead). If the victim loses, he must pass an unmodified Survival Test or drops dead of an appropriate natural cause! Even if the victim passes the Survival Test, the attack on his life causes D6 x 4(12) Life Points and stuns for several seconds (all actions are at -2 for the next Turn). Each use of this power costs 18 Essence Points. Targets with a Constitution 5 or higher, the Gifted, and all supernatural beings cannot be killed with this power. If they fail to resist, they take damage as above; if they resist, they are completely unaffected.

Death Senses

2-point Power

The Primal is uniquely attuned to the approach of death. He can sense terminal disease and imminent death among those around him, by sensing the presence of the Grim Reapers, the spirits who come to collect the souls of dying humans. Through the same senses, he can see ghosts and other errant spirits wandering the Earth. This power costs one Essence Point to activate and lasts for five minutes.

Domain of the Dead

4-point Power

The character gains some measure of control over the spirits of the dead. By spending two Essence Points, and winning a Resisted Task (Willpower and Primal Task against a Simple Willpower Test on the spirit's part), the Primal can make the target recoil from him. The entity cannot attack the character, and is compelled to flee as soon as possible. Multiple targets can be affected. The Essence cost is two per spirit in the area; one Willpower and Primal Skill is made, and used for all the Resisted Tasks.

Necromantic Powers (F)
Variable Power

The character can acquire the Necromancy Skill and Necromantic Powers (see p. 235), paying the normal cost for them. To empower these abilities, the character has an equivalent Essence Channeling equal to his Willpower attribute. The power costs two character points plus the cost of the Necromantic abilities.

Spirit Shape
8-point Power

The character can become a spirit (see p. 297). The process takes a minute of intense meditation, and costs 15 Essence Points, which cannot be recovered while the change is in effect. During that time, the character's Life Points become Vital Essence, his Essence Pool becomes Energy Essence and he gains all the powers and drawbacks of spirit entities.

Stay the Hand of Death
5-point Power

Prerequisite: Death Sense

The Primal may interfere with the process of death. If someone dies in his presence, he senses the approach of a Grim Reaper to take the soul towards its destiny. Stopping the Reaper gives the dead a new chance at survival. Using this power costs 20 Essence Points, and requires a Willpower and Primal Task. If the Task is successful, the victim attempts an unmodified Survival Test to revive. If that Test is passed, all wounds or other cause of death are removed. There is a risk involved, however. If the Task fails, the character has not only failed to stare Death down, he has angered It. The character immediately loses D6 x 4(12) Essence Points in addition to the base cost, and permanently loses one Essence Point, as he feels Death's icy touch on his soul.

Thievery

Shadow Movement
Variable Power

The character can move silently with unearthly ability, able to sneak past alert watchers or guard dogs with seemingly effortless ease. This power affects all senses, and adds a bonus to any Stealth Tasks. This costs one character point per +1 bonus, to a maximum level of +6. This ability costs five Essence points per minute, which cannot be regained until the character stops using it. Furthermore, if the character stands still, people in the area have a penalty equal to his bonus to see him, even if in plain sight.

Silver Tongue
4-point Power

Characters with this power have an uncanny gift of convincing people of almost anything. Use of this ability requires good roleplaying—it should not be a matter of announcing "I convince the Secret Service agent that I'm on the approved guest list." Instead, the player must come up with a decent story (maybe he is claiming he was just mugged and lost his ID) and be at least moderately convincing. The power costs one Essence Point per Intelligence level of the target. The victim resists the Willpower and Primal Task with a Simple Intelligence Test. The reaction of the victim upon believing the tale is true can be unpredictable, however. In the example above, the Secret Service agent might let the character enter the restricted area, or he might call the authorities to helpfully report the mugging. Additional Silver Tongue uses might be needed to actually steer the victim into the right path.

Unlock
Variable Power

This power adds a bonus to any Lock Picking (normal or electronic), Hacking, or Escapism Tasks the character performs. Activating the power costs one Essence Point per minute, which cannot be regained until the character finishes the attempt. This power costs one character point per +1 bonus, to a maximum bonus of +6.

Unseen and Unknown
6-point Power

The character can skulk around with nobody being the wiser. As long as he moves quietly and avoids attracting attention, nobody knows he is there. This power affects all senses, not just sight; it seems to work by partially shifting the character's body into a separate reality. It also affects motion detectors and cameras. The moment the character does something to affect the physical world, like grabbing an object or opening a door (or launching an attack), the imperceptibility stops, and cannot be re-created until the character is beyond everyone's senses (i.e., no living observer is in a position to detect the character). Activating this power costs 15 Essence Points and it lasts one minute per Success Level in the Task.

Torment

Agony
8-point Power

This power manifests as a blast, a whip, or a flying dart of energy that inflicts tremendous agony as well as physical damage—D4(2) points of damage times the Essence spent. The victim must pass a Simple Willpower Test, minus half the damage inflicted (to a maximum penalty of -6), or be stunned for rest of the Turn. Agony has a range of 3/10/20/60/120.

Clawed Chains
6-point Power

The character can summon barbed chains at a cost of five Essence Points. They remain for one minute per Success Level in the Task. Used as a weapon, or when first binding a victim, the chains inflict D4(2) x Strength points of slashing damage. The chains can strike a target up to 20 yards (meters) away. A victim tangled or bound by the chains can try to break free. This is resolved as a Resisted Test, a Simple Strength Test on both sides, except the victim has a -4 penalty.

Curse
6-point Power

This power is identical to the Fortune Power of the same name (see p. 284).

Vitality

Enhanced Constitution
Variable Power

The character can gain a bonus to the Constitution Attribute, which is applied only while this power is activate. This costs five Essence Point per minute (which cannot be regained for as long as the power is maintained). The maximum bonus is equal to the character's base Constitution, doubled (i.e., a character with Constitution 4 could have a maximum bonus of +8, for a total Constitution 12). The bonus affects Life and Endurance Points, but not Essence Pool. This power costs one character point per point of the bonus.

Life Force
Variable Power

The character can temporarily increase his ability to withstand injury. Activating this power costs three Essence Points per minute, which cannot be regained as long as the power is active. The power costs one character point for every 20 Life Points gained.

Recovery
Variable Power

This power allows the character to increase his ability to recover from injury. The character can regenerate damage almost as fast as it is inflicted. This recovery is cumulative with any other regenerative powers possessed. The power costs one character point to regenerate one Life Point per Turn, +1 character point per additional Life Point per Turn.

Weapon Mastery

Feat of Glory
8-point Power

The Primal can perform impossible combat actions. He might be able to shoot down a jet aircraft with an assault rifle, or kill ten men with ten shots from an automatic fire burst. The more unlikely the event is, the more Essence needed. The action attempted must be (at least barely) within the realm of the possible. The target must be within the weapon's theoretical range (even if it is the extreme range). Use the Feat of Glory Table to determine the Essence cost of the action.

Feat of Glory Table

Action	Essence Cost
Eliminate Range Modifiers	3
Unlikely Feat (hit with all rounds in a burst)	4
Hit multiple targets with same attack	3 per additional target *
Extraordinary Feat (hit a far-off, fast-moving target, like a jet aircraft)	15

* If the attack is a burst of automatic fire, all targets take damage as if they were hit by an individual burst, as long as there are enough bullets to hit them all. If only one blow/bullet/thrown weapon is being used, each subsequent target takes two less points of damage from the attack's initial result; if this reduces the attack's damage to zero, the attack has spent all its energy.

Ways of War

8-point Power

Weapons and tactics come naturally to this character. If it can be used to kill people, he can use it. The character instinctively knows how to use and care for any weapon imaginable. He has an effective skill of three with all weapons, from knives to artillery pieces. If the character already knows the skill, he gains a +3 bonus to it.

Weapon Mastery

6-point Power

The Primal has a weapon of choice, which he knows above all others, and with which he is supernaturally deadly. It must be a hand weapon (nothing requiring a crew of two or more, disqualifying all machine-guns, most anti-tank weapons larger than a LAW, and all vehicle weapons). The weapon must be of a specific type and make (a katana, for example, or a Colt .45). The character has a bonus of +3 on all Tasks involving that weapon, and the weapon's Damage Multiplier is raised by +1 for every two levels of skill (rounded up, not counting the bonus above) in the weapon. For example, if the character specializes in a Colt .45 and has a skill five with it, he gets a +3 bonus on Tasks using the weapon, and inflicts D8 x 7(28) (three extra damage levels).

Deities and their Aspects

Listed below are some gods from four major pantheons, and their most common Aspects. The list is far from exhaustive, both in terms of the deities involved and the Aspects they embody. It can serve as a basis for players to design their characters, however. Players and Chroniclers are encouraged to check out any of the numerous books on mythology. The tales of these cultures can be a great source for character ideas and adventure plots and scenarios. Future *Armageddon* books will provide more detail on the ancient gods.

Aztec/Mayan Gods

Coatllicue: Fertility
Kukulcan/Quetzacoatl: Life, Sun, Wisdom
Huitzilopochtli: Sky, War
Hunhau: Death
Tezcatlipoca: Trickster, War, Wisdom

Egyptian Gods

Anubis: Death, Justice
Bast: Beast (Cat), Fertility
Isis: Fertility, Magic
Ptah: Life, Wisdom, Smith
Ra: Justice, Sun, Wisdom
Toth: Justice, Wisdom

Greek Gods

Ares: War
Athena: War, Wisdom
Gaea: Earth, Fertility, Life
Hades: Death
Hephaestus: Fire, Forge
Hermes: Trickster, Wisdom
Zeus: Air, Fortune, Strength, Storm, Wisdom

Norse Gods

Freya: Fertility
Hel: Death
Loki: Trickster
Odin: Death, Sky, War, Wisdom
Thor: Strength, Sky, War
Tyr: Justice, War
Volundr: Forge, Vengeance

Spirits

In the world of *Armageddon*, reality is made up of many layers; the physical world—what mundanes refer to as the "real" world in their ignorance—is but one of those layers. Some occultists call these layers of reality Sephiroths.

Traveling from one Sephiroth to another is not easy. Most beings from beyond the Earth find it difficult to enter our realm. When they do so, they appear as immaterial beings of pure Essence. These entities are commonly known as spirits. There are many types of spirit, from the incorporeal ghosts of the dead to elementals and demonic fiends. Most of them share some basic powers, however. Described below are some of the basic abilities and limitations of spirit beings. Two types of spirit entity involved in Celestial politics, Angelic Ethereals and Fiends, are detailed as well. More information about spirit entities can be found in other Unisystem volumes.

Common Spirit Powers

Most spirits share a number of traits. When creating new spirits, the Chronicler should keep these abilities in mind. A few of the most powerful or unusual spirits are able to exceed or transcend the common limits of their kind, but they are the exception to the rule.

Beings of Essence

Spirits are made out of pure Essence. Instead of Life and Endurance Points, their vitality is expressed in Essence Points. Most spirits have two Essence Pools. One is their Vital Essence, the energy that makes up their very existence, and which is almost never used. Vital Essence is bound in the matrix that defines the spirit. The other is Energy Essence, pure Essence that can be used to empower their many abilities. In extreme cases, spirits use some of their Vital Essence to activate their abilities, but any such Essence used is permanently lost. A spirit whose Vital Essence is depleted becomes unraveled and ceases to exist.

Channel and Tap into Essence

Spirits can manipulate and channel Essence. Most Spirits have the equivalent of Essence Channeling, with a level equal to their Willpower or even Willpower doubled. They can also tap into the extra Essence made available at Places and Times of Power (see pp. 199-200). This is one of the reasons some areas are said to be haunted and why Halloween and similar dates have a reputation for being times of ghosts and spirits—many of these creatures take the opportunity to use the extra energy to power a number of strange effects. Some spirits have the power to take Essence from living beings, either absorbing the power that is unwittingly released during intense emotional reactions, or by actively draining a victim of his Essence!

Elementals

These entities are living embodiments of primal forces of nature, including the four Classical Elements (earth, fire, air, and water). Elementals are typically found in the company of magicians, who often summon and bind them into service.

Str 1-10+	**Dex** 2-6+	**Con** 2-10+
Int 2-5+	**Per** 2-5+	**Will** 3-6+

Vital Essence: 15-50+
Energy Essence: 10-100+

Skills: Has the equivalent of Brawling at the same level as Dexterity, and Occult Knowledge at levels 1-5.

Spiritus: 3-6+

Powers: Elementals can channel one Essence Point per Turn for each Willpower and Intelligence level. Furthermore, they have the equivalent of the appropriate Elemental Invocation (see pp. 212-216) at a level equal to their Spiritus Skill.

Evolution

Spirits do not remain the same over the course of eternity. Like all other living things, they change, grow, or decay. Spirits slowly gain power by absorbing Essence given to them or taken from other living things (but not ambient Essence, which is useful but not nourishing). Many spirits spend most of the Essence acquired, but a few hoard it and slowly absorb it into their Vital Essence, increasing their overall energy. Ancient spirits may increase their power tenfold over the course of centuries.

Immaterial

The natural form of spirits is a manifestation of Essence that cannot interact directly with the physical world. Spirits are not bound by physical barriers. They cannot be perceived by normal senses, and physical attacks cannot harm them. By the same token, they cannot affect the physical world (including living beings) except in indirect ways. Only Essence attacks harm them, first by depleting their Energy Essence, and then by destroying their Vital Essence. (Some Gifted powers affect the spirit's Vital Essence directly, however.) Spirits have physical Attributes, but they can only be used on other spirit beings (including ghosts and astral travelers), unless they manifest physically somehow.

While immaterial, the spirit has two basic movement rates. While moving normally, it can hover, walk, or run. This uses the Speed Secondary Attribute. If the spirit needs to travel quickly between two points, spending one Essence Point per hour allows it to travel 100 miles an hour times the spirit's Willpower Attribute (so, a spirit with a Willpower 4 can travel at 400 miles an hour). In this form of travel, things move in a blur, and the spirit is largely unaware of its surroundings. Some spirits are bound to a specific area, however, and cannot use this mode of travel.

Oathbound

Most spirits (with the notable exception of the souls of dead humans) are bound by any oaths they make. If a spirit swears upon its Power and True Name, it cannot break that oath any more than a mundane can reverse the pull of gravity. A spirit's True Name is the symbol of its Vital Essence, a "code" more unique and personal than a DNA signature among humans. It is entirely bound to the oath, and breaking it, even inadvertently, means its sudden and utter obliteration. Spirits are sticklers to the terms of such oaths, however, and often prove to be devilishly tricky in following the letter while violating the spirit (no pun intended) of the oath.

Perceive Essence

Being what they are, spirits see the world, both physical and spiritual, in terms of the flows of Essence. Spirits can tell the different "flavors" and "scents" of Essence in both living and inanimate things, other spirits, Magic, and all other elements of Reality. Spirits do not see things in terms of color and shape, as humans do. Instead, they perceive the Essence patterns that make up all things. Spirits see people's souls rather than their bodies. They are automatically aware of the emotional states of living things, and can tell if they are lying. Only humans protected by Essence Shields (see p. 220) can avoid this scrutiny.

Physical Manifestation

Most spirits are unable to assume a physical form—at least not by themselves. In general, spirits cannot use their Energy Essence to manifest themselves, but can use the Essence provided from outside sources for this purpose. They can tap into ambient Essence; most spirits can materialize during such Times of Power as Halloween and the Equinoxes, for example. Another source of Essence is provided by a summoning sorcerer. The Essence spent by the sorcerer is used by the spirit to assume a material form. Typically, it costs one Essence Point for each Vital Essence point the creature has.

While manifested, the spirit has the equivalent of 1 Life Point for every Vital and Energy Essence Point in its Pool. Reducing Life Points to 0 (note that even manifested spirits may be highly resistant to conventional weapons and dangers) dematerializes the creature and costs it D10(5) Vital Essence Points, which are permanently lost (and which may destroy minor Spirits).

As immaterial is their natural form, spirits can dematerialize in a single Turn by simply willing it so.

Spiritus

Spiritus is a special ability all spiritual entities share. It determines the degree of control the spirit can exercise over its surroundings and the skill with which it can use its abilities.

The Servant Races

The Heavenly Host and the Infernal Legion can field armies hundreds of thousands strong. Only a minority of those beings are of the "higher" order: the Seraphim (Lesser, Common, and Greater). Of the rest, a substantial number are uplifted (or damned) human souls—the Kerubim and Qliphonim. Below these ranks are a vast number of lesser creatures, collectively known as Ethereals or Fiends.

Ethereals

The term Ethereal is used by occultists in the world of *Armageddon* to describe a special order of spirit. Ethereals are dedicated followers of one of the great powers of the universe. Some of them embody a single idea or concept, like Love or Vengeance. The borders of the Death Realms, for example, are patrolled by cloaked entities known as the Grim Reapers, who serve Death Itself. They are believed to be lesser creations of the first Sephyrs, or perhaps fragments of long-dead Sephyrs. Ethereals do not have self-awareness and free will as higher orders of being (like humans or the Seraphim) do. Their entire existence revolves around their duty, the concept they espouse, or the master they follow. This makes them incorruptible, relentless beings. They cannot compromise, surrender, or tolerate any deviation from their core beliefs any more than a human being can give up breathing. Many Ethereals are little more than mindless automatons who carry out their tasks with the same uncaring efficiency of a steamroller. Others are slightly more sophisticated, but equally single-minded. Their nature, in short, makes them inappropriate for Cast Members; they are best used as Supporting Cast and Adversaries.

Angelic Ethereals

These entities dwell in Elysium. They can be commanded by Archangels, although on occasion they are put under the command of a Greater or Common Seraphim. To most people (both Gifted and Mundane), there is no visible distinction between Seraphim and Ethereals—the entities manifest as glowing, beautiful humanoids (wings are optional) who radiate feelings of goodness and well-being. Many people are moved to tears by the mere appearance of these creatures (Gifted and strong-willed mundanes are less likely to lose their composure), while sinners feel fear and shame.

Angelic Ethereals

Str 5 **Dex** 5 **Con** 5 **Int** 5+ **Per** 5 **Will** 5

Vital Essence: 50
Energy Essence: 70
Life Points (when manifested): 120
Speed: 12
Spiritus: 5

Most Christians and Muslims automatically identify these apparitions as angels; other religions ascribe them a similar beneficial identity.

Before the war, Angelic Ethereals appeared on Earth very rarely. Some magicians summoned them, as did some of the Divinely Inspired. Archangels can do nothing about the Divinely Inspired's summoning of Angelic Ethereals—apparently the Inspired outrank them, at least as far as Ethereals are concerned. Magicians who summoned the entities were sometimes tolerated, if their intentions were good, or otherwise punished in diverse ways. Since the rise of the Dark Apostle, Ethereals have been destroyed by the tens of thousands. Many of them serve on active duty on Earth, usually under the command of a higher Celestial.

Angelic Ethereal Powers

Angelic Aura: If the spirit manifests itself physically, all non-Gifted people with a Willpower below three are struck by a feeling of awe and emotion. Most people feel a wave of love and acceptance that may bring back happy memories of their childhood. People with a guilty conscience feel wracked by shame. Gifted characters, supernatural beings, and mundanes with Willpowers 3 or higher are not fully affected, but they feel some of these emotions nonetheless. Those affected suffer a -2 penalty in any Test or Task that refuses or hinders the spirit in any way. Common criminals and the like flee at the first opportunity, or cower in fear otherwise. Attacking the spirit requires a Difficult Willpower Test.

Healing: The spirit can cast the Lesser Healing Invocation (see p. 219) with a skill level equivalent to their Spiritus and an effective Channeling level equal to their Willpower.

Holy Sword: When manifested (or confronting other entities in the spirit world), the spirit can create a blade of holy fire by spending five Essence Points. This weapon inflicts D8(4) x

Strength points of slashing damage, which affects both physical and spiritual beings. Normal body armor does not protect against these attacks.

Physical Manifestation: Angelic Ethereals can materialize more easily than normal spirits. To appear physically, the Ethereal must spend one Essence Point for every five points of its Vital Essence. This Essence is not regained until the spirit returns to its natural state or to its plane of existence. Furthermore, Angelic Ethereals who materialize in front of crowds risk being quickly drained of power. The Crowd Rules that affect Magic (see p. 206) also apply to manifested Ethereals, unless they can either fool the audience into believing them to be natural phenomena, or by quickly terrifying them into submission.

Spirit Entities: Angelic Ethereals share all basic spirit abilities.

Fiends

The demonic counterpart to the Ethereals, Fiends are malicious spirits, twisted monsters who hunger for the Essence of living beings and enjoy destruction for its own sake. Unlike the Ethereals, who are driven by a relentless sense of duty, fiends only obey out of fear or greed. The Fallen Seraphim recruited thousands of these beings into their ranks towards the end of the first Celestial War, and brought in thousands more afterwards.

The more mindless of their kind are killing and eating machines who, in their natural state, attack at the first opportunity. The greatest of their kind are more self-controlled, capable of foresight and planning, but even they lack the skills and subtlety of a true demon. While the Fallen Seraphim seek to corrupt, Fiends want only a chance to feast on the life force of a living being—humans or other sentient beings if possible, but any animal, plant, or spirit (including other Fiends) will do in a pinch.

For this reason, Fiends can be summoned by magicians with relative ease, provided they know the right Invocations and the offered right incentive. Lesser Fiends are fairly mindless and violent, but once they encounter overwhelming force turn craven and servile. Those who bring them to this world must never lower their guard, however, for Fiends will turn against their "masters" at the first opportunity. Note that to many occultists, the distinction between Fiend and demon is academic at best.

Fiends

Str 2-10+	**Dex** 3-7+	**Con** 2-10+
Int 2-7+	**Per** 3-7+	**Will** 3-7+

Vital Essence: 20-100+
Energy Essence: 20-100+
Life Points (when manifested): 40-200+
Speed: 10-34+
Spiritus: 3-6+

Fiend Powers

Physical Manifestation: Fiends can materialize physically, as long as they have an outside source of Essence. This usually requires Magic, although on occasion a large release of Essence allows one or more of these creatures to slip through. Another possibility is to open a Gateway leading to the creatures' native world. Fiends who cross through a Gateway do not need to spend Essence to remain on Earth. A few cults would love to open huge gateways allowing hordes of these creatures to pour through; fortunately, such links between worlds are extremely rare.

Possession (animal): Some Fiends favor pets, while others try to take over large animals. Taking over an animal often puts the Fiend in conflict with the appropriate nature spirit, but Fiends appear to win such encounters with ease. Animal Possession costs the Fiend 15 Essence Points (which cannot be regained until it releases its victim) and requires success in a Willpower and Spiritus Task, resisted by the victim's Simple Willpower Test. If the Fiend wins, it is in control of the victim. Attempts to resist are possible every ten minutes or so, although if the victim fails in four or more attempts in a row, the Fiend is in control for as long as a day before further resistance is possible.

While possessed, the victim's Strength is inhumanly high. The possessed gains a bonus equal to 1/3 the Fiend's natural Strength, rounded up (Secondary Attributes are not affected by this Strength bonus). The victim can also withstand a large amount of damage, gaining a Life Point bonus equal to one half the Fiend's Vital Essence Pool, rounded up. When the Fiend relinquishes control, however, any damage incurred remains. If greater than the victim's normal Life Points, this often results in death.

Possession (human): Fiends love to take over some helpless human, using him as an agent of chaos and destruction. Possession costs the Fiend 20 Essence Points (which cannot be regained until it releases its victim), but otherwise works as per animal possession.

Possession (machine): In recent times, Fiends have started taking over machines—vehicles, industrial equipment, toys, computers, and so on. The creature is somewhat limited by the structural limitations of the equipment, but can sometimes transcend it. The Fiend uses Essence to warp and manipulate the machine, allowing it to perform incredible feats. Possessing a machine costs 20 Essence Points.

Plain, brand-new machines cannot be possessed. The object must have some residual Essence, perhaps as the result of a death, strong emotions, and the like. A toy that belonged to an abused child, or a car involved in a hit and run fatality are two examples of ripe targets for possession. The Fiend can drain the pain-tinged Essence in the object, inhabit it, and use it to wreak destruction. The degree of control over the machine increases with time. During the first day of possession, the creature can do very little with the machine—still, with some creativity, even a minor malfunction can produce nasty results for those around the device. After two or three days, the Fiend is able to operate the machine—vehicles run by themselves, dolls walk and talk, and so on. After four days, the device can outperform any normal machine of its kind—a possessed old wreck runs faster and better than a mundane racing car. If the possession continues for over a week, the Fiend is able to repair the machine, regenerating any damage at the rate of five damage points per Essence Point spent. Destroying the possessed machine leaves the Fiend in spirit form without an anchor.

Spirit Powers: Fiends have all normal spirit powers. They cannot stay on Earth in spirit form for very long, however. If they cannot find some form or anchor (by either materializing physically or through possession), they start losing Essence (first Energy, then Vital Essence) at the rate of five points per hour. This drain cannot be stopped until the spirit is either material, in possession of a living being, or it returns to its plane.

Chapter Eight

True Immortals

The so-called True Immortals first appeared in the fabulous realm of Atlantis, one of the antediluvian Elder Kingdoms. The Atlanteans were masters of Arcana, a mixture of magic and science that is almost unimaginable even in the twenty-first century. Most of that knowledge is forever lost, unfortunately. Some of the Watchers claim that Lucifer unleashed the Flood as much to destroy Atlantis before its power reached its zenith as to prevent the dark priests of Ultima Thule from summoning Leviathan to our world. At its height, Atlanteans treated with the Seraphim as equals; towards the end, centuries of war with Ultima Thule had weakened and debased their culture.

The Flood was not the end of the Blood of Atlantis, however. Over the ages, the souls of those who perished returned to Earth through the cycle of reincarnation. The souls reshaped the bodies, and the newborn became Immortal. They retained the implanted knowledge of Atlantis, but they could not access the memories. The result is that all True Immortals are plagued by maddening dreams and half-remembered memories of a primeval past.

Over the centuries, True Immortals have dwelt among humans, some ruling over them as kings or petty gods, others hiding their nature and fleeing those who would kill them as witches or demons. They were warriors and scholars, heroes and scoundrels. Their deeds were recorded in ancient chronicles, or were forgotten by all but the undying participants. Some have banded together in loose-knit societies, while other shun the company of their kind. A varied and fractious lot, they are few but proud, each an individual above all.

Being Immortal

Immortals start life much like anybody else. It is not until the Change takes place that their true natures become apparent. The Change occurs sometime between their nineteenth and fortieth birthday; the reason for this wide age differential is unknown. It is a physical and psychic shock to the Immortal's system. They appear to suffer a seizure of some sort, and collapse for several hours. During that time, their minds are flooded by images of their previous existence in Atlantis, although most of the images are forgotten as soon as the fit ends. When they recover, their bodies show no ill effects. Although most of them do not realize it yet, they no longer age, and are almost impossible to kill.

Sometimes, the Immortals do not understand the effects of the Change until decades later, when they notice those around them growing older while they remain the same. More often, they suffer an injury of some sort, only to discover that the mortal wound mends in a matter of minutes. Sometimes, they encounter older Immortals who tell them the truth. In other instances, the visions that accompanied the Change include the knowledge that they are ageless beings (many, of course, do not believe the visions until later on).

What the Immortals do with their knowledge varies from individual to individual. Some use their abilities to accumulate power, either financial or political. The majority become wanderers, never staying in one place for more than a human lifetime, thus avoiding notoriety. In their travels, they encounter all manner of beings. These meetings run the gamut from brief and curious exchanges to friendships that spanned centuries, to equally long-lived hatreds and rivalries.

Some Immortals have stronger memories of the past. A few are actually able to replicate some of the wonders of the Atlantean Arcana. These Makers are highly respected (and envied) by other Immortals, although many become eccentric "mad scientist" types, sometimes creating devices more dangerous than useful. A tale from Immortal myth claims that a Maker's correspondence with the human scientist Nikkola Tesla led to an experiment that caused the Tunguska disaster in Russia in 1908. Tesla's device allegedly unleashed an enormous amount of energy, creating a huge crater and an explosion that literally shook Europe.

Immortals, Death and Reincarnation

The self-styled title True Immortals is a misnomer. They cannot die of natural causes, but they can be killed. One way to destroy them is to remove their Essence from their bodies. Other Immortals can do this, as well as sorcerers and many supernatural creatures. Mundanes can dismember Immortals and burn the pieces, which also releases their souls from their bodies. Short of these two methods, however, killing an Immortal is nearly impossible. Some have suffered a fate worse than death, however. Immortal folklore speaks of one of their kind foolish enough to go against a ruthless gang of mobsters. When normal methods failed to

destroy him, the resourceful criminals simply dumped his body in the foundation of a building, and to this day the Immortal lies buried beneath tons of concrete and steel, alive and aware but trapped in a sense-deprived Hell.

Although Immortals reincarnate, they do so with far less frequency than normal humans. It appears that when Immortals die, their souls are sent to a separate and isolated realm. Immortals never become ghosts or undead, and if they ever reincarnate, they do so thousands of years after their demise. The Undying have a long acquaintance with the process of reincarnation, involving not themselves but those around them. Mundane enemies can be killed, but a lifetime or two later they may often return to the world, with no direct knowledge of the previous conflict but still destined to meet the Immortal and develop an inexplicable hatred for him. Current reincarnations of past enemies can be the Immortal's worst nightmare.

Atlantean Makers

The knowledge imprinted into the souls of all Atlanteans was meant to be awakened in a series of special "coming of age" ceremonies, each ceremony releasing more precious knowledge into the mind of the Atlantean. Immortals have grown up without the benefit of these ceremonies (nor the education accompanying them), and all they have of their Atlantean legacy are bits and pieces of a fabled past. Some Immortals seem better able than others, or for some reason or another they seem to recall more of this information. They can actually build crude versions of the devices their ancestors used in times past. They are known as the Atlantean Makers, or simply the Makers.

The Makers all share an insatiable curiosity and drive worthy of the most dedicated scientist. Many of them study the sciences, both natural and occult, in an effort to better understand their bizarre creations. Unfortunately, no Earthly discipline is advanced enough to be of any help. The Makers cannot even contribution to these fields, because the concepts they half-remember are so far ahead of the times.

The Makers themselves only have a dim idea of what it is they do. They follow dreamlike instructions, and produce unlikely results. How they manage to turn a boiling vat of mercury, lead, rock salt, and assorted minerals into Orikalk, or combine silver, iron, and sulfur into Adamant is a mystery to them, let alone others.

Creating True Immortal Characters

Immortals can use any of the Gifted Character Types (although it will be difficult to muster the necessary points as a Beginning Gifted). They do not have to purchase the Gift, but must pay for the Immortal Quality (see p. 85), which costs 15 points. This Quality grants them the common True Immortal Powers. Those with the Immortal Quality may also purchase special abilities listed later in this chapter.

Common True Immortal Powers

The following are abilities that all True Immortals possess.

Ancestral Memories

All Immortals have brief flashbacks of their previous lives as citizens of Athal, the mysterious city-state that may be the fabled land of Atlantis. Most of these visions have little relevance to the modern world, but they may reveal important information about other Immortals, who might have been the character's acquaintances (or enemies) in his past life, or when dealing with powerful and ancient beings like the Seraphim or the Mad Gods.

Immortality

Immortals are almost impossible to kill, and they never die of natural causes. To kill an Immortal through conventional means, the body must be completely dismembered, and the pieces burned to ashes and scattered. Being at ground zero of a large explosion (something inflicting over 300 points of damage in one attack) would also do the trick, as would some event that disperses most of the mass of the Immortal.

If they are aware of this weakness, supernatural beings can also try to kill the Immortal through the Severing, a mystical attack that cuts the connection between the Immortal's soul and his body. To attempt the Severing, the Immortal must be reduced to -10 Life Points. Then the supernatural or Gifted must expend Essence equal to the Immortal's Essence Pool (the normal maximum amount, not current Essence). If enough Essence is spent, a Resisted Simple Willpower Test between the Immortal and his attacker must be resolved. The Immortal gains the

bonus from the Hard to Kill Quality, if he has any levels in it. If the attacker wins, the link is severed, and the Immortal's soul cast out, not to be reincarnated for thousands of years (this effectively removes the character from most games). If the Immortal wins, he lives, and no further Severing attempts can be made against him for 24 hours. The Severing is known to the Lodge of the Undying and any Association with Seraphim in its ranks; beyond that, it is not common knowledge, requiring the Occult Knowledge (Immortals) Skill.

Magic Resistance

Immortals resist any Invocation (provided the Invocation allows a resistance Task or Test), and any supernatural power meant to affect the mind with a +2 bonus.

Manipulate Essence

Immortals do not need Essence Channeling. They can spend Essence at whatever rate they wish, provided they have enough in store. This Essence expenditure can only be used for Immortal Powers, however. They cannot use it to fuel Invocations or other Arts.

Regeneration

Immortals regain lost Life, Endurance, and Essence Points much faster than normal humans. Even mortal wounds can be completely healed in less than a minute. The regeneration rates are as follows:

Life Points: One point per Constitution level per Turn. So, an Immortal with a Constitution 4 would regenerate four Life Points at the end of every Turn.

Endurance Points: Two points per Constitution level per half-hour of sleep, or one point per Constitution level per hour of rest.

Essence Points: Two points per Willpower level every minute.

If any limb is severed, it regrows when Life Points are fully restored.

Resistances and Immunities

Immortals do not need to eat, breath or sleep to survive. Narcotic and irritant poisons affect them, but they soon recover. Corrosive poisons retain full effect. They can contract diseases, but shake them off in a matter of days (even a Terminal disease disappears in 15 minus Constitution days). They never suffer from cancer or genetically inherited diseases, and can endure lethal levels of radiation. The latter causes the symptoms of radiation sickness for several days until their bodies metabolize and eliminate all contaminants.

Although normal injuries are unlikely to kill an Immortal, they still inflict pain and unconsciousness. Immortals are subject to the same shock and unconsciousness rules as normal humans, but they quickly recover from them. An Immortal reduced below zero points is probably knocked unconscious, but he awakens as soon as his regeneration powers bring him back to one or more Life Points. Immortals do not need to make Survival Tests until they are reduced to below -300 Life Points, at which point they must pass one, at -1 for every 10 points below -300 Life Points.

Special Restrictions

Immortal souls have been mysteriously altered. This give them near-eternal life, but at a price. They may learn Invocations, but must release Essence through ritual magic (see p. 199). Immortals cannot learn Essence Channeling, Necromancy, Inspired Miracles, Seer abilities, or any other non-Immortal supernatural powers.

Supernatural Attributes

True Immortals receive the following physical Attribute bonuses: +1 Strength, +1 Dexterity, and +1 Constitution. Unlike normal humans, an Immortal can improve an Attribute with experience points up to three levels above his starting level. Also, Immortals can use Metaphysics Points to increase Attributes, in the same way that Drawback Points are used (see p. 65). As always, bonuses are added after the Attribute levels are purchased.

Endurance Points and Speed are figured normally, but the following formulae determine the Immortal's Life Points and Essence Pool:

Life Points: ((Strength + Constitution) x 5) +15
Essence: Sum of Attributes +25

Supernatural Senses

Immortals can, by concentrating, sense the flows of Essence around them, both in things and people. By spending one Turn of concentration and passing a Simple Perception Test, Immortals can sense the presence of magic, the relative strength of a human being's Essence pool, and the presence of supernatural beings. Other

Immortals can be recognized by making eye contact, which produces a flash of psychic recognition. Immortals can also sense the presence of another of their kind within 30 yards (meters), but not the exact location or direction.

Unaging

Immortals stop aging completely at the time of the Change. This event generally occurs between the ages of 19 and 40; most Immortals undergo the Change during their mid- to late-twenties. Exceptions may occur when some traumatic incident earlier in life awakens the Immortal's abilities. At worst, such an event may have occur when the character is barely a teenager, or even a child. Those Immortals have the Child Vulnerability, and their bodies are permanently frozen at their early age. Immortal Children are not common, and they rarely lead happy lives.

Special True Immortal Powers and Vulnerabilities

These abilities and flaws exist among Immortals, but not everyone has them. They cost points from the Metaphysical Category. Vulnerabilities work like Drawbacks, granting extra character points.

Awareness

3-point Power

Immortals with this ability have greatly enhanced supernatural and physical senses. They gain a +2 to all Perception Tasks or Tests. Furthermore, they automatically sense the presence of ghosts, spirits, and other invisible entities, and detect Gifted abilities, supernatural beings masquerading as normal humans, and all other Immortals in a 100-yard radius. Their ability to see Essence patterns also allows them to sense a person's emotional state.

Battle Boost

5-point Power

Battle Boost uses Essence to temporarily augment the character's physical attributes. Any of the three physical Attributes (Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution) can be raised at the cost of two Essence Points per +1 bonus. These bonuses do not affect Secondary Attributes, except for Speed. The increases last for one minute, unless the Essence cost is spent again for another minute's worth of bonus (this may be continued as long as the Immortal desires, or as long as he has sufficient Essence to spend). When the power expires, the character is weakened. Each +1 bonus becomes a -1 penalty to the same Attribute, for a period of one hour. So, if an Immortal increases his Strength by three levels (at the cost of six Essence), he suffers a -3 penalty to his Strength after the power expires. Essence spent on Battle Boost cannot be recovered while the power is maintained. Attributes cannot be lowered below -1 in this way, however, so the maximum boost allowable is equal to the normal Attribute level +1. Characters with a physical Attribute at -1 are able to move, but find themselves unable to perform most physical tasks (walking slowly or lifting small weights is probably the upper limit).

Child

1-, 2-, or 3-point Vulnerability

The term Child refers to those Immortals who underwent the Change before the usual age. This often occurs when the character suffers a mortal wound, disease, or accident. The unfortunate side effect is that the character's biological age is permanently frozen from the moment of the Change. A 12-year old Immortal boy still looks 12 several centuries later. He may be stronger or wiser than any adult in the world, but he remains a child to the eyes of the community and the law. When he fails to grow up, people think he suffers from some sort of developmental problem. Children soon learn to hide their identities and move from place to place.

The younger the character's biological age, the greater the value of this Vulnerability. Being 17 or 18 is no major disadvantage (one point), since the character can easily pass for someone older—she might get carded at a bar, but otherwise does not suffer greatly. For ages 16 down to 13, the value is greater (two points). For ages 12 or less, the value is even more (three points).

Destiny Rider

1-point Vulnerability

Some Immortals have the ability to unconsciously sense the Essence streams that determine the flow of time, causality, and fate. Destiny Riders are carried by the winds of chance to places where they can make a difference—often where danger awaits. This ability is more of a burden than a boon, since the character is dragged towards potentially lethal encounters, whether they want to or not.

This vulnerability makes for easy plot hooks. Destiny Riders often find themselves at the wrong place at the wrong time. If a Rider decides to take a walk in the park, for example, he is certain to stumble upon a band of cultists ready to sacrifice a victim. If he stays a home, the fleeing victim may jump through his living room window, with the cultists a few steps behind. The "curse" does not strike all the time, however; Chroniclers should be careful not to overuse it.

Gaze of Dominion

4-point Power

Some Immortals have inherited the ability to manipulate men's thoughts. The ancestral memories sometimes recall a Guild of the Eye, made up of Atlanteans who could project their will onto other people. The Gaze requires eye contact, the expenditure of 3 Essence Points, and a Resisted Test. The victim resists with Willpower (Difficult Test for Mundanes, Simple Test for others). If the Immortal wins, he can project one mental command on the victim. Simple commands like "Stop," "Run away," or "Drop your weapon" work best. More complex orders, and things that go against the victim's wishes and interests, are resisted with a +1 to +7 bonus, at the Chronicler's discretion.

Characters who practice this ability may learn a Gaze Skill. This works as a regular skill, and is purchased using Skill Points. In the Resisted Test detailed above, the Immortal uses a Simple Willpower Test until the Gaze Skill is greater than the character's Willpower. At that point, replace the Willpower Test with a Willpower and Gaze Task.

Maker

6-point Power

Makers possess enough awakened memories of the past to create some advanced artifacts. The strange super-science of Atlantis cannot be duplicated through conventional means, however. Only Makers have the know-how and Essence manipulation capabilities to produce Arcana artifacts (see p. 307).

Shetarri Warrior

17-point Power

Some Immortals remember the Shetarri Warriors, a sub-breed of Immortals transformed by weird science into deadly warriors. The Shetarri were not very popular, as they were only created for a brief period, and their kind was exiled from the city centuries before the Flood.

When a reincarnated Shetarri undergoes the Change, his body gradually becomes heavily muscled, until the character appears to be a dedicated body builder. The character's skin also becomes tougher and more resilient than normal. The Shetarri transformation affects the Immortal's Essence matrix even more than the norm, however. The character is unable to learn most other Immortal powers, and most other Immortals and even humans feel an instinctive loathing and distrust towards him.

There are few Shetarri in existence. The Lodge of the Undying (see p. 56), the most knowledgeable about these things, puts their number at around twenty worldwide, six of them belonging to the Lodge itself. One of the others is making a very good living as a professional WWE wrestler.

Shetarri Powers: Shetarri gain +5 to Strength and Constitution (cumulative with the Immortal bonuses). The maximum level of Shetarri Strength and Constitution Attributes are 12 each, instead of the normal True Immortal's seven each (see p. 61). They also have 25 extra Life Points. Their skin has an Armor Value 5, cumulative with any other armor worn. All Shetarri are attracted to Weapon Skills of all types, and seek to learn them at the first available opportunity.

Shetarri Vulnerabilities: Shetarri have a base Charisma -2 Drawback, in addition to other social interaction penalties. They also are Cruel (one point). Of the Special Immortal Powers, Shetarri can gain only the Awareness Power. All other restrictions and abilities are the same as other Immortals.

Spirit Voice

4-point Power

A few Immortals have the ability to project thoughts in a manner similar to the psychic power Mindtalk (see p. 232). They can also "hear" a response thought back at them, but they cannot read minds beyond that level. Spirit Voice costs one Essence Point per minute. During that time the character can send telepathic messages to anyone in line of sight. For three Essence per minute, the character can try to communicate with anybody he knows, as long as the person is on Earth and not blocked by some sort of Essence barrier, like a Ward or magical Shielding.

Thought Wall

2-point Power

It appears that the Atlanteans faced enemies with psychic powers at some point in their history. They protected some of their warriors with a powerful mental shield that render them all but immune to mental attacks and domination. The Thought Wall grants the character a +6 bonus to resist all forms of mental attack. This ability is always active, being a part of the character's Essence matrix. On the down side, his presence can be easily detected by psychic and other sensitive beings, as the mental shield glows like a beacon for those with the right senses.

Atlantean Arcana

The past life memories many True Immortals share describe a place where magic, psychic powers, and technology merged into a bizarre whole. Some Immortals have the memories to recreate this super-science and alchemy, and are called Makers. The scholars of the Lodge of the Undying have come to refer to the processes as the Atlantean Arcana.

The Arcana use Essence to combine chemicals in ways unknown in conventional chemistry. The process appears to transform matter at the atomic level, allowing for impossible alloys to exist or to combine unstable or poisonous compounds into miraculous medicines. Apparently, the process only works for True Immortals, or involves a psychic process no one else has been able to imitate. A normal human who followed the steps of an Atlantean formula would end up with nothing more than a noxious mess.

Described below are a few artifacts that can be created using Atlantean Arcana. Whatever sciences and arts the Atlanteans possessed did not include mass-production techniques, however. Each artifact is a labor of individual craft, and takes tremendous amounts of time and effort, not to mention very expensive materials. Makers cannot produce these items casually or in great quantities. With the number of Immortals on the rise, the knowledge to make such items is also becoming more common, but has not served in any way to decrease their cost or value.

The cost on the main entry represents the number of character points that must be spent for the Maker to "remember" the formula (this includes the psychic process that makes it effective). Listed at the end of the entry are a number of artifacts that can be made with the formula, and the cost for an Immortal to own one of them. For a Maker to know how to make and own such an item, both costs must be paid. For example, knowing how to make Adamant weapons would cost four points; owning an Adamant sword costs three points; having both knowledge and weapon would cost seven points.

At the Chronicler's discretion, non-Maker characters with a good reason for owning one of these artifacts can acquire them, at double the normal "owning" cost. Immortals belonging to the Undying Lodge are the most likely candidates. A character with a three-point or greater Immortal Contact (a friend or ally of his, usually) would be another. Finding such an object during the course of a game would cost no points, but its previous owner is sure to object.

Adamant

4-point Power

This legendary metal is extremely hard and resilient, making it perfect for weapons and body armor. Adamant is almost indestructible—its tensile strength is almost ten times that of the best industrial steels, and yet is supple and flexible, rather than brittle. Adamantine armor does not make its wearer invulnerable—even if the armor survives unscathed, a large enough amount of energy (kinetic or otherwise) transmits itself through to the body behind it.

Adamant is made of a combination of iron, silver, copper, and lead (the ratio is 3, 1, 2 and 4, respectively), mixed in a vat hot enough to melt the lead, and then cast into molds. A total of 15 Essence Points must be spent for every pound (0.5 kg) of Adamant created. A total of 10 pounds (5 kg) of ingredients must be used to produce one pound (0.5 kg) of Adamant. By the time the mixture acquires the quicksilver-like sheen of the alloy, nine-tenths of the materials have mysteriously disappeared. What happens to the rest of the metal—sublimated, transposed to another dimension, recombined at the sub-atomic level, or turned into energy for the recombination—remains a mystery to everyone, including the Makers.

Adamant cannot be forged or worked to any great degree. Instead, it must be molded while still in a liquid or semi-solid state. Edges are naturally razor sharp, which is fortunate, since only an Adamant file works on such edges, and then with great difficulty. Armor must be made into plates or scales; chain mail or other complex types simply do not work. On the other hand, an Adamant plate added to a bulletproof vest stops all but the heaviest bullets.

Making a mold for a simple blade, or a solid plate or sheet, requires a Simple Intelligence Test (Makers with this ability retain basic knowledge of the craft skills of his previous life). A Craft Skill (the appropriate Weaponsmith or Armorer type) allows the Maker to devise more elaborate weapons and armor. Any Adamant cutting weapon, from a sword or ax to an arrowhead, increases the Multiplier by three levels, and halves the Armor Value or Barrier Value of any target—except a suit of Adamantine armor. So, a character with a Strength 3 wielding a knife (with a normal damage of D4(2) x Strength) inflicts D4 x 6(12) points of damage. If he struck somebody wearing a suit of Class I Armor (Armor Value of D6 + 7(10)), it would protect with only half its value (roll and halve the result, or just use five).

Adamantine armor increases its Armor Value by one Multiplier level. Only armor with metal plates works (a suit of plate or plate mail, or Class III or IV armor). So, a Class III vest—normal Armor Value of (D8 x 3) + 18 (30)—with the addition of Adamant plates has an AV of (D8 x 4) + 18 (34). Armor-piercing attacks do not work against Adamantine armor (do not divide the Armor Value versus those attacks). Furthermore, the armor protects against supernatural attacks that bypass normal armor (like Soulfire).

Artifacts: Owning a small weapon (switchblade, or arrow- or spearhead) costs one point. A medium-sized weapon (large knife, short sword, or axe-head) costs two points. A large weapon (broadsword or Katana) costs three points. A huge weapon (greatsword, halberd, and the like) costs four points.

A suit of armor costs two points for every 10 points of average Armor Value (not counting the Adamantine bonuses), rounded down. So, a breastplate (average Armor Value of 20) costs four points, while a suit of Class IV armor (average Armor Value of 40) costs eight points.

Ambrosia

2-point Power

This Atlantean substance has passed down through mythology as the "food of the gods," said to make those who ate it immortal. While the claims are not exactly true, Ambrosia has tremendous curative properties, and when eaten by normal humans it revitalizes and rejuvenates them.

Ambrosia is made by combining the juice of any fruit (lemon and oranges are favored, but pineapples, cranberries, and grapefruits will do, and some Makers make "Ambrosia cocktails") with silver, gold, and a quantity of Atlantean blood (two Life Points' worth is enough for a quart, along with one ounce each of the precious materials). The components are boiled together while spending Essence (10 Essence for a quart) for a period of four hours (the Essence spent in this manner cannot be regained until the process is over). The mixture inexplicably reaches a boil at around the same temperature as water, and the gold and silver melt and blend in the mixture. At the end of the process, a pasty substance remains—it is edible, and extremely tasty.

A bar or cake of Ambrosia has tremendous healing properties. Eating it restores D10(5) Life or Endurance Points. Furthermore, after eating it, normal Life, Endurance, or Essence Point recoveries are doubled for a period of one hour (or, in the case of mundane Life Point recovery, one full day). A more interesting effect, for the mere mortal, is Ambrosia's rejuvenation effect. Eating one bar or cake stops the aging process, or the advance of any degenerative disease or condition (like cancer or AIDS) for a full D6 + 3(6) months. Unfortunately, after a few decades (10 years per Constitution level of the subject), the effect starts wearing off. Each dose starts working for D4(2) months for another 10 x Constitution years, declining to one dose working for D4(2) weeks, D4(2) days, and finally, D4(2) hours! This final situation occurs after Constitution x 50 years—a very long lifetime. Stopping any doses for a period of ten years restores Ambrosia's effect, which, if done judiciously, can extend the subject's life span even further. A Maker could keep a normal human being alive for a very long time by feeding him Ambrosia—a couple of Immortals have kept loved ones alive for centuries in this manner—which often makes their eventual decline and death all the more painful.

Artifacts: Each pre-prepared dose of Ambrosia costs one character point. Ambrosia's healing effects work on humans and supernatural creatures (except ghosts and undead). The life-enhancing effects work on any living human being, even Gifted characters whose aging process is already slowed (see p. 202).

Atlantean Thought Ship

20-point Power

Prerequisites: Adamant, Energy Crystals, Orikalk

The ancestors of the Immortals had "flaming chariots" which they used for transportation or as weapons of war. Each Thought Ship was a unique work of art, and only a few hundred

existed even at the height of their civilization. These glowing vessels disappeared thousands of years ago, but in more recent times a handful of Makers have discovered their secrets.

Making a Thought Ship requires the knowledge to create Adamant and Orikalk. For a true Thought Ship, powered by harnessing the Essence fields of the Earth itself, Essence Crystals are also needed. The secret of the ship is its interface system, however—a connection that links the pilot's mind to the ship, which thus becomes an extension of him, as much under his control as one of his limbs.

The "traditional" Thought Ship has the shape of a delta wing, with a golden skin. When activated, ripples of Essence energy run through it, giving it a glowing aura that can be visible even by normal humans. It is believed that some UFO incidents were caused by these vessels. Other Makers use more traditional vehicles and aircraft, and replace their controls with their Thought Steering apparatus, with them, they can fly vessels even if they do not have the normal skills to do so.

A Maker with this knowledge can build any of the basic vessel types described below, or the control system that can be added to any mundane vehicle. Keep in mind, however, that these ships require years of work, and are tremendously expensive. Even the smallest one requires the making and use of hundreds of pounds of Adamant and Orikalk, which, by their nature, require thousands of pounds of silver, gold and other precious, expensive and often toxic materials.

A full Thought Ship has no windows (although some Makers put them in) and its only controls are two bars of Orikalk placed on the sides of the pilot seat. When holding on to the sticks, the pilot (who must be an Immortal) is in complete control of the ship, which is completely responsive to his thoughts. The pilot detects other aircraft at up to 150 miles (225 kilometers) in any direction. Thought Ships can fly at speeds of up to Mach 2, and can execute tight turns (up to 90 degrees) while flying at speeds below Mach 1, without any ill effect on its passengers. While the vessel is in operation, the pilot is drained of Essence at the rate of one point every five minutes (or 12 points per hour); this Essence cannot be regained until the pilot lands and rests.

For two Essence Points per five minutes of operation (24 per hour), the ship also becomes transparent to all but the most powerful radars, and even then the radar profile is diffuse and hard to pin down. The ship is still visible to the naked eye, however. For an additional 2 Essence every five minutes (total of four points per five minutes), the ship becomes invisible, although this effect is less certain. About 5% of any group of humans can spot the craft, and by drawing attention to it may allow others to see it.

Artifacts: A Thought Steering System requires 50 pounds (25 kg) of Orikalk, and the appropriate Mechanic Skill to mate it with a vehicle (a car or an aircraft, for instance). The steering system of the vehicle is replaced by two bars just like the ones in the Thought Ship. A normal vehicle equipped with this system is able to perform far beyond its normal limits. Even if the Immortal does not know how to operate the vehicle, using Thought Steering gives him an automatic skill of three (if he already knew how to use it, he gains a +3 bonus to all his related Driving or Piloting Tasks). Using this system drains the pilot's Essence at the rate of one point every 10 minutes (or six points per hour). As when piloting a full Thought Ship, this Essence cannot be regained while the vehicle is operating. Owning such a system costs three points.

A Small Thought Ship is a single-seat aircraft, slightly bigger than a car. It has an Armor Value of D10 x 5 + 25(50) and 150 Damage Capacity. To build it requires 300 pounds (150 kg) of Adamant, 500 pounds (250 kg) of Orikalk, and 20 Energy Crystals. Building the ship takes 2,000 man-hours, and when finished 300 Essence Points must be invested in it. This ship costs 15 points.

A Medium Thought Ship about twice the size of the Small Thought Ship, and capable of holding a pilot and a passenger or co-pilot. A secondary set of steering handlebars can be put on the second seat, allowing the co-pilot to fire any weapons in the vessel, or to contribute Essence for its operation. The ship has an Armor Value of D10 x 6 + 30 (60) and 250 Damage Capacity. To build it requires 600 pounds (300 kg) of Adamant, 1,000 pounds (500 kg) of Orikalk, and 40 Energy Crystals. Building the ship takes 4,000 man-hours, and when it is finished 600 Essence Points must be invested in it. This ship costs 20 points.

A Large Thought Ship is the biggest ship ever built by a known Immortal Maker (only two have been made in the history of the Lodge of the Undying). This vessel is about the same size as a private jet aircraft. The ship can seat a pilot, co-pilot, up to three more passengers, and 2,000 pounds of cargo. Any passenger can contribute his Essence towards the energy costs of the ship. The ship has an Armor Value of D10 x 7 + 35 (70) and 500 Damage Capacity. To build it requires 1,500

pounds (750 kg) of Adamant, one ton (1000 kg) of Orikalk, and 100 Energy Crystals. Building the ship takes 8,000 man-hours, and when it is finished 1,500 Essence Points must be invested in it. This behemoth costs 25 points.

Basic Thought Ships have no weapons systems. Their advantages lie in their speed and stealth. Some Makers install conventional weapons on their vessels, when they can get them. Others build weapons using Immortal technology, and powered with Energy Crystals. An energy projector inflicts D6 x 20 (60) points of damage, with a range of 20 miles (30 km). It requires 10 Energy Crystals, 10 pounds (5 kg) of Orikalk and the expenditure of 50 Essence Points. Adding one of these weapons raises the point cost of any ship by 10 points.

Crystal Skull

5-point Power

Prerequisite: Energy Crystals

The Crystal Skull is exactly what its name indicates. Some time ago, some mundane occultists came into contact with one, and eventually fashioned their own copies, largely useless and powerless, but interesting enough to gain them a place in the pantheon of paranormal items. True Skulls, fashioned out of Energy Crystals and Orikalk, have powerful telepathic properties. Any Immortal who holds one in his hands can project his thoughts over amazing distances. The skull can also be used to extract information from an unwilling subject—an Immortal can probe nearby people and tear secrets from their minds, often inflicting severe physical and spiritual damage. Whether this is the intended use of the Skulls or not remains unknown. Some Immortals claim using the Skull as a torture or interrogation tool is akin to using an electrical appliance to kill someone in a bathtub—it works, but that is not what the designer had in mind for it.

In any case, those who use a Crystal Skull often experience disquieting phenomena. They hear voices that seem to have no connection with what they are doing. Some Makers claim that the Skulls are alive, inhabited by some spirit or soul that tries to take over its creator. Other rumors suggest that the Skulls are used by the Secret Masters (see p. 185) to observe and dominate their reborn brethren. A couple of Immortals have turned this paranoia into a personal crusade, traveling the world in search of Crystal Skulls to destroy.

Artifacts: Making a Crystal Skull requires 10 Energy Crystals. The Maker puts them in a box and spends no less than two hours visualizing the Skull. After 30 Essence Points have been spent, a Crystal Skull—roughly the size of a human head—appears in the box.

An Immortal character wielding a Skull can converse telepathically at distances of up to 100 miles (150 km) per level of Willpower. The owner can also launch telepathic probes (the range for this is a more modest three yards/meters) on an unwilling victim. The wielder must win a Resisted Simple Willpower Test, but the Skull adds a +4 bonus to his Test. If the victim loses, he is wracked by agony, and suffers pinprick hemorrhages in his eyes and face, inflicting D6(3) points of damage, and draining the victim of D8(4) Essence Points. Prolonged exposure to this experience may inflict permanent brain damage and Essence loss. An unmodified Survival Test is required for every hour of interrogation under the Skull's power. On a failure, the victim's Intelligence is reduced by one level, and permanently loses two Essence. Some Invocations and powers may restore these losses, but mundane science cannot.

Using a Crystal Skull is not without risks. At the Chronicler's discretion, continual use may attract the attention of spirit entities who try to use the link between the Skull and the wielder to cause mischief. It is also possible that the mysterious Secret Masters can tap into the Skulls and use them to probe, scan, or even control their wielders (see Beholden Drawback, p. 80). Owning a Crystal Skull costs four points.

Energy Crystals

4-point Power

Prerequisite: Orikalk

Many students of the occult know that crystals of any kind (from diamonds to table salt) are "attractive" to Essence. The Immortals' civilization took this knowledge even further, and used specially-treated crystals as power sources. With them, they could levitate huge buildings, propel their ships, and bring light to their golden cities. Makers can use these crystals as weapons or to supplement or replace the power systems in vehicles or machines. The crystals have two main shortcomings against conventional energy supply systems, however. For one, they take a great deal of time and effort to make. More importantly, they need to be supplied with Essence on a periodic basis, and this Essence must come from an Immortal—the Essence of normal humans, Gifted or not, does not work, and neither does that of supernatural beings.

Making the Crystal requires common quartz and six ounces (170 grams) of Orikalk that has not yet been set into shape. The Orikalk is melted and the quartz added, while 15 Essence are spent. After one hour, the Orikalk is absorbed into the quartz; the stone can then be cut and polished into any desired shape.

Most Essence Crystals are used to power weapons like the Essence Wand, or the few Thought Ships that remain in existence. Makers with the appropriate Science or Mechanic Skill (at level three or higher) can hook Crystals to an engine and use it to provide power. This requires building a framework of Orikalk (1 lb/0.5 kg per Crystal used) and the expenditure of 15 Essence for every Crystal used to provide power. Electrical, steam, and internal combustion engines can use Crystals instead of their regular systems. One Crystal powers any of half dozen conventional appliances. A small vehicle (a motorcycle) needs three Crystals; a car require five to seven Crystals depending on the size. Large, powerful vehicles (trucks, small aircraft) require no less than 10-15 Crystals.

Most Makers lack the skills or the frame of mind to perform such works of science; many of them were born before the rise of technology, or lack the needed skills. Only in the past fifty years or so have Makers started to build these hybrids. Only a few dozen Crystal gadgets are in circulation worldwide.

Artifacts: Essence Crystals vary in size and shape, but they tend to look like a child's marble. Owning an Essence Crystal costs two points.

An Energy Wand is about six inches (15 centimeters) long and channels Essence to fire blasts of energy. This energy is usually invisible (those who can see Essence view it as a display of brilliant colors), but it can blast holes in things, people, or beings of Essence. Some Makers create the wands and mount them on normal pistols, thus making their own "ray guns." The wands require an Essence Crystal and one pound (0.5 kg) of Orikalk. The wand is cast, and the Crystal attached to one end. During the process, the Maker must spend 15 Essence Points to effect the change.

The wand can hold up to 20 Essence Points. This Essence must be replenished by an Immortal, or recharged by touching the wand with a charged Essence Crystal—the Essence flows into the weapon, replenishing it. Each blast from the wand costs one Essence Point, and inflicts 1D6 x 6(18) points of damage, to either Life Points, Vital Energy Essence, or Damage Capacity. Mundane armor does not protect against this weapon, although suits of Adamant or Orikalk will. The blasts have range of 3/30/60/200/500. Owning an Energy Wand costs four points.

Orikalk

4-point Power

This mystical metal is a mixture of mercury, gold, copper, and silver, heated and melted together. Its creation requires the expenditure of 15 Essence Points per pound (half kilogram). The materials need to be mixed in the same proportion (one unit each), and, unlike Adamant, no material is lost in the process (one pound/half kilogram of each of these four materials produces four pounds/two kilograms of Orikalk).

The resulting substance has a reddish gold color, and is fairly soft and easy to work with. It can be hammered and worked, or made into wires or links. Some Makers have woven chain mail out of it, for example. When the final shape is created, another 20 Essence Points per pound (0.5 kg) must be spent to "fix" it; afterwards the material becomes very solid, at least as hard and resilient as good steel.

Orikalk's hardness is not its principal quality, however. The metal has a special affinity to Essence. It can block or repel hostile Essence attacks, and it can block the path of Essence creatures. Ghosts and spirits cannot cross an area encircled by Orikalk wire; Orikalk swords cut both physical and spiritual beings; the weapons can be made to "bleed" Essence off living beings. Up to half the damage inflicted by such a weapon can become Essence drain instead.

Orikalk can also be used to make bullets. These bullets have all the aforementioned effects, including the ability to drain Essence as well as inflict damage. Used against supernatural beings, any damage that gets through is subtracted from both the Life and Essence Pools of the target.

Finally, Orikalk is somewhat responsive to the desires of the wielder. Bullets arc their flight paths to compensate for poor aiming, although they cannot shoot around corners. Swords shift their balance to allow for faster hits and parries. All Orikalk weapons have an inherent bonus of +2 to attack and defense rolls. They do not have any special damage bonuses, however.

Artifacts: An Orikalk hand weapon (sword, knife and so on) costs three points to own, regardless of the size.

Orikalk bullets or arrowheads may be owned at a cost of one point for every 10

CHAPTER NINE: ADVERSARY

Chapter Nine

Alonzo had not been in any church in—how long? Not since he was sixteen, since his parents had given up making him go. He'd always found the whole thing boring.

Now here he was, climbing the steps to the darkened church, scared out of his mind but still forcing his feet forward.

The night before, he'd chided himself. How bad could it be? The Iglesios, the Churchies, they were crazy, but if you went to their ceremonies, you'd get more privileges. Lower taxes, a chance to apply for a better job. Maybe even a car, instead of riding the stinking bus every day. But now, he did not feel as confident.

Part of it was the defacement of the church. All crosses had been erased or painted over. Everywhere were the Circles of Leviathan, looking down on him like the angry eyes of some ancient monster. And he'd heard what one of the other factory workers, Reynaldo, had whispered to the others. Reynaldo had been the first on his shift to go to one of the Church's sessions. He'd come back looking pale and haggard. When asked what he'd seen, all he'd said, in a voice so low they'd had to read his lips, was "Mounstros."

Monsters. What the hell had he meant by that?

Alonzo hesitated one more second, and went past the open portals, into the shadowy church. A lot was the same as when he was a child. The candles were there, although the Holy Water vessel was empty. But all the stained glass windows were painted over, with more symbols of the Church. A large photograph of the Apostle hung behind the altar. And, presiding over it all was a priest, a . . .

He froze, and for an instant he almost bolted out of the Church. You can't, he told himself fiercely, you can't or they might just shoot you down, or they might take down your name and tomorrow the Soul Police will be at work looking for you. Do you want to wear a yellow suit like some stupid canary?

Besides, the priest wasn't a monster. He was, who knows, a burn victim, or maybe those were warts on his face. His mother had always told him he should not stare at people with deformities. Poor man, to have to give the Mass with a face like that. Best not to look at him again, he might take offense and—

—and he just couldn't stomach to look at that face.

Taking a deep breath, Alonzo continued forward. Halfway there, he heard the clattering of booted feet behind him. He'd been so scared he hadn't heard the group rushing into the church behind him. He turned, and saw four Soul Police thugs in their black uniforms. He cringed and fell to his knees. What did I do? *his mind screamed.* What did I do wrong?

The four men rushed past him. They headed for an old woman near the front, the one that had been praying fervently when he came in. The priest—don't look at his face, just don't—was pointing at her. The men grabbed her, forced her on her feet. Then Alonzo saw it.

Clasped tightly in her hand was a crucifix and rosary.

One of the men ripped it from her hands, tossed it to the floor, and ground it under his boot. They took her away, and as they dragged her unresisting body past Alonzo, he heard the litany of the Lord's Prayer coming from her lips.

They'll kill her for this, he realized. She was praying to her God in His House, which they took away, and now they will kill her for it.

He was too scared to be angry.

Moving slowly, deliberately, Alonzo sat down, and then knelt, imitating the rest of the congregation. The priest continued talking, telling the group how to pray, what to expect. Alonzo followed the directions. If he didn't he might end up like the old woman.

At least she had the guts to do what was right, *a small part of him said. Alonzo ignored it.*

He'd survived too much to end it all now.

As the priest spoke, Alonzo felt the irresistible urge to look at the priest's face again. It's just warts, he told himself. Just warts. He looked up.

And saw the tiny tentacles writhing on the priest's face as he spoke.

Alonzo closed his eyes tightly. I will not scream. I will NOT scream.

And, sometime after he closed his eyes, he prayed to Leviathan.

And heard an answer.

Adversary

Introduction

An evil cult and all-conquering army; a seductive, compelling evil; a breeding ground for monsters and abominations; a cancer on Reality itself—the Adversary is all this and more. In the world of *Armageddon*, this once-obscure cult has overwhelmed half of the planet, and stands poised to devour the rest. This chapter describes the Adversary, the Church of Revelations (CoR) and the True Believers. It covers the Dark Apostle who leads them all, and Leviathan, whom all serve.

The Rise of the Church of Revelations

The origins of the CoR are lost in mystery and speculation. Allegedly, they date back to prehistoric times, to the mythical eras of Atlantis and Ultima Thule. Some occultists claim that the Church was the brainchild of a secretive splinter group of the Society of Thule, the occult Aryan supremacists most widely known for supporting Hitler's regime. This splinter group was known as the Searchers of Ultima Thule, and their goal was to contact Leviathan, whom they believed was the patron god of Ultima Thule. Since no records of this society have ever been made public, all remains pure speculation.

Whatever their origins, the CoR started recruiting members sometime in the mid- to late twentieth century, probably starting shortly after the end of World War II. These early Believers operated in absolute secrecy, and concentrated on amassing financial and political power. Its converts were business leaders, military officers, politicians, and diplomats, leavened with a small core of young, fanatical followers. Unlike most other religious organizations, they were in regular contact with their dark deity, and were able to coordinate plans of tremendous intricacy while covering up their activities from both mundane and supernatural watchdogs.

The organization became public at the beginning of the new millennium, during the so-called New Age in which supernatural abilities started to surface in unprecedented numbers. Members started to display the Mark of Leviathan—apparently a simple tattoo on their hands of forehead. To many religious leaders, the significance of those marks was fairly obvious, but their accusations were lost amidst other calls to persecute this or that religious minority, or outlaw magic or supernatural powers. The CoR was one of a hundred strange cults, and they all seemed harmless enough. Its members rarely got in trouble with the authorities. They were mostly clean and soft-spoken, and all appeared to be productive members of society. Many worked in factories owned by the secret, wealthier members of the cult. They often worked two shifts. In the late shift, staffed only by Believers, the factories produced weapons and other war materiel, which would be used when the time was right.

Before too long, the Church built concentrations in several areas of the world. Germany was a major recruitment area. Many of the new converts were East Germans resentful of lower living conditions than their Western brothers, even two decades after unification. In Vietnam, the movement spread through the countryside, finding fertile ground among a people who had been stripped of their traditional religion in favor of the cold comfort in Communism. In Argentina, the cult started first with the German-Argentinean community, and then spread to the disaffected youth. In Turkey, it began by quietly subverting some of the more radical Muslims sects, quietly replacing key leaders and slowly corrupting members. Smaller branches of the cult appeared in North America and other countries of Europe and Asia; these branches remained more secretive, but still managed to recruit hundreds of thousands. By 2008, there were several million converts worldwide. Most of them still operated in secret. Less than one in ten converts had a visible Mark of the Beast, and most of the rest did not publicly announce their membership.

In 2009, everything changed. The Dark Apostle rose from obscurity, and every Believer sported the Mark of Leviathan overnight. Within a year, Germany had fallen to the cult. Within two years, war raged across Europe. In little more than six years, the Church came to dominate one continent and control nearly half of two others.

The Believers

The Believers are those who have willingly accepted Leviathan as their god. They form the hard core of the Army of Revelations (AoR), and its Church. All of them have been touched by Leviathan, and its Taint has begun its work.

The converts come from all walks of life. Before the Church became public, many of them were wealthy industrialists, high-ranking military

The Legend of Ultima Thule

While Atlantis stood on a continent in what is now the Atlantic Ocean, and Mu on a similar giant island in the Pacific, Ultima Thule controlled the area of Northern Europe, with its capital where the Baltic Sea now lies. The delusions of Aryan supremacists to the contrary, the people of Ultima Thule were not Germanic (the few proto-Germanic tribes lived in the wastes of Siberia at the time) or Aryan, but a mixture of diverse racial groups, both Asian and Caucasian. Ultima Thule was ruled by the Hyperboreans, a dark-haired and pale-skinned people. They were powerful magicians who largely eschewed scientific development in favor of the pursuit of occult power.

Slowly losing a millennia-long war with Atlantis, a council of Hyperborean mages explored the Otherworlds in an attempt to change the fortunes of war. They made contact with the being known as Leviathan. The contact transformed the sorcerers into Adepts, who then returned and over a period of centuries seized power in Ultima Thule. A forced process of conversion followed, not at all unlike the one occurring in the current war. The High Priests of Leviathan summoned terrible monsters to battle the Atlanteans. For a time, the manifestation of Leviathan in our reality seemed only a matter of time. It was then that Lucifer, the Seraphim, and the Titans combined their powers to blast Ultima Thule out of existence, to destroy Atlantis and Mu, and finally to send a Flood down on the world, nearly wiping out the human race.

The CoR does not dispute these facts, although its leaders put their own spin on it. In their version, the heroic and loyal peoples of Ultima Thule were destroyed for trying to summon the rightful ruler of our reality. Atlantis is viewed as the great enemy, and the angels are considered Atlanteans' puppets (the fact that the Angels also destroyed Atlantis is rarely considered in Believer dogma). A small department of the CoR is dedicated to sending archeological expeditions down to the bottom of the Baltic Sea (which is relatively shallow), hoping to find some lost artifacts or magical items from Ultima Thule. It seems that the angels were very thorough in the destruction of that civilization, however, and so far nothing has been found.

officers, and prominent politicians. The process of conversion for this first group involved the abilities of the Adepts (see p. 328). These powerful priests of Leviathan established a link between the would-be converts and Leviathan itself. The men and women were plagued by dreams of a vast, dark entity, an entity that promised tremendous power in return for service. To the credit of humankind, less than half of those contacted succumbed to temptation. The ones who did were people who had already sold their souls in the name of power and expediency. Given a choice to gain even more power, they leapt at it, and became Leviathan's slaves.

The second wave of Believers were recruited among the young and malcontent. Every society has people who feel (rightly or otherwise) that they are not getting a fair shake. The cult started spreading through word of mouth. Little prayer cards were handed out in dance clubs and coffee houses. "Pray to the Great One, and your prayers will be answered. No purchase necessary." It became the new thing to do. Some people prayed to Leviathan out of boredom, or for a lark. Others did so out of greed, and even desperation. And they all made contact with an alien and monstrous being.

Most of those who made contact were repulsed and horrified. Later, however, some small wish or another was granted. People who had asked for promotions or good grades or lucky breaks started getting them. Often, people got hurt as a consequence of the wish. Promotions were garnered when their superiors were injured or killed in freak accidents. Strict, uncompromising teachers suffered sudden illnesses and died, only to be replaced by those with markedly favorable attitudes toward the praying students. Lucky breaks regularly occurred at the expense of others. To many, the situation was so horrible they never prayed to Leviathan again. Others either refused to see the connection or cared only for the results. They prayed again and again, wishing for better and bigger things. And in doing so, the Taint spread.

As the Believers grew in numbers, they started infiltrating other groups. In Europe, the Church absorbed several Neo-Nazi and nationalist groups. Their members stopped chanting hate slogans and started acting like productive citizens. They had found something bigger than any Aryan ideal or national identity could offer. The Church also became popular among criminals. Robbers and burglars found that their capers became easier if they used the prayer cards handed out by smiling quiet men in the worst bars of the worst neighborhoods. Some were so grateful they started donating money or even their services to the Church. In time, many were working for it full-time.

The armed forces of many nations also proved to be fertile ground. Many soldiers saw a bleak future ahead of them, as NATO slowly ceased to exist and defense budgets were slashed, then slashed again. The 21st century seemed to have little use for standing armies, and many soldiers felt themselves betrayed by the people and nations they had sworn to protect. When some popular officers organized small clubs for selected people in the services, they found ready participants. The officers spoke of new glories and a new force that would sweep the world. Those looking for meaning, and easy answers, were quickly convinced.

When the time came, every country in Europe had a well-organized and funded Fifth Column of Believers, who had positions in all major services, from the police and fire departments to the armed forces. In 2008, the total number of Believers was probably less than ten percent of the population of the nations where they first surfaced, and perhaps about one percent of the world's population. Similar movements began to appear in South and Central America, South East Asia, and the Middle East.

The Process of Conquest

In most areas, the conquest starts out violently, and then simmers down as resistance is crushed and the conquered peoples are cowed into submission. The process does not rely exclusively on brute force, however. The CoR is capable of using propaganda, bribery, and manipulation to bring new converts into the fold.

The steps below echo the events that happened when the war started in 2011. For the most part, by 2016 the Conquered Territories are all in the Consolidation or Implementation steps.

Seizure of Power

In the first step, internal chaos is created, followed shortly by overt conquest. Believers within the nation use their influence in the media to discredit all local institutions, be they political, religious, or private. Charges of corruption, criminal activity, or worse are leveled against national leaders. Propaganda paints the CoR as a

liberating force, come to free the people from pollution, greedy corporations, excessive taxes, overgrown government, or any other unpopular local situation (the propaganda is tailored to pander to the resentments of the invaded nation). Saboteurs (often in the target nation's own military) disrupt command and control, and generally undermine the country's defense forces. Believers organized strikes and work slowdowns. Attempts to arrest local Believers are denounced as human rights violations, with tales of atrocities (often unfounded or exaggerated) quickly spread.

As the country is staggered by this Fifth Column, the Revelationists strike directly from outside the country. Elite units, armed with the latest weapons and sometimes supplemented by terrible creatures, occupy key transportation hubs, destroy or capture local military bases, seize hostile television and radio stations, or destroy hospitals and other basic facilities.

Cities are largely spared unless armed opposition proves to be intense. After a number of warnings, the AoR deals with stubborn cities by mass bombardment, using fuel-air explosives or incendiary bombs. The resulting firestorm devastates most cities. In the wake of the firestorm, bands of alien Shaitan (see p. 333) sweep in, killing many of the survivors and spreading terror. After this happens to a couple of recalcitrant towns, the will to resist usually breaks. In some particularly stubborn areas (mostly in some Muslim nations), the AoR simply kills as many as two thirds of the urban population—death tolls comparable to a strategic nuclear strike.

As much of the local military is subverted beforehand, the military phase ends. During that time, civilians live under strict curfew, and public gathering places are shut down. Major political and religious leaders are arrested. Some reappear shortly afterwards, sporting the Mark of Leviathan; the rest are never seen again. Most basic services (police, schools, hospitals and the like) are turned over to local Believers, at least at the upper echelon levels. Where not enough native Believers are available, foreign Believers are used, typically of an acceptable ethnic background and fluent in the native language. The process is quick and efficient.

Consolidation

Shortly after an area has been secured (typically less than a week after a city or province has been taken over), public announcements are broadcast, explaining the new rules and regulations to the local population. They are first reassured that their lives and property are not in danger, and that a new golden age has arrived. The announcers are all skilled and media-savvy, often local TV anchors who have become Believers. Their lies are persuasive and articulate, meant to lull people into accepting the new order of things.

The initial demands are strict but not overtly harsh. Firearms must be turned over to the authorities; the weapons can be sold outright (at generous prices offered by the CoR), or the person can accept a receipt for the weapon, and redeem it after the situation normalizes. Public gatherings of more than six people require a license, which can be obtained from the police. Curfews are relaxed, but usually prohibit unauthorized movement after 10 p.m. Travel is curtailed; people need special papers to leave their hometowns, and must prove an urgent need to do so.

People live under those rules for about a month. During that time, many are visited by Leviathan in their dreams, with the usual offer of power in return for worship. By the end of the month, a good tenth of the non-Believers have converted or are on their way to converting.

The media is strictly controlled. Television stations report only the news as edited and approved by the Believers. Outside radio and TV stations are jammed, and satellite television is outlawed. The Internet remains a link to the outside world, but Internet access is quickly restricted. Most service providers are shut down, and the rest charge exorbitant fees and are closely monitored.

As long as people keep to themselves, they are largely left alone during this stage. Resistance is not tolerated, however. Demonstrators receive one warning, and then are fired upon with automatic weapons, grenades, and poison gas. Death tolls for suppressed demonstrations range from several dozen wounded or killed to the murder of every demonstrator (and any innocent bystander) in the area. The local press reports on these massacres, and adds a warning that "terrorist" activities will not be condoned. Some demonstrations, and the repression they generate, have led to citywide riots. In that case, the Believers evacuate the city of "desirables" (inasmuch as it is possible), and then shell it into rubble, sending the Shaitan in afterwards.

This period provides the best opportunity to establish a resistance network, because the Believers still do not have a thorough network of

informants and sympathizers in place. This is the only chance for possible targets to go into hiding, too, because of the chaos and confusion of the process. After the Revelationists finish consolidating their power, they are able to keep a close watch on the activities of their new subjects.

Implementation

A few weeks after people start getting used to the situation, the CoR starts imposing new rules. The new social classes are revealed (see p. 320), and a person's status is redefined by their dedication to Leviathan. Obvious unbelievers find themselves dispossessed, deprived of rights, and in some cases imprisoned or killed. Nobody knows which friend, neighbor, or relative will sport the Mark of Leviathan next. Informing on one's neighbor becomes a way of life for many; settling old scores can be as easy as placing a call to the Soul Police. Opposition is handled even more ruthlessly, by night raids or military weapons. To survive, resistance movements have to be subtle, careful, and ruthless.

With every passing day, refusing to worship Leviathan brings about more hardships. The media focuses on the positive aspects of the new world order: the awesome glory of the armed forces, the dignity of the priesthood, the power and wealth awarded to the faithful. A growing number of people starts attending church services regularly, most of them for expediency's sake. Thus, the corruption spreads.

During this stage, the CoR tries to hide the most obvious effects of Taint. The most hideously deformed Believers are ordered to conceal themselves, and Shaitan are not paraded on the streets except during times of unrest. The media never admits the existence of monstrosities walking the streets, and people who do not directly witness such events are thus less likely to believe in them.

Metamorphosis

This is the final stage of the Church's plans. It has only happened in isolated towns and villages, deep in the heart of the Conquered Territories, and only in the last couple of years.

At this point, the Believers outnumber the Gentiles. The pressure to belong increases radically; people who refuse to attend Church services are harassed and even assaulted, with no intervention from the authorities except when the fights turn against the Believers. The Tainted flaunt their deformities openly, uncaring of the opinion of non-Believers. Contact with the outside world is severely restricted. Long-distance phone calls, Internet access, and travel are denied to all who do not adopt the CoR.

Over a period of months, people are forced to choose between becoming Believers or being branded Infidels. The latter are rounded up and taken to slave camps. Eventually, only the Believers remain, and the transformation process begins in earnest. The Taint spreads, and starts to affect not only people, but all living beings. The reports from spies and partisans in the Territories vary wildly and occasionally contradict each other, but they include sightings of mutated animals and plants, of fields that seem to come alive, trees that grow eyes and faces. The land itself becomes Tainted. Gifted observers have noted ambient Taint replacing the Essence in the place. Additional reports claim that the people in those areas start to change even further, and engage in grotesque practices, from orgies and ritual torture to cannibalism, sometimes perpetrated on Infidels, and sometimes inflicted on each other. One eyewitness account, largely dismissed by mundane intelligence services, speaks of one village in a remote mountain region where the entire population fused into an obscene flesh entity, and that the resulting creature is, even now, singing to the skies in a prayer to its Master.

Life in the Conquered Territories

Life as the conquered is nothing new in Europe. Although Western Europe had not experienced it in several decades, Eastern Europe was subjugated until a mere twenty years before the war. South and Central America had lived under numerous dictatorships for a long time, and neither Asia nor the Middle East were strangers to oppression. Nothing could prepare the peoples of the Conquered Territories for the grip of the Church of Revelations, however.

In some ways, life goes on. People needed to work and make money, or they do not eat. The CoR closed many "unproductive" businesses, like stores and tourist attractions. Demand for workers, however, remained high. New factories (many of them pre-existing factories retooled for new purposes) worked around the clock to supply the needs of the growing army.

Chapter Nine

Society

The people of the Conquered Territories are divided into four broad social classes, each with its own set of documentation and rights. The differences relate to a person's spiritual status.

Infidels: Those who persist in worshipping any deity other than Leviathan are branded Infidels and lose all their rights. In effect, they are little better than slaves. Infidels must dress in bright yellow jumpsuits and shoes made of cheap materials, for ease of identification. Being caught wearing any other clothing is a capital offense. They are also fitted with a hard plastic bracelet with an electronic identification marker. Removing or destroying the bracelet is also a capital offense. These people automatically forfeit their property, which is confiscated by the Church. They become Wards of the Church, and are put to work in factories, on roads or at other menial physical labor. Many are sent to "work camps" from which few ever return.

Nobody becomes an Infidel voluntarily. They are usually discovered by the authorities or denounced by their neighbors. Anybody found in possession of a religious symbol of any kind can be tried by the Ecclesiastical Courts and, if found guilty, named an Infidel. In Consolidation and Implementation areas, Infidels number less than two percent of the population. This is growing, however, as the laws are applied more rigidly.

Gentiles: The vast majority of the conquered peoples are branded as Gentiles, those who do not worship Leviathan—yet. Their freedom of travel and assembly is greatly restricted, and they are taxed heavily. Still, they can keep their property and are nominally protected by the law. In practice, they are only one accusation away from becoming Infidels, and they live in dreadful fear and uncertainty. In the majority of areas, Gentiles make up nearly seventy percent of the population.

Probationary Members: Gentiles who agree to attend at least one weekly Mass of Leviathan, and who can document this attendance for at least a month become Probationer Members. This status results in lower taxes and greater opportunities, such as being allowed to serve in the armed forces (military service pays higher than most civilian jobs). These people start being influenced by Leviathan. The process is slow for some, while others become corrupted after only a few sessions. Probationary Members comprise some twenty percent of the population. This number steadily grows as the conquest process proceeds.

True Believers: Those on whom the Mark of Leviathan appears automatically become True Believers. These are the only full citizens of the Conquered Territories, with the most rights and privileges. The True Believers remain a small minority in most areas, only about one tenth of the total population. This number grows most, at the expense of the Gentiles.

The Church of Revelations

In the space of a few years, the CoR has grown from a clandestine organization to a huge organized body, with a bureaucracy large enough to handle the needs of over a billion people. The CoR oversees the government and the spiritual needs of the Conquered Territories. Under the Dark Apostle is a network of archbishops, bishops and cardinals who rule with an iron fist.

The CoR has many advantages over most other organizations. Its members are mystically linked through the Mark of Leviathan, which also makes it almost impossible to infiltrate. Every member is a proven Believer, and they all share in the dream of bringing Leviathan to Earth. Beyond their fanaticism, members enjoy huge privileges, including almost absolute power over the lives of Gentiles and Infidels, as well as all the luxuries and comforts money can buy. The CoR makes no pretense that the Church shuns material gain. It has total control over the economies of the conquered territories, and distributes the plunder among its members.

Even so, the CoR is an institution, and like all institutions it sees its share of infighting, competition, and petty politics. Church leaders actually encourage some of it, provided that the back stabbing and intrigue do not interfere with the primary goals of the organization. This competitiveness also helps weed out anybody who gets too complacent or lazy; the Church has no tolerance for lack of devotion, and members are always trying to find such faults in others. In practice, of course, rivalries hamper some operations—Church leaders get entangled in turf fights and forgetting their primary duties.

Organization

The CoR's organization is a perverse mockery of the Catholic Church. The Conquered Territories are divided into dioceses and archdioceses, ruled by bishops and archbishops. The similarities aided

consolidation of the initial conquests, and appealed to the Dark Apostle's whim.

The Faithful: They are the equivalent of novices, Believers who wish to serve in a spiritual capacity.

The Priesthood: Priests and nuns are the "foot soldiers" of the Church. They are in charge of local parishes, and act both as spiritual advisors and municipal administrators. A number of priests are Adepts. Adepts are rarely assigned to administrative posts, but work as AoR Chaplains or Church troubleshooters. Other priests serve in the Ecclesiastical Courts, or work as executive assistants to higher-ranked Church members.

Knights: Knights are Adepts who act as agents and assistants to the local Bishops and Archbishops.

Holy Orders: The Orders are special societies within the Church, each of which serves a special purpose. Each Order has a Grand Master (leader or commander), a number of Masters (sub-commanders, in charge of an area or unit), and the Brethren or Sisterhood (the rank-and-file).

Bishops: Bishops are in charge of a city or a district. They combine the position of spiritual leader with the office of city mayor. The Soul Police Commander answers to the Bishop. All Bishops are at least Adepts of the Second Circle.

Archbishops: The nominal rulers of an entire country. They oversee the activities of the Bishops and their political power is equivalent to that of a premier or president. Archbishops are at least Adepts of the Third Circle.

Cardinals: These Church agents have the same rank as Bishops, but do not have administrative duties. Instead, they are agents and inspectors, ensuring the smooth functioning of the Church. Some are also sent on important missions outside the Conquered Territories. Cardinals are either powerful Adepts, supernatural beings like corrupted Seraphim, or Sheol Undead.

The Dark Apostle: Johann Goering remains the head of the CoR, as well as the Supreme Commander of the AoR. Everyone ultimately answers to him.

The Ecclesiastical Courts

The legal system of the Conquered Territories is controlled by the Church, and run through the Ecclesiastical Courts. Secular lawyers can no longer find work in the Territories; millions of attorneys in Europe, Asia, and South America have had to seek other ways to make a living. A running joke in the U.S. goes that some good

with come of losing the war—the Church will kill all the lawyers. The Ecclesiastical Courts' justice is swift, biased and cannot be appealed. Common crimes are punished swiftly.

Major Orders of the Church

The orders exist outside the regular Church hierarchy. They are the equivalent of monastic or knightly societies, each with its own ranks and internal organization. Instead of a geographical area of responsibility, the Orders are widespread, with chapter houses everywhere in the Conquered Territories, and sometimes beyond them.

The Brotherhood of Purity of Purpose: Commonly known as the Brotherhood, the Monks of Leviathan, or simply the "dark monks," this Order serves as the ecclesiastical arm of the Soul Police. Its members oversee the process of conversion and the elimination of Infidels. All are Adepts of diverse power, and their Masters are at least Adepts of the Fourth Circle. They are master torturers and interrogators.

The Helping Hands of Leviathan: Also known as the Hands (and by their enemies, as the Tentacles), this order comprises most of the Army Chaplains who serve in the AoR. The Hands provide medical and arcane support. About one third of them are Adepts, usually of relatively low levels. Another third are Gifted Believers, dominated by Seers and Magicians. The rest are human doctors and nurses, all Believers, all inducted to the priesthood as well as trained in medicine. The Helping Hands work under local military command, and have relatively little influence. Its members receive universal respect from the AoR, and are even liked for their healing services. The vehicles of the Helping Hands are white, with a red Circle of Leviathan painted on the sides. The white paint and the red symbol rarely stop freedom fighters from firing on their vehicles, however. In fairness, the Red Cross or Crescent is not respected by the AoR, either.

The Mendicant Knights of Leviathan: This order is made up of supernatural beings who have accepted Leviathan as their master. From Vampyres to renegade Seraphim, they find a home in this order. The superiors of the order are mostly Sheol or Adepts, with a few powerful and loyal supernaturals thrown in. The Mendicants are often sent out to support Soul Police and AoR operations dealing with supernatural enemies. The order is relatively small, however, and their casualties are always higher than normal—their former brethren often make all-out efforts to destroy the traitors.

The Undying Knights of Leviathan: This Order is composed exclusively of Sheol, undead beings whose bodies and souls have been utterly corrupted by Leviathan (see p. 332). Several famous Nazi soldiers and agents of World War II have been revived and turned into undead monsters. The chief agent of the Undying Knights is the re-animated corpse of Otto Skorzeny, the premier SS troubleshooter of the Nazi regime. They operate in small teams or as single agents, and answer only to the Grand Master of the Order, who in turn answers only to the Dark Apostle. Many are sent to the Free World to work behind the scenes and oversee espionage, sabotage, and terrorism missions. The rest are dedicated to counter-insurgency in the Conquered Territories. These members conduct their own operations, independent from both the AoR and the Soul Police. This has caused members of both organizations to acquire a dislike for the "zombie knights," and even stirred some destructive infighting.

The Soul Police

The security army of the Cult of Leviathan is the Soul Police. They hunt down dissidents and Infidels, and in general oversee the submission of the conquered peoples. Numbering over one million agents worldwide, the Soul Police has several armored divisions of their own, which they use independently of the AoR. Its agents are superbly trained and equipped, and most of them are Believers or, at best, Probationers well on their way to conversion.

Organization

The Soul Police is organized along paramilitary and police lines. The basic ranks include trooper, sergeant, lieutenant, captain, and colonel. Colonels control a district. Over the Colonel stands a Director, who is in charge of an entire diocese, and answers only to the local Archbishop.

The Soul Police is divided into three branches. Each branch has its own specific duties and missions. In a district, a captain or a lieutenant oversees each branch.

The Criminal Branch is in charge of investigating secular violations of the law. They perform all the tasks of a normal police department. Ironically enough, this is the least prestigious branch of the service, largely staffed by former police officers of the

Conquered Territories. As a result, it has the largest proportion of non-Believers in its ranks. Any investigation launched by the Criminal Branch can be taken over by any of the other branches whenever any information it uncovers appears to involve "important" affairs. Important affairs include anything pertaining directly to the conversion and pacification of the conquered peoples, the suppression of rebellious elements, or the presence of supernatural beings.

Many of the members of the Criminal Branch are people trying to do their jobs in an impossible situation. Crimes continue to be committed, but when the perpetrator is a Believer and the victim is a Gentile or Infidel, no charges are filed unless the victim has a powerful Believer intervene on his behalf. The department has minimal resources for investigating most crimes, unless the victim is a Believer with enough connections to get justice done. Most other investigations are handled in a direct and often brutal fashion. Likely suspects are hauled in and interrogated, and sent to prison after a perfunctory trial. Many crimes go unreported because people have no faith in the police.

The Ecclesiastic Branch is staffed only by Believers. It is in charge of assisting the Brotherhood of Purity of Purpose (see p. 322) in converting the Gentiles and rooting out the Infidels. Its mission has a lot more to do with security than with religion, however, as the Branch is also dedicated to discovering any partisan or guerrilla movements in the Conquered Territories. This department is usually the largest in most districts, and the most prestigious.

Interrogation of suspected heretics or terrorists almost always involves torture, drugs, or supernatural means. A significant percentage of the Believer members are Gifted and have a number of paranormal powers, including Magic and the Second Sight; many more are Adepts, with the unique abilities granted by the Mark of Leviathan (see p. 327).

The Special Branch is the equivalent of the SWAT units, except much larger. It has its own helicopters, armored vehicles, and even several armored divisions (although largely equipped with captured French tanks in the European Territories, and similar lower-quality vehicles in other parts of the world). Its soldiers wear dark body armor and heavy military weapons. Their job is counterinsurgency and general terror. They are called whenever the enemy uses enough weapons or raw power to be a real threat.

Chapter Nine

The Army of Revelations

The militant arm of the Church of Revelations is the AoR. With over six million soldiers (and growing at a terrifying rate despite tremendous combat casualties), it is the largest army in the world, and the most powerful. That the AoR is committed to no less than five theaters of operations has saved the U.S. from being overrun, but every day, more troops and materiel are shipped from Europe and North Africa to the Americas, despite heavy losses inflicted by U.S. submarines and aircraft. Every year, the AoR grows stronger, as it digests the resources and population of the Conquered Territories, and recruits more converts into its ranks.

The AoR is unique in several respects, even aside from its supernatural elements. First of all, it is a truly multinational force, with soldiers from dozens of countries fighting together. It has a unified command, with a minimum of inter-service rivalries to get in the way of conquest. And it is highly motivated, staffed largely by fanatics with military training.

Organization

The AoR has two branches, the Navy of Retribution and the Army of Revelations. There is no air force; both the Navy and the Army have air wings, which are subordinate to those services. Navy and Army organizations follow NATO standards in other respects. The army consists largely of armor or mechanized infantry divisions with artillery and other support units. The AoR has a very large Army Chaplain contingent, with a squad of Chaplains assigned to each company.

The Shaitan (see p. 333) are organized into regiments, and kept segregated from the rest of the army. Some professional soldiers find the monsters to be both repulsive and of little use except as cannon fodder and for mop-up operations, but most accept their presence as yet another gift from Leviathan.

The Army has no sexual bias, and female soldiers are assigned to front-line units routinely. About forty percent of army personnel is made up of females, with a higher ratio in support units and a lower one in combat ones.

Training

Training levels among AoR troops vary widely. In the years preceding the initial attack, hundreds of thousands of Believers underwent intensive secret training. Vehicle crews were trained with computer simulators so precise they performed almost flawlessly when equipped with the real thing. Additionally, many Believers were recruited from the ranks of established national armies, especially the German, French, Italian and Polish armies. As the AoR swept through Eastern Europe, many other recruits with some military training followed.

The manpower needs of the Army continued to grow as more nations fell, however. For the most part, front-line units are composed of hard-core Believers with extensive training. New volunteers are kept in reserve units that trained even as they prepared to relieve older units, with replacements trickling in to replace combat losses. The quality of these replacements is lower overall, which accounts for some of the recent reversals in Russia.

In South America, the core of the AoR was largely Argentinean, all Believers who underwent the same training as their German counterparts. Vietnamese and Turkish Believers also were superbly trained. The Believers under arms in the countries those two nations conquered are not as well trained as the ones in Europe. All these nations had a smaller human pool from which to draw forces, and as casualties mounted (even after using Arisen to make up for their losses), the quality of replacements fell drastically. That had something to do with the failure of the AoR to move north into the U.S.

Logistics

The AoR has had trouble with supply lines. A six million man army is a huge monster that needs to be fed and maintained. The First Army has all the resources of Europe at its disposal, but neither of the other four armies have enough of an industrial base to maintain their operations. Shipping supplies is possible but dangerous, as the U.S. has the edge on the seas, even after the loss of several aircraft carriers and submarines.

Technology

The AoR possesses cutting-edge technologies at its disposal. The Church subverted many members of the Combine (see p. 176), who had access to the most advanced weapon prototypes in the world. The CoR then converted some of top weapon designers, many of whom were only too happy to meet with an employer that appreciated their talents and, even better, had the resources to develop their most ambitious projects. As a result, when the war started, the AoR had some of the best aircraft and tanks in the world.

Supernatural Elements

In purely mundane terms, the AoR is an impressive war machine. Its weapons, tanks, and aircraft tell only part of the story, however. Many Free World generals made the mistake of trying to ignore the AoR's supernatural aspects; most of them have paid the ultimate price for it. Never in recorded history has a force amassed so much temporal and mystical power together.

First of all, the Church provides several units of supernatural personnel for the Army. The Army Chaplains, staffed by the Helping Hands of Leviathan (see p. 322), are psychics, magicians, and healers of some skill. More important are the Adepts of Leviathan (see p. 328), Believers who establish a powerful link with the Mad God and who have a host of strange powers. The Adepts are often used to good effect against the Seraphim and other supernatural enemies of the AoR.

The AOR also has at its disposals hordes of Shaitan (see p. 333), alien beings from the same dimension as Leviathan and who take over and mutate simple life forms (from insects to reptiles). Their very presence causes Taint in reality. They are fierce creatures, some as large as elephants, all incredibly strong and dangerous. Against a modern military, however, the usefulness of the Shaitan is limited. The creatures, while tougher than human, are not bulletproof, and even the largest of them can be easily destroyed by personal anti-tank weapons, much less the main guns of tanks or concentrated artillery.

Shaitan are often used in probing or first wave attacks to tire out and demoralize enemies. In that role they are very well suited—they are fearless, their appearance terrifies humans, and their deaths do not demoralize the AoR human units (who do not like them in the first place). They are also very effective against disorganized or poorly equipped human armies. They have been great assets in Asia and South America, for example. Against partisans, civilians, and the like, the Shaitan are more devastating than equal numbers of regular troops.

Taint and Invocations

Adepts with Magical Invocations use them like normal magic, with the following modifiers. The intent of the caster does not affect the Invocation in any way. Failed Dismissals (when an Invocation fails) invariably result in damage. The Crowd Effect works normally. Group Magic works as well, as long as the participants use Taint and not Essence. Normal Times, Items and Places of Power do not work, but Tainted equivalents exist. Areas where the Metamorphosis stage has been reached become Tainted Places of Power.

Supernatural Adepts

Supernatural beings (such as Seraphim, Avatars, and their ilk) who become Adepts have their Essence Pool replaced by a Taint Pool. They retain all their previous powers, but they are fueled by Taint instead. The Seraphim's vulnerability to Taint is lost, and not replaced by an equivalent vulnerability to Essence (they now have the vulnerabilities of Adepts, of course). They are not restricted by Taint Channeling levels for those powers that do not use Essence Channeling normally, but still use it for the any Adept powers. Status-wise, supernatural Adepts are considered to be one Circle above their normal station (i.e., a supernatural First Circle Adept would have the effective social rank, but not the powers, of a Second Circle adept, and so on).

Finally, two types of undead serve with the AoR. The Sheol (see p. 332) are former humans whose souls are Tainted by Leviathan. The Arisen (see p. 332) are mindless zombies temporarily raised by the Adepts to serve as cannon fodder. Again, the value of the Arisen is limited at best. Modern weaponry makes frontal infantry assaults useless for the most part. They are still a powerful psychological weapon; like bayonets in older times, their effect on the morale of the enemy is more important than their physical effect.

Life In the Army

The morale of the army is by and large very high. The troops are mostly volunteers, and a high percentage of them are Believers. They are treated well, with discipline but without undue brutality, and indoctrinated from early on into thinking of themselves as an elite, exceptional unit. The soldiers are highly paid, and given the utmost respect.

In addition to material needs, the Church sees to it that soldiers' baser desires are also satisfied. Following the WW II Japanese example, the Church creates "Pleasure Battalions" staffed by male and female Infidel prisoners. Every desire, no matter how corrupt or deviant, can be satisfied there. The ranks of the Pleasure Battalions are rapidly depleted through murder or suicide—and they are just as quickly replenished. Soldiers are awarded Performance Chits, which are traded for services in the Pleasure Battalions. These chits are awarded for exemplary service and acts of piety (such as attending several Church services every week).

Many soldiers find the presence of Shaitan to be disturbing, but this is slowly changing. More and more soldiers are also exhibiting the physical effects of the Taint (see p. 327), so they are themselves becoming more inhuman.

All company-level or higher-ranked officers must be Believers and bear the Mark of Leviathan. In the lower ranks, the proportion of Believers varies from unit to unit, but it is never less than thirty percent, and in elite units it is almost always one hundred percent. Most non-commissioned officers (about nine-tenths) are also Believers. Additionally, most soldiers convert after their first or second year of enlistment. Attendance at Church services is not officially mandatory, but those who attend are rewarded with extra leaves and other minor privileges, and those who make it a point not to attend them are quietly singled out and isolated.

Taint

Leviathan is a being from beyond our reality. It is so alien that its mere existence on our world causes reality to break down and decay. Although it has yet to manifest in our universe, its influence has already begun the process of transformation and destruction. Occultists refer to this as Dissolution, or Taint. In a way, the Taint is the opposite of Essence, an energy that twists life and reality, perverts them, and ultimately destroys them.

Effects of Taint

Those who worship Leviathan becomes the first victims of Taint. In a way, the effects are like a contagious disease, or a form of cumulative poison. The longer the Believers expose themselves to Leviathan's touch, the greater the risk of becoming Tainted. One of the first signs is the Mark of Leviathan, but others soon follow.

Sooner or later, victims start to mutate and change. Their skin becomes rougher, or develops strange growths. Some people start growing hair in unusual places, while others lose it altogether. Others start developing bestial traits. Many grow tentacles on their bodies, limbs, or face.

In some cases, the Taint manifests not through the Believer's body, but through effects in the world around her. Some Believers can cause plants to wither in their presence, kill small animals with a touch, and similar unpleasant effects. These effects get worse with time. Some older members of the Church no longer resemble anything human.

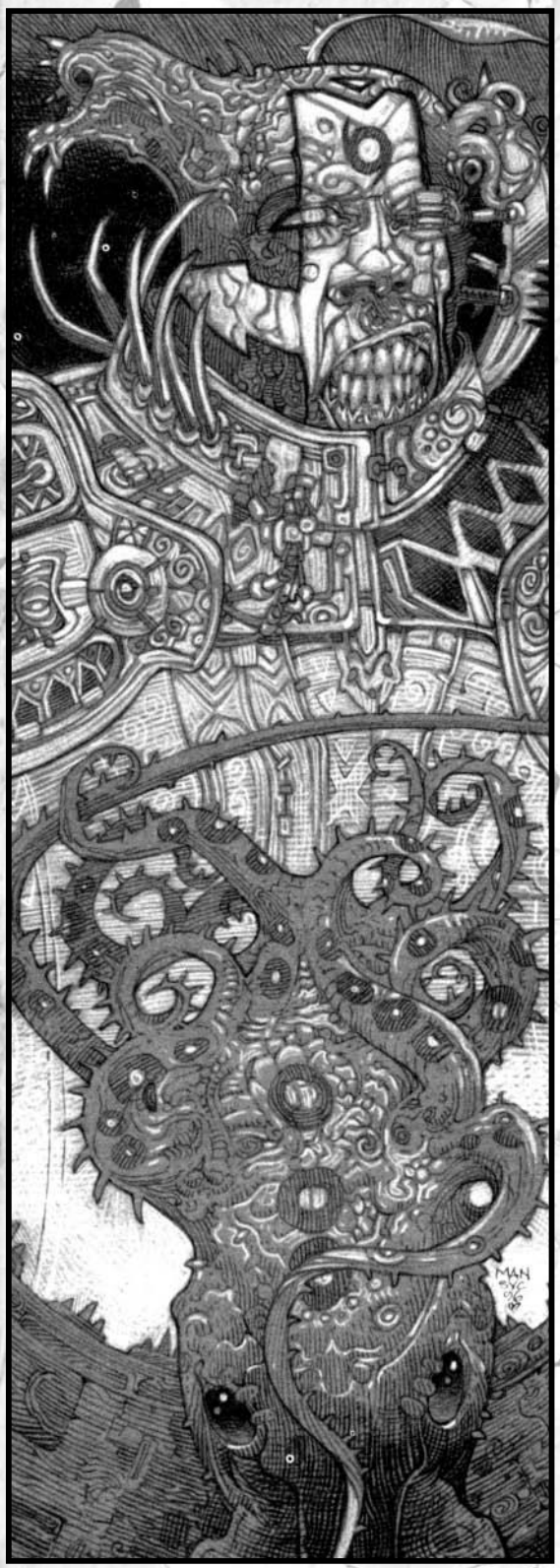
The Adepts of Leviathan are those humans who have learned to use the Taint as a power, manipulating it like normal Gifted humans use Essence. Those who wield the Taint are utterly corrupted by it, and their minds and bodies become increasingly alien and more monstrous. To see a high-level Adept is to see Earth's future if Leviathan's minions win the day.

The Mark Of Leviathan

The Mark of Leviathan appears on all True Believers. It is a circle with two curved spikes, black or dark red in color, that seems to be a tattoo on the forehead or hand of the Believer. It is not a normal tattoo, however. Before the war, some youths started imitating the Mark with tattoos of their own (the fad vanished soon after, and a lot of people underwent the expensive and painful process of having the tattoos removed or covered; those who did not often died in impromptu lynchings). Unlike those tattoos, the true Mark has a psychic as well as physical presence. It acts as a conduit between Leviathan's reality and our own, and is used as a means of communication between Believers.

Effects of the Mark: Those who accept Leviathan in their hearts (not those who pray to him out of fear or convenience, although eventually they also come to be Tainted) manifest the Mark. From that point on, the process of corruption is nearly irreversible. Some may try to lie to themselves and pretend they are still their own person, but whenever they are called to act, they find themselves obeying orders, no matter how loathsome. Those with the Mark are committed to the service of the Church.

The Mark also enhances the latent psychic abilities of humans. Those who wear the Mark recognize each other on sight, and know if



people are wearing fake Marks. Magical illusions and psychic projections used to simulate the Mark can fool the average Believer, however (but not the more powerful Adepts). Also, Adepts can communicate at distance with anybody who carries the Mark. In the course of the war, this has allowed commanders to know the exact location of units in the battlefield, and send orders telepathically through an Adept, reducing the risk of an intercept.

As a side effect of the Taint, those who bear the Mark become more resistant to magical or psychic probes than normal people. All Believers have a +2 bonus to resist unwanted telepathic or magical scanning; this bonus resists all powers, Invocations, and other supernatural means of mind reading, locating, or detecting people.

When operating covertly, Believers can, through an effort of will, hide the Mark from outsiders. This costs them two Essence Points (or Taint when they develop a Taint pool), which cannot be regained until the Mark becomes visible once again. Certain Invocations (like Insight) and Seer abilities can pierce this disguise, but first must overcome the Believers' natural defenses against scanning.

The Mark and Supernatural Creatures: Humans are not the only ones to surrender to Leviathan. A number of supernatural beings have betrayed their brethren and the rest of reality and have aligned themselves with the Dark Apostle. The Mark also appears on those beings. Supernatural beings gain all the Believer benefits described above. Some also become Adepts, but in doing so they forsake most Essence-based abilities.

The Adepts

A number of Believers have managed to establish such a strong connection to Leviathan they are transformed by it. Their very souls start to mutate, becoming creatures of Taint instead of Essence. The Taint gives them tremendous power, at the cost of most of their humanity. Adepts are among the most dangerous of the servants of Leviathan.

Becoming an Adept

Nobody knows what prompts a Believer to become an Adept. It might be that these men and women are reincarnations of the Hyperborean Priesthood of Ultima Thule. Or perhaps these people were latent Gifted irrevocably transformed

by their connection to Leviathan. However they are chosen, the symptoms are all the same.

The first change occurs at the most fundamental level. Over a period of several weeks, the Adept's soul is transformed, from a construct of Essence to one of Taint, the dark mirror of Essence. Instead of an Essence Pool, the character now has a Taint Pool. There are few outward signs of the change at first, because the shape of the matrix remains the same; only its composition has changed. Most Adepts of the First Circle look pale and sickly, but that is all. As the Adept grows in power and experience, the changes become more apparent. Each new Circle brings greater mutations.

Common Adept Powers

All Adepts have a number of special powers, granted to them by the Taint that has invaded their bodies. In addition, their degree of advancement (or Circle) gives them unique pseudo-magical powers.

Conversion of Essence Powers: Former Essence-based powers are converted into equivalent Taint abilities. Theophanies and Primal Powers are retained, but are fueled by Taint. Fortunately, converting a supernatural being or a Gifted human is a difficult process, requiring the combined efforts of several Adepts. As a result, most supernatural converts remain mere Believers, with an Essence Pool.

Hard to Kill: All Adepts have the equivalent of five levels of Hard to Kill (see p. 73). This gives them a total of +15 Life Points and +5 to all Survival Tests, and is cumulative with normal Hard to Kill levels (to a maximum of 10 levels).

Psychic Communication: Adepts can communicate with any Believer, and receive psychic impressions from them. The range of this communication is one mile per Willpower level of the Adept. Adepts are often used in lieu of radios or other standard means of communication.

Taint Channeling: This works like Essence Channeling (see p. 81). Adepts have a base Channeling level equal to their Intelligence attribute. They can recover one point of Taint per level every minute.

Taint Healing/Wounding: Adepts can heal any wounds by spending Taint Points. Each point spent in this manner heals D6(3) Life Points. Adepts are limited by their Channeling level in the number of Taint Points they can spend in one Turn (so, an Adept with Taint Channeling 4 could heal up to D6 x 4(12) points per Turn). This Healing also works on other Tainted creatures (like the Shaitan or other Adepts). If used on normal humans, or any other being of Essence, the Taint actually harms them, causing burning and blistering (damage is inflicted at the same rate as healing). Taint burns are terribly painful; victims suffer a -2 penalty to all actions for one Turn after being wounded. The Adept must be touching skin to heal or harm.

Taint Pool: Instead of an Essence Pool, Adepts have a Taint Pool. This anti-Essence works in some ways like normal life energy, but in others it is the total opposite. Attacks that drain Essence, like Soulfire, also drain Taint, but the process is even more painful for the Tainted ones (along with the usual drain, being hit by a blast of pure Essence imposes a -2 penalty to all actions for the following Turn, due to the agony inflicted). Adepts start with a Taint Pool equal to their basic Essence Pool. Each Circle adds bonuses to this base pool.

Adept Circles

The ancient Priesthood of Leviathan divided its Adepts into Six Circles, with each successive Circle indicating a greater level of understanding and power. This old hierarchy has been revived, and apparently expanded, by the CoR. Although an Adept's Circle does not represent an actual rank in either the clergy or the military, it is a mark of status. Powerful Adepts often have a measure of authority greater than their actual rank would indicate.

As Adepts attain greater Circles, their previous powers are supplemented by those listed in previous ranks.

Adepts of the First Circle

The First Circle is the beginning stage, the time when the Adept is still learning to use his powers. First Circle Adepts serve as assistants or servants of more powerful Adepts. First Circle Adepts are also found assisting the Soul Police in relatively peaceful areas, honing their skills in some safety. Most of the time, they study Invocations, which they cannot use until reaching the Second Circle.

Blast of Taint: The Adept can fire a blast of Tainted energy, which does damage directly to the target's Life Points. The blast inflicts D4(2) points of damage per Taint Point spent on it, and has a range of 10/50/150/600/1000. Those hit by a blast of Taint suffer a -2 penalty to all actions for the following Turn, due to the agony

inflicted. Aiming the blast uses the character's Dexterity and Perception, or Dexterity and Magic Bolt Skill, if known.

Bonuses: None.

Adepts of the Second Circle

These Adepts are the backbone of the Church. They are Tainted sorcerers who undergo a measure of magical training during their initiation, and who are sent out to support the Army and Soul Police on a number of operations. They are the most likely sorcerous foe encountered on the battlefield.

Magical Knowledge: All Adepts of the Second Circle can use Magic, and know the following Invocations: Elemental Fire, Farsight, and Shielding, all at a minimum level of two, with at least one Invocation at level three.

Taint Signs: About 10% of all Adepts of this level have a Taint mark of some sort, usually a facial or skin malformity.

Bonuses: +1 to Taint Channeling level, and +30 Taint Points.

Adepts of the Third Circle

Those reaching the Third Circle learn the first secrets of summoning entities from Leviathan's realm. These summoners tend to stay behind the lines, calling down unspeakable monstrosities against the enemies of Leviathan.

Lesser Summoning: Summoning one Lesser Shaitan costs one Taint Point and takes one minute. Greater Shaitan are ten times as expensive, and take ten times as long to summon. Taint used in this manner cannot be regained until the Shaitan is destroyed or dismissed, limiting how many monsters the summoner can call at any given time.

Magical Knowledge: Adepts of the Third Circle usually learn one more Invocation at level two or higher. The most common are Lesser Illusion, Levitation, or Warding.

Taint Signs: 20% of these Adepts have a minor Taint mark as above; 5% have a more noticeable deformity, often a vestigial, useless limb, like a tail or tentacle.

Bonuses: +1 to Taint Channeling, +30 Taint Points (cumulative with previous bonuses).

Adepts of the Fourth Circle

The Fourth Circle indicates a major turning point in the Adept's life. Their bodies undergo a significant transformation, which may have visible signs, and always greatly enhances their physical capabilities. Fourth Circle Adepts are no longer human; their strength and vitality are the match of most supernatural beings. Coupled with their magical abilities, this makes Adepts the ideal agents and enforcers of the Church. Whenever a Fourth Circle Adept shows up, it is a clear sign that the Powers that Be are greatly concerned with the situation.

Raise the Dead: The Adept can create up to 10 Arisen per Willpower level, provided she has enough corpses, at the cost of two Taint Points per Arisen. This process can be performed up to six times a day (allowing one Adept to raise as many as 60 Undead per Willpower level per day).

Taint Signs: 40% of Fourth Circle Adepts have a minor Taint mark; another 20% have a noticeable deformity, and some 5% no longer look human, but have a face full of tentacles, or six eyes, or some other hideous disfigurement. The rest look human, although this appearance is but a facade.

Bonuses: Add +3 to Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution. Then double their Life Points and Taint Pools (taking into account both the new Attributes and previous Circle bonuses).

Adepts of the Fifth Circle

These Adepts are the main source of Shaitan and Arisen in the Army of Revelations. They are hideously powerful and twisted beings.

Greater Summoning: The ability of the Adept to summon both Shaitan and Undead increases by a factor of ten. Thus, ten Lesser Shaitan or one Greater Shaitan may be summoned in one minute for a cost of one Taint Point. Further, 100 Arisen per Willpower level can be raised at the cost of two Taint Points per ten.

Magical Knowledge: These Adepts know an additional four to six Invocations, at levels three to five.

Taint Signs: The proportion of visibly Tainted Adepts nearly doubles. 50% of all Adepts have minor marks, 40% have a noticeable deformity, and 10% are totally inhuman. No Fifth Circle Adept can pass as a normal human.

Bonuses: +100 to Taint Pool, +100 to Life Points, +5 to Strength, Dexterity and Constitution, +3 to Intelligence, Perception and Willpower, +1 to Taint Channeling level.

Adepts of the Sixth Circle

Only a few Sixth Circle Adepts exist. Their powers are extreme, and they are Archbishops, Cardinals, or Order Masters and Grand Masters.

Taint Signs: 50% of all Adepts are no longer even vaguely human. The rest all have major deformities.

Bonuses: Triple both the character's Life and Taint points once again (taking into account all bonuses), +1 to Taint Channeling level.

Higher Adepts

Some Church Leaders are thought to belong to the Seventh or higher Circles. Through their link to Leviathan, these True Believers can perform awesome supernatural feats. They command the elements, bend the rules of chance and fate, and raise the dead as mindless zombies. They summon monstrous beings known as the Shaitan. The greatest are a match for the most powerful Gifted humans and supernatural beings. Add the high-tech armies and devices they command to the equation, and they are daunting foes.

In the Far East, the Believers answer to the Lady of Jade, a child-like, inhuman creature. In the Middle East, the Church is governed by the Dark Imam, a living mockery of the merciful precepts of Islam. In Central America, El General dictates life and death for millions. The Dark Imam, the Lady of Jade, and El General are all believed to be Eighth or Ninth Circle Adepts, although they look mostly human. What powers these beings wield, and how they are able to hide their Taint, remains a mystery. Some claim those leaders have fought off assassination attempts from Greater Seraphim.

The Dark Apostle

Johann Goering, the Dark Apostle, is an enigmatic figure. On telecasts, he looks like a normal human being, and a charismatic one at that. He shows no visible signs of supernatural powers or other qualities. But a video tape of the riots of 2009 shows Goering as he walked towards police barricades. Despite being shot dozens, if not hundreds of times, he impassively reached the police officers and tore them apart with his bare hands. The Seraphim and the Old Gods have tried to destroy him, and have failed. So have multiple teams of assassins, freedom fighters, and even high-level Adepts who tried to take over the Church. None of these would-be killers survived.

Except when making public appearances, the location and movements of the Dark Apostle are not commonly known. Sometimes, he appears with no warning near the front lines of Asia, the Middle East, and America. Sometimes, he is accompanied by a small bodyguard of Adepts and Shaitan; more often, he is completely alone. How he can travel from place to place undetected and quickly remains a mystery. Those surprise visits have terrified and awed the soldiers of the AoR and augmented the legend around the man.

Occultists are not sure of exactly what or who Goering is. An orphan, raised first by a normal family and then by the Cult of Leviathan, he is clearly more than human.

Chapter Nine

Creatures of Leviathan

Described below are some of the people and creatures that serve Leviathan, and their basic attributes and common abilities. Of course, these beings are not the sum total of the Adversary's blight. New horrors are being raises each day, from mutated humans to genetically engineered beasts to entities from beyond our reality. Chroniclers should feel free to device any monster desired (or use any found in other Unisystem game products) and send them forth as minions of the Dark Lord.

Cardinal Dan Gordon
Sheol Agent

Dan Gordon was a good policeman, until witnessing one crime too many unhinged him. One night, Dan walked into a holding area and emptied his service pistol into the group of prisoners, killing four and injuring seven. He was shocked when the system turned against him and, for a change, convicted him in record time. The bitterness and hatred was too much for him, and Dan committed suicide in prison. Life after death offered redemption, but when contacted by Leviathan the chance to pay back the system that had betrayed him was too good to pass up. He rose up, and works secretly in the U.S., overseeing a network of spies and saboteurs.

Str 6 Dex 4 Con 7 Int 3 Per 4 Will 2

Life Points: 186
Endurance Points: n/a
Speed: 22
Essence Points: 56

Qualities/Drawbacks: Acute Senses (Hearing), Cruel 3, Fast Reaction Time, Resources (Wealthy)

Skills: Brawling 4, Computers 3, Disguise 3, Driving (Auto) 2, Electronic Surveillance 3, Guns (Handgun) 4, Guns (Shotgun) 2, Hand Weapon (Baton) 2, Questioning 3, Stealth 3, Streetwise 4, Surveillance 2

Special Powers: All Sheol Powers

Equipment: Automatic shotgun, 9mm pistol, as well as a small arsenal of weapons and vehicles stashed in several mid-western cities in the U.S. He also has over a dozen agents, mostly human Believers, spread over those cities.

The Sheol

The Sheol are humans who were contacted by Leviathan after their deaths. These restless spirits agreed to serve the Mad God, and thus were returned to their bodies as Tainted Undead. The Sheol look like vaguely mummified creatures. They are extremely hard to kill, and have a number of Taint powers. Sheol are used as agents and enforcers of the Church.

Sheol Powers

Attributes and Points: Sheol are built using 20 points for Attributes, 10 points in Qualities (and up to 10 in Drawbacks), and 35 points in Skills (older and more powerful Sheol can be created with more points, as the Chronicler sees fit). In addition, the Sheol gain +3 to Strength and +3 to Constitution. Their Life Points are triple the normal amount. As Undead, the Sheol do not have Endurance Points; they never get tired.

Create Shadows: By using Taint to dim the lights in an area, the Sheol can create a sphere of darkness, useful for hiding or ambushing. The area affected equals one square yard (meter) per Taint Point spent. Anybody fighting in or firing into the area is at -3 to most combat Tasks, except the Sheol, who is immune to the darkness it creates. The darkness lasts for one minute, or until dispelled by the Sheol.

Psychic Communications: The Sheol can converse telepathically with any Adept. The range of this connection is 10 miles (15 kilometers) per Willpower level of both the Sheol and the Adept.

Resistant to Damage: The Undead bodies of the Sheol can withstand a great deal of damage. This is reflected in their large Life Point Pool, and by an inherent Armor Value 10. The Sheol can also heal damage by using Taint Points, regaining two Life Points per Taint Point spent. The only way to kill a Sheol is to reduce both its Life Points and Taint Pool to -30.

Taint Manipulation: The Sheol can use as many Taint Points as it needs to, and does not need Taint Channeling to do so. They recover Taint at the rate of one point per Turn (12 points per minute). The character has a Taint Pool equal to the sum of it attributes plus 30.

Typical Arisen

Str 3 **Dex** 3 **Con** 2 **Int** 2 **Per** 2 **Will** 2

Life Points: 60
Endurance Points: n/a
Speed: 10
Essence Points: 0

Skills: Brawling 1, Dodge 1, Guns (Assault Rifle) 2, Hand Weapon (Bayonet) 1, Hand Weapon (Knife) 1

Special Powers: All Arisen Powers

Equipment: G-22 Assault Rifle with Grenade Launcher. No body armor or other equipment.

The Arisen Hordes

These Undead creatures can be raised by the more powerful Adepts. The Arisen are nearly mindless and follow orders blindly, only half-remembering their training. They are tough, but their lack of imagination or initiative makes them relatively weak. Some AoR units that suffered catastrophic casualties have been turned into Arisen units, and sent ahead of other units to soften up the opposition.

Arisen Powers and Vulnerabilities

Believer Control: The Arisen follow the orders of any Believer they encounter.

Remembered Skills: Arisen have the same skills they had in life, but use them at a -1 penalty. They can wield the weapons and equipment that they were trained with, or simply attack with their bare hands.

Undead: The Arisen have double the normal Life Points they had when alive, but once reduced to zero, they collapse and die. Until that happens, they continue to fight, even after losing limbs or other body parts.

The Shaitan

The Shaitan are not a race of creatures. They are twisted Taint spirits, summoned to our plane of existence, and made to inhabit the nearest lesser life form they encounter. Sometimes this means small animals and insects, but they are even called to take over fungi and bacteria in the air. In all cases, the animals are consumed and transformed into mutated, gigantic monsters. Most Shaitan forms are vaguely humanoid, but many are nothing more than tentacled horrors and sheer mockeries of human life. Their size varies from roughly human to crawling or flying horrors the size of a house. They have honed predatory instincts and fast reflexes, making them ideal hunters and hand-to-hand fighters.

Against modern weapons, they fare poorly. Most are too mindless to use normal weapons, and so must be able to reach their targets with their hands or claws or tentacles. The largest creatures are highly resistant to small arms fire, but even they can be destroyed by heavy weapons. Their hideous shapes, and grotesque wails, are certain to lower the morale of their enemies, however. Some of the creatures also have additional powers, enabling them to terrorize or even drive insane or kill humans in large numbers. Shaitan were used extensively in the South American and Asian theaters, less so in Europe. They did fine in the Americas until they faced the U.S. Army, where they were slaughtered by the hundreds of thousands.

The Shaitan have the advantage that they can be summoned again and again, making them cheap, disposable troops. And when they manage to break through a defensive line, the slaughter they inflict is hideous. Casualties of human units fighting the Shaitan depend on whether or not the Shaitan manage to reach and overwhelm the defenders. If the defending unit stands its ground, its casualties can be relatively light. If the Shaitan break through, casualties can be as high as 80%, most of them fatalities.

AoR Soldier

This is a common line soldier, who can also be used as a Soul Police SWAT trooper. About 30% of all soldiers are Believers. The rest are normal humans, but highly motivated and loyal soldiers.

Str 3 **Dex** 3 **Con** 2 **Int** 2 **Per** 2 **Will** 2

Life Points: 30
Endurance Points: 26
Speed: 10
Essence Points: 14

Qualities/Drawbacks: Zealot

Skills: Brawling 2, Dodge 2, Guns (Assault Rifle) 3, Hand Weapon (Bayonet) 1, Hand Weapon (Knife) 2

Special Powers: Non-Believers have none. Believers have Mark of Leviathan abilities.

Equipment: G-22 Assault Rifle with Grenade Launcher, L-11 Combat Armor, Knife-bayonet, HUD Helmet Laser Sight, three hand grenades.

Soul Police Agent

These are uniformed agents. Plainclothes detectives add one to their Questioning Skill. About 60% of all agents are Believers.

Str 3 **Dex** 3 **Con** 3 **Int** 2 **Per** 3 **Will** 3

Life Points: 34
Endurance Points: 32
Speed: 12
Essence Points: 17

Qualities/Drawbacks: Cruel, Situational Awareness, Zealot

Skills: Dodge 3, Guns (Handgun) 4, Guns (SMG) 3, Hand Weapon (Knife) 3, Intimidation 2, Martial Arts 3, Questioning 4

Special Powers: Non-Believers have none. Believers have Mark of Leviathan abilities.

Equipment: P-61 machine-pistol, Class II Kevlar Vest (sewn into uniform), badge, handcuffs, two stun grenades, dagger, radio.

Shaitan Powers

For all their wide variety of forms and shapes, the Shaitan have a number of common abilities.

Attributes: Shaitan Attributes range from four to 10 for the Lesser forms, and from six to 18 for the Greater ones.

Hideous Appearance: The monstrous shapes of the Shaitan require a Fear Test at a -2 penalty for unprepared or inexperienced soldiers. After a few encounters with the Freaks, as they are commonly called, most learn to deal with them.

Flight: About one fourth of all Shaitan summoned have wings or other means of flight. They tend to be slow, cumbersome fliers, averaging less than 40 mph (60 kph) in speed, although a few can exceed 100 mph (150 kph).

Natural Weaponry: Many Shaitan have sharp teeth, claws, and horns that do slashing damage.

Resistant to Damage: The alien nature of the Shaitan makes their flesh less easy to damage. Special damage bonuses, like those from slashing weapons or hollow-point bullets, do not apply against the Shaitan. Also, the Shaitan have rarely less than 60 Life Points, and many have 100 Life Points or more. To figure Life Points, add their Strength and Constitution, multiply the result by 10, and add either 20 (for Lesser Shaitan) or 50 (for Greater Shaitan). If the creatures are reduced to -30 Life Points, they collapse and rapidly dissolve into a noxious substance.

Skin Armor: Most Shaitan are armored by either hard skin or scales, or layers of blubbery flesh. Typical AVs range from 5 to 40. The Greater Shaitan have an Armor Value of at least 20, and the largest ones have an armor of 60 to 100. This armor is immune to armor-piercing attacks, and protects against both physical and Essence-based attacks.

Taint: The Shaitan are beings of Taint, and have a Taint Pool, usually equal to two-thirds (rounded up) of their Life Points. If their Taint Pool is reduced to -20 points through Essence-based attacks, they cease to exist.

Other Powers: Some Greater Shaitan have powers that affect an area. They include emotion-altering abilities (treat as Fear Tests, with a -1 to -6 penalty, affecting an area of 10 to 100 yards/meters), direct Taint attacks (inflicting D4 x 4(8) to D4 x 10(20) points to a similar large area; this Taint damage cannot be absorbed by mundane armors), and even Adept Powers (these Greater Shaitan are actually not physically larger, and have the physical Attributes of Lesser Shaitan, but normal human mental Attributes).

Typical Lesser Shaitan

Str 7 **Dex** 4 **Con** 5 **Int** 1 **Per** 2 **Will** 4

Life Points: 140
Endurance Points: n/a
Speed: 18 (36 flying)
Taint: 60
Armor Value: 10

Skills: All attacks treated as skill level 3

Special Powers: All Shaitan Powers

Damage: Claws: D6 x 7(21) slashing damage; Teeth: D4 x 6 (12) slashing damage

Typical Greater Shaitan

Str 15 **Dex** 5 **Con** 9 **Int** 2 **Per** 2 **Will** 6

Life Points: 400
Endurance Points: n/a
Speed: 28 (36 flying)
Taint: 120
Armor Value: 50

Skills: All attacks treated as skill level five. The creature can attack four times per Turn, reaching targets up to 20 yards (meters) away.

Special Powers: All Shaitan Powers.

Song of Taint: Mundanes have to pass a Simple Willpower Test or be paralyzed with terror for six minus Willpower Turns (minimum 1 Turn). The song affects a radius of 200 yards (meters), and can be used once every minute.

Damage: Tentacles: D8 x 15(60); **Teeth:** D6 x 15(45), slashing damage

CHAPTER TEN: CHRONICLES

Chapter Ten

They struck in the night, like thieves. That riled Guy Lowell, a two-year graduate from the Police Academy, who still believed cops should order perpetrators out of their houses with loudspeakers, not launch surprise attacks like a bunch of ninjas crawling in to steal the silverware. On the other hand, one of the other officers detailed to SWAT duty had mentioned that this drug ring might have some Churchies among them.

Churchies made Guy nervous, although there was no way he'd believe the weird-ass tales people told about them. Parading a bunch of guys in Halloween costumes in front of the Eurowimps the Churchies had conquered was easy to do, and the War Department had issued a statement saying there was no proof that those monsters were in the field. Guy, who had celebrated his twenty-first year a few months ago, felt nothing short of invincible, with his hardened Kevlar armor, full riot helmet with low-light capability, and, best of all, a brand-spanking-new HAR-18, a rifle-grenade launcher combo that could drop an elephant.

Guy was young enough not to wonder why the higher-ups issued elephant guns to their officers.

The lieutenant gave the order. Guy and the officers with him—two tall and quiet mugs who went by the names August Hiram and Desmond Marcus—positioned themselves so they covered the back entrance of the building. The larger team would have the unenviable job of knocking the reinforced door of the building down and going in. The SWAT team had not been officially told to shoot first and ask questions later, but it was clear there would be minimal hassles if that happened. The building was in a Safety Zone, a lawless land where the people with the biggest guns made the rules.

Guy waited. Then he heard it, the pounding of the battering ram against the door, the shouts of "Police!"

The shouting was followed by gunshots, a long, unending chatter of automatic fire.

"Jesus, they've got a machine gun in there," whispered Guy. Neither Hiram nor Marcus said anything. Their eyes were on the back door.

The shooting continued. Guy could hear screaming mixed with the gunfire. With a cold shudder, he recognized Johnny Wang's voice. Johnny had been a year ahead of Guy in the Academy. Now he was screaming in what had to be unendurable agony.

The back door slammed open.

"Police! Freeze!" Guy said—screeched, rather. His voice seemed to have gotten seven years younger all of a sudden. Still, he was squeezing the trigger as he said it. As it turned out, that had been the right reaction. The first three men out the door were shooting and running. They had Uzis or MAC-10s or some sort of submachine guns. Guy's first three shots went wide. While he corrected, Hiram cut all three men down with a long burst of his M-16.

Then the monster came out.

It was no Halloween costume. The thing was all tentacles and slime, and it sang . . . God it sang. Guy's blood ran cold, the gun slipped through his deadened fingers, and a moan of helpless terror escaped.

Marcus leaped forward, dropping his gun. Guy watched in total disbelief, while his fellow officer grappled with the monster. Marcus pulled, and two of the tentacles came off, a jet of ichor streaming out of the wound. Then Hiram stood up, and changed into a half-naked, golden man, a metal statue that had no business moving or existing. A blast of pure light exploded from his hands, and the monster collapsed into a burning, trashing heap, shrinking into nothing after a few seconds.

Hiram leaned over Guy, and changed back to normal. "Whuh, whuh . . . ?" Guy stammered, his eyes glazing over.

"It's all over, Guy. We shot the three perps. You did okay, kid."

"I did?" Guy felt there was something else, something important. It was on the tip of his tongue, but he couldn't remember. He saw the three men on the ground, and the flaming puddle nearby. A patch of grease, ignited by a stray round, probably, but something about it made him feel uneasy, so he stopped looking at it. "Jeez," he said. "So we shot them all?"

Marcus nodded. He was favoring a leg. "You hit?" Guy asked. He vaguely remembered being worried about Marcus for a moment. Marcus smiled with an embarrassed expression. "I tripped and sprained a leg. Should be fine."

"Well, it's all over, then," Guy said. "This is good. My first shoot-out, you know. I wonder if this is what war feels like? No, probably worse, isn't it?" He wandered off, still babbling to himself.

"Will he be okay?" Marcus asked Hiram.

"Yes. He wanted to forget it all, anyway. That was a nasty one. You did good, Marcus."

"Thanks, Dad."

Stories

After pages of background, history, character creation, rules, equipment, powers, and enemies, it is time to start running a game. So what's next for the *Armageddon* Chronicler?

Gather a Cast of characters, and prepare a Story, of course.

The Chronicler's job is to prepare the initial setting, create the Supporting Cast and Adversaries, and devise the initial plot that brings the characters together. The Chronicler's choices at this point may make the difference between a fun game and a boring evening.

Unlike a typical board game, roleplaying sessions do not all start (or end) in the same way. Like any fictional tale, a game will be different based on what themes, plot lines, and characters are used. The Chronicler decides what the initial elements of the story are. This includes the setting—a small Maine town, the slums of Chicago, or a cross country trek running from coast to coast, or whatever; the Supporting Cast—a group of locals both colorful and mundane; and the initial themes and conflict—is the small town haunted by an unspeakable entity, or the slums the battlefield between two rival Covenants?

Setting

When creating a setting for a Story, the Chronicler needs to gather or create information. The setting is where most of the Story takes place. It can be as small as a single wood cabin in the middle of a haunted forest, or as large as a teeming city with a cast of millions. Little bits of information add local color; people, landmarks, and mood help make the setting come alive for the players. Mapping out every corner of a setting may be helpful, but it is not really necessary. Rather, the Chronicler should think of interesting details. For example, all towns have their own little landmarks, be they statues to Civil War heroes or old buildings with a long history. Mention and describe them, and perhaps make them part of the Story—perhaps the statue has a hidden compartment at its base containing important documents, or the old building has been used for a number of strange and disturbing rituals.

If the theme of the game is fear, for example, descriptions of the setting should focus on the ominous—the closed-down shops and boarded-up buildings, the scared people who move quickly and bear anxious looks, the disturbing graffiti about the end of the world, the bloated corpse of a dog at the mouth of an alley adding to a general stench of decay. Make the characters feel isolated even in a crowded setting, worried that they will find no help beyond their resources. At that point, the monsters and phantasms throw in their path will seem all the more terrifying.

The *Armageddon* game is set in the near future, close enough to the present day that many things are the same. Use a place the players are familiar with—the group's home town, for example—and give it some supernatural touches (if possible relying on local legends and lore). There could be a nest of Believers operating in the town, or some other supernatural being. If a larger setting is preferred, pick a nearby city. What role do the diverse conspiracies of the game play in that city? Is any one group in control of it?

The actual geographical location has a lot of influence on the theme and mood of a Story. Running a game in conquered Europe, for example, has very different available choices than one run in North America. Described below are some possible major settings.

The Free World

The lands not ruled by the Church of Revelations are collectively known as the Free World. They include most of North America, and parts of the Middle East, North Africa, Australia, and Asia. In Europe, only Great Britain, Norway, Sweden, and Finland have no invaders in their territory. The Free World is not unscathed, however: all member nations have suffered a great deal, and face worse things in the very near future.

The survivors of the initial onslaught owe their freedom to many different factors. Guns, tanks, and soldiers have played a role, of course, as has the determination of the population to resist. In the case of Britain and Australia, the seas have acted as a barrier against the invaders. Supernatural forces have also helped; the Old Gods, the Seraphim, and other entities have thwarted the Believers on a number of fronts.

While life in the Free World is certainly better than under the yoke of the Church of Revelations, it is far from pleasant. Prices are high. In some places, starvation is barely kept at bay, and bombing raids, terrorist actions, and supernatural attacks are a constant burden for

those who live there. People are afraid, often lashing out against any suspect group or organization. Some countries risk becoming as tyrannical as Believer-controlled lands.

The main themes of the Free World are hope, fear, and conflict. These nations are the last hope for the whole world, but their survival is in doubt. They offer a sanctuary to those involved in the war, a place where they can rest, however briefly, before returning to the front lines. Still, internal enemies exist—supernatural infiltration, religious fanatics, and political strife are constant dangers. Investigation, subtle dangers, and horrifying discoveries are the order of the day.

Games set in the Free World can focus on a number of things. Hunting any Fifth Columnists (Believer undercover agents and sympathizers) is a major undertaking, one pursued both by the local authorities and by members of secret societies. They can also involve the plans and machinations of said secret societies; the Free World is the only place where they can afford the luxury of preparing their next move, or engaging in petty infighting. Furthermore, there are dangers besides those of the war. With supernatural beings emerging, many entities, some of them quite evil, have found refuge in the Free World. While those beings are not aligned with Leviathan, they can do a lot of mischief on their own, and must be stopped.

The Conquered Territories

From the Atlantic to Eurasia, Western and Central Europe, South America, Turkey and much of Asia are in the grip of the Church of Revelations. The Conquered Territories are stark reminders of the fate of the rest of the world if the enemy wins. The war has decimated the population of several countries, and many cities were wrecked in the fighting. The survivors live in constant fear—of the merciless conquerors, of their changing neighbors and relatives, of the temptation to give in and surrender to Leviathan. Most people have trouble coping with the situation even after years under the yoke of the Believers. For the most part, they try to survive and get along, despite the growing signs that soon they will not be allowed the luxury of being neutral. Resistance movements fight on; the risks are great, but the stakes are worth the risks.

Games set in the Conquered Territories focus on resistance movements fighting the Church of Revelations. The characters can be members of such a group, or outside agents sent on raids or espionage missions. In this setting, the Adversary has the edge in numbers, firepower, and supernatural ability. No matter how powerful the Cast Members are, they cannot operate openly and hope to survive for long. Subtlety and cunning are the key to survival.

The Front Lines

These are the contested battlefields of the world, where armies clash and ground is purchased with blood. Mexico, China, India, Eurasia, and the Middle East are the major fronts, where every day troops fight and die. In most cases, the fronts are relatively stable—two opposing lines, launching offensives and pushing each other back and forth. In others, parts of the Free World fall to a new offensive from the Believers, or (as in the case of Mexico) conquered areas are liberated by force.

The front lines are largely the province of the military. Troops are mobilized, transported to the lines, and thrown into combat. Most soldiers do not fight at the front, but serve in the support branches. Even there, safety is far from guaranteed, especially when the enemy can use supernatural powers and creatures to strike deeper than mere artillery and aircraft can. The real danger is at the sharp end, however. Men and women die on the open ground between trenches, or in rolling tanks and infantry fighting vehicles, or in high-performance aircraft up in the skies.

Games set on the front lines tend to concentrate on two aspects: the military and the paramilitary. Military games deal directly with the war, with the Cast Members, typically operating in uniform, openly battling the enemy. The scenarios consist of tactical mayhem and epic slugfests, or involve more dramatic and thoughtful situations. Paramilitary games involve groups not under military control but still fighting in the war. These groups range from partisans or irregulars behind the front lines, conducting guerrilla warfare operations, to teams of supernatural beings such as Seraphim, beholden to no human agency, attacking the Adversary on their own terms. The horrors of war, and the particular horrors of this war, are the main elements of games in this setting.

Supporting Cast and Adversaries

Most games require a Supporting Cast, the Chronicler-controlled characters who interact with the Cast Members in the course of the game. They range from suspicious store clerks and librarians to other Association members. Try to make each character distinctive in some way. They do not all need to speak with exotic accents, but they should have some distinguishing quality. Speech patterns and habits are a good start—the street-bred magician should probably use a lot of profanity, while the bookish occultist may rely on obscure and pedantic words. Describing their habits and behavior will make the players remember who a character is.

Adversaries are the characters who provide the conflict in the story. There may be several Adversaries in a game, from the fellow Association member who is trying to outshine or discredit the Cast Members to the flesh-eating abomination living in the sewers. Sometimes, the Cast does not meet the Adversary until the end of the story. In others, the Adversary turns out to be a character the group had come to trust. Adversaries should be resourceful and dangerous. In some cases, the Cast may not be able to truly defeat or destroy them, and they may come back in later Stories.

The agents of the Church of Revelations make for great Adversaries. An Adept (see p. 328) operating incognito in the U.S. can be a challenging enemy. Although he does not have the full resources of the Church behind him, he has a great deal of supernatural power, and may be backed up by several fanatical followers, monstrous Shaitan, or other creatures.

Story Plot and Mood

What is going to happen in the Story? To some degree, nobody knows—that is part of what makes roleplaying fun. Still, the Chronicler knows some of the important events and developments. He sets up the basic plot elements, and helps shape the mood of the Story.

Plots in *Armageddon* tend to revolve around discovery (about oneself and the world at large), conflict (between the Church of Revelations and the rest of the world), horror (the world is being conquered by monstrous entities), and hope (the characters might play a role in defeating the Dark Apostle and saving the world). The elements of the plot can be as personal as confronting a character's childhood fears come to life or as cosmic as preventing the unraveling of Reality.

Themes

Although all kinds of Stories are possible in the *Armageddon* setting, the following themes and ideas play a major role in most settings.

War

The world is in the middle of a global war. Even America is not safe from the fighting. The characters can be part of an elite military unit, like the Special Operations Task Force (see p. 32), sent behind enemy units to observe or sabotage them. Or they can be grunts on the front lines, fighting a deadly enemy. The Stories that can be told in a war setting include tales of survival and heroism, of the horrors of war and the people who try to do what is right in the middle of carnage. It can be dark and depressing like *Platoon* or dark but hopeful like many World War Two films.

The Hidden War

While armies clash in the fields, a shadow conflict is being waged in cities behind the battle lines. Spies, guerrillas, terrorists, and saboteurs use means magical and mundane to disrupt their enemies' plan. Secret organizations like the Watchers and the Alliance fight against the agents of the Church of Revelations. This often involves more intrigue and investigation than straight combat. The enemy's goals must be discovered, then hindered in some way (which may involve simple attacks or executions), or friendly plans must be kept hidden from the enemy.

In the U.S., the Believers are at a disadvantage, which they offset by hiding in the largest cities (often conducting their business in the so-called Safety Zones that are little more than giant prison camps), or in the countryside, among small bands of nomadic sympathizers. In the Conquered Territories, the Believers have the police and security agencies of the land at their disposal. Characters operating there must be careful and devious to avoid capture.

Ancient Conflicts

Not all the diverse groups who should be aligned against the Dark Apostle have joined the struggle. Some have old scores to settle first. These Stories involve enemies other than the Church of Revelations. They could pit angels against demons or Pagan Gods. Some Immortals may bear a centuries-old grudge against a Nephilim character, and they may care more about getting revenge than anything else.

In these Stories, there can be two possible resolutions. One involves playing out the conflict until a clear winner emerges. The other is to somehow convince both sides that to fight each other is insane in the face of a greater common enemy. And if the Church of Revelations is aware of these conflicts, its agents will do their best to fan the flames.

The Other Signs

The war is but one of the many changes that are affecting the world. Supernatural predators unaligned to either side remain a threat. In some places, reality seems to break down for no reason, and alien entities, perhaps nearly as dangerous as Leviathan itself, are trying to break into the world for their own dark purposes. Some Stories might involve a danger that the Cast Members believe is part of the Church of Revelations' plans, but which involves a third force that must be stopped.

Bringing the Cast Members into the Story

The best and most dramatic Story is useless if the Cast Members are not interested in becoming involved. As the setting and the Supporting Cast are created, think about ways to involve the Cast in the Story. Sometimes, it is better to let the players create their characters first, and then weave the Story around them. Alternatively, the Chronicler should tell the players a little about the Story, its themes, and its setting, allowing them to create characters that fit into the plot.

Story Ideas

While not full adventures, the following ideas should give new and experienced Chroniclers a start on creating Stories.

The Dead Prophets

Three young people have been savagely murdered in different parts of the U.S. The victims shared one thing in common: they were powerful Seers. Occult research reveals a legend of a Prophet whose visions will help defeat a "Great Beast." The description of the Prophet seems to match all three victims. It seems that agents of Leviathan are trying to eliminate the Prophet by killing every likely candidate.

The Plot: The character's Association discovers the legend of the Prophet, and sends the characters looking for him (or her). Or

perhaps several groups learn of it, and each one tires to locate the Prophet for its own purposes. The characters compete with the would-be assassins and other groups as they track down leads, mundane or mystical.

A different take on the Story has a friend or relative of the characters (or maybe one of the characters—a Seer with Mindtime Strength 7+ would fit the bill) in the role of the Prophet, or at least a likely candidate. The mission becomes a much more personal affair, as assassins and recruiters dog the group's steps wherever they go.

Bad Omen

The town of Omen was a small, quiet farming community with a population of six hundred souls. There was nothing of note to it, until every person in the town died for no apparent reason over night. The similarities to the Munich Disaster (see p. 27) are disturbing. Every person and animal appears to have died at the same time. None of the bodies show any injuries, except for people who fell down or crashed vehicles when they died. No living beings, not even insects and bacteria, were spared. Is this a terrible new weapon from the CoR?

National Guard units sealed off the area, and government investigators are trying to determine what happened, using mystical and mundane means. Meanwhile, panic spreads to the surrounding townships, as people, afraid the same thing will happen to them, attempt to fleet the city.

The Plot: A powerful supernatural event obliterated the town. Its exact nature could vary. The attack could be a test of a mystical weapon first created by Ultima Thule during it wars against Atlantis, and hidden in a secret base in the Bavarian Alps. It opens a dimensional gateway and releases a powerful blast of Taint that devours tens of thousands of Essence Points—enough to kill every living thing in the blast radius. Characters using Magic or supernatural powers to investigate may accidentally open the gateway and be sent to the base. Whether this devolves into a huge slugfest against the base's security elements or becomes a scouting expedition is up to the characters. The weapon is a one-of-a-kind artifact, discovered at the bottom of the Baltic Sea. If it is destroyed, the AoR will not be able to make another; otherwise, it will use it again and again.

Alternatively, the death of Omen could have marked the birth of a supernatural entity of tremendous power. This being is a powerful servitor of a Mad God, one with no direct connection to Leviathan. After materializing on this world, the creature assumed the form of a human drifter and managed to hitchhike out of town before the death of the town was noticed. The creature's goal is to reach an ancient Place of Power and use it to bring its master into the world. This Mad God will then challenge Leviathan for control over this reality. The servitor is powerful (give it the equivalent Attributes of a Greater Shaitan, and the abilities of an Adept of the Third or Fourth Circle), and it is trying to be discreet, although it cannot help but warp reality and leave a trail of strange events and the occasional death behind. Can the characters catch it before it reaches its goal?

Deadly Politics

An Alliance Team (maybe including the characters) organizes a general meeting of all the local Gifted and supernatural beings in a major city. The city has been plagued by Believer activity and sabotage, and the authorities are largely helpless. The Alliance is trying to locate and eliminate major Believer cells in the city.

A major city can have as many as a couple of hundred "special" people and creatures in its midst. Trying to find all of them, or even a majority of them, is no easy task. Even when their identities are known, the occult underground is a fractious place, with assorted Associations and factions vying for dominance or involved in petty or serious feuds. It is a tough job, but the Alliance is going to do it.

The Plot: The characters can be Alliance members involved in organizing the meeting, or locals being contacted by the Alliance. They can be involved in trying to find supernatural beings (many of whom have spent centuries hiding themselves), or playing diplomat between groups who have little love for each other. The local chapters of the Heavenly Host and the Infernal Legion, mostly led by human agents, have been involved in a bitter feud for quite some time; getting them to work together will be difficult at best. The local Host members will be extremely reluctant, while their Infernal counterparts will play along, but may try to use the meeting for their own purposes.

To make things complicated, the Believers hear of the proposed meeting and try to use it for their own ends. They may follow the organizers and discover potential enemies, or wait until the meeting is underway and then strike, hoping to kill many supernatural and Gifted foes.

Chapter Ten

Glossary

Adversaries: Supporting Cast characters who oppose the Cast Members' actions.

Alliance: An Association combining mundane and supernatural beings to fight against the Church of Revelations.

Archetypes: Pre-created characters providing examples or ready-to-play persona.

Army of Revelations: The armed forces of the Church of Revelations and the Leviathan.

Art: A group of related Metaphysics abilities or powers. Magic, the Sight, and Necromancy are all Arts.

Attribute: A physical or mental trait of the character. See Primary Attributes and Secondary Attributes.

Attribute Test: See Test.

Avatar: A supernatural race—the human embodiment of a Primal Being's power.

Beginning Gifted: A Pre-Heroic campaign level Character Type.

Believers: Dedicated followers of the Church of Revelations, often marked or mutated by their faith.

Cast Members: Also known as player-controlled characters or player characters (PCs for short). Cast Members are characters whose actions, thoughts and responses are controlled by the players, who usually also create them.

Celestials: A common designation for Seraphim.

Character Concept: The basic motives and focuses of a character's personality. Character Concepts are chosen or formed in the initial stages of the character creation process.

Character Points: The points used to build a character. The specific numbers and categories are dictated by the Character Type, and the optional Skill Point Calculation System if used.

Character Type: A character's classification, dictating available Attribute, Qualities, Drawback, Skills, and Metaphysics Category Points.

Church of Revelations: A fanatical cult that has taken over large portions of the world, powered by Taint and the Leviathan.

Chronicler: Also known as a Game Master or Referee, the Chronicler is the player who prepares the setting, guides the Story, roleplays the Supporting Cast and Adversaries, and makes all the rules decisions.

Close Combat: Any fight conducted at arm's length by people using fists, feet, or hand weapons (such as knives, swords and sticks).

Conquered Territories: Those areas controlled by the Church of Revelations.

Dark Apostle: Johann Goering, Leviathan's chief representative on Earth.

Difficult Test: A Test in which only one Attribute applies and it is not doubled.

Divine Inspiration: The power to perform Miracles in the service of a Greater Entity.

Drawback: A special negative aspect of a character that imposes limitations or hindrances. Drawbacks are chosen during character creation and provide extra Attribute, Quality, Skill, or Metaphysical Points as the player chooses. No character can take more than 10 points in Drawbacks.

Elder Kingdoms: Atlantis, Mu, and Ultima Thule, destroyed thousands of years ago by Lucifer and the angels.

Essence: Beyond matter and energy, Essence is the basic building block of Reality. Supernaturals and those who use the Arts learn to manipulate Essence to change the world.

Exile: A Seraphim who as rejected his responsibilities to the Heavenly Host or the Infernal Legion, and thus lost standing and power.

Experience Points: Points awarded during the play of Armageddon Stories that may be used to improve a character's capacities.

Fallen Seraphim: Demons.

Free Territories: Those areas not controlled by the Church of Revelations.

Game Time: Time as it passes in a game or session of Armageddon. Game Time rarely corresponds directly with Real Time.

Gifted: A Heroic campaign level Character Type.

Gifted Master: A Mythical campaign level Character Type.

Greater Gifted: A Legendary campaign level Character Type.

Greater Supernatural: A Mythical campaign level Character Type.

Heavenly Host: An Association of angels and lesser supernatural beings.

Incarnate: A supernatural race—a younger Titan who has manifested on Earth.

Infernal Legion: An Association of demons and lesser supernatural beings.

Inheritor: A supernatural race—offspring of Primal Being and human parents.

Initiative: The order in which characters act during Turns. The character with the highest

initiative acts first, and the remaining characters act in descending order of initiative.

Inspired: Those with the Power of Divine Inspiration.

Invocation: A pattern or matrix learned by a Magician to facilitate the manipulation of Essence by his will.

Items of Power: An item that facilitates the flow of Essence.

Kerubim: A supernatural race—a lower rank of angels, once human.

Lesser Gifted: A Heroic campaign level Character Type.

Lesser Supernatural: A Heroic campaign level Character Type.

Level of Success: See Success Levels.

Leviathan: A Mad God and inspiration for the Church of Revelations.

Lodge of the Undying: An Association of True Immortals.

Lone Wolves: A designation for any individual or group that is not part of another Association.

Mad Gods: Greater beings from beyond our reality.

Magic: The Art of using Invocations and channeling Essence to impose the Magician's will on reality.

Magicians: Practitioners of Magic.

Matthews Riots: Reaction to the publication of a tape revealing a nationwide conspiracy of rogue police officers. Lead to the Safety Ordinances.

Mediums: Practitioners of Necromancy.

Metaphysics: Any of a number of supernatural abilities used to manipulate the world. Most use Essence in some manner.

Miracles: A supernatural effect, powered by Essence, caused by the will of an Inspired.

Multiplier: The number by which a set or range of points is multiplied before arriving at the final result.

Mundane: A Heroic campaign level Character Type.

Munich Disaster: The destruction of Munich leaving only the Dark Apostle alive. Signalled the coming of Leviathan and lead to the war.

Necromancy: Innate and learned powers that allow Mediums to traffic with the spirits of the dead.

Nephilim: A supernatural race—offspring of Seraphim and human parents.

Otherworlds: A generic term for Sephiroths and Realms used by non-specialists to refer to regions outside of Earth.

Outcome Table: This table specifies the Test or Task results needed to achieve certain Success Levels and the general effects of those Success Levels.

Pantheons: A loose confederation of Primal Beings and lesser supernatural beings.

Place of Power: Certain places are imbued with meaning, emotion and supernatural significance. These places provide extra Essence to those who can tap into it.

Potential Hero: A Pre-Heroic campaign level Character Type.

Power: A special positive ability of a character that derives from the supernatural or metaphysical and grants certain capacities or benefits. Powers are purchased during character creation by using Metaphysics Points, or granted when certain Qualities are purchased.

Primary Attribute: The principal numerical measures of a character's physical and mental abilities. There are six Primary Attributes: Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Perception and Willpower.

Qliphonim: A supernatural race—a lower rank of demons, once human.

Quality: A special positive aspect of a character that grants abilities or benefits. Qualities are purchased by expending Quality Points during character creation.

Ranged Combat: Ranged combat involves any sort of missile weapon, from a thrown stone to a machinegun.

Real Time: Time as it passes in the "real" world, as opposed to Game Time.

Realms: A specialist's term for sub-areas of Sephiroths. See Otherworlds, Sephiroths.

Reckoning: A period of great chaos, both mundane and supernatural, usually signals great changes in store.

Regular Skill: A basic skill of average difficulty to learn and improve. Regular Skills cost 1 character point per level until level 5, and 3 points per level thereafter. See Special Skills.

Resisted Tasks or Tests: This rule applies to any situation where someone or something is trying to perform a certain specific action and someone or something else is trying to prevent it, as when two or more individuals are in some sort of competition.

Rule of 1: If a natural 1 is rolled or an ace is drawn, roll or draw again and subtract 5 from the new roll. If the result is greater than 1, consider the final result to be 1. If the result is below 0, use it as a negative modifier on the

Task. If another 1 or ace is rolled/drawn, apply a -5 penalty, and roll/draw again, following the previous procedure.

Rule of 10: If a natural 10 is rolled or drawn, roll or draw again, subtract 5 from the new roll and add the result, if greater than 1, to the total roll. If another 10 is rolled/drawn, add +5 to the result and roll again, following the previous procedure.

Safety Ordinances: A set of laws isolating certain inner city areas.

Secondary Attribute: A physical or metaphysical trait of a character calculated from Primary Attributes. There are four Secondary Attributes: Life Points, Endurance Points, Essence Points (or Pool), and Speed.

Second Sight: See the Sight

Seers: Those who use the Sight.

Sephiroth: A specialist's term for locations, areas, or dimensions outside the general experience of the majority of mundanes. See Otherworlds, Realms.

Sephyr: Elemental beings who shaped our reality.

Seraphim: A supernatural race, also called angels or demons, descended from the Sephyr. There are three classes: Lesser, Common, and Greater Seraphim.

Sight: The power of the mind, called psychic ability or ESP by some.

Simple Test: A Test in which the applicable Attribute is doubled (or two different Attributes are added together).

Skill: A learned capability of the character. Skills are purchased during character creation using Skill Points.

Skill Type: A subgroup of certain broader skills. Skill types must be chosen when the main skill is purchased. Skill types do not cost character points.

Special Operations Task Force (SOTF): A special command within the U.S. armed forces employing the Gifted and supernatural beings.

Special Skill: Skills that require additional time or dedication to master. Special Skills cost 2 character points per level until level 5, and 5 points per level thereafter. See Regular Skills.

Specialization: A narrow band of expertise in a larger skill. These additional levels only apply when the character tests the specialization.

Spirit Patron: A supernatural being who has formed a relationship with a human and granted certain powers in exchange for certain obligations.

Story: A series of plot-linked game sessions, like the episodes of a TV series or soap opera.

Success Level: A measure of how well a character performed a successful Task or Test.

Supernatural: A Legendary campaign level Character Type.

Supporting Cast: Also known as Non-Player Characters (or NPCs). These are all the characters in a Story who are not Cast Members.

Symbols of Power: Certain symbols, particularly the circle and pentagram, have supernatural significance. When used for casting Invocation, such symbols provide extra Essence Points.

Task: A Task is any activity that requires some training to accomplish, and whose outcome is in doubt. Tasks are resolved by rolling a ten-sided die (or drawing cards) and adding one of the character's skills and one of his Primary Attributes, and applying modifiers. Results 9 or higher are referenced on the Outcome Table to determine Success Levels.

Tests/Attribute Tests: A Test is an activity or situation where the character's Attribute levels determine the outcome. Any activity that depends exclusively on the character's inborn talents (such as raw strength, pure intelligence and so forth) use Tests. Tests can be Simple or Difficult. A Simple Attribute Test adds the result of a ten-sided die (or the draw of a card) to the appropriate Attribute (doubled) or the sum of two Attributes. A Difficult Attribute Test adds the result of a ten-sided die (or the draw of a card) to the appropriate Attribute, not doubled. Results 9 or higher are referenced on the Outcome Table to determine the Success Levels.

Titans: Supernatural beings, also know as Old Gods, descended from the Sephyr.

Time of Power: Certain times and dates have special supernatural significance. During these times, extra Essence Points may be gathered.

True Immortal: A sub-species of human who do not age.

Turn: An arbitrary measure of time designed to break combat and other time-sensitive game play into manageable pieces. A Turn represents between 1 and 5 seconds, and is just long enough for a character to perform one action.

Type: See Skill Type.

Underground: A designation for the various resistance movements operating in the Conquered Territories.

Watchers: An association of Celestials and lesser supernatural beings.

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ARMAGEDDON
the end times

Name
Association
Concept

CHARACTER POINTS | SPENT | UNSPENT

CHANNELING LEVEL

Primary Attributes

STRENGTH		INTELLIGENCE	
DEXTERITY		PERCEPTION	
CONSTITUTION		WILLPOWER	

Secondary Attributes

LIFE POINTS	
ENDURANCE POINTS	
SPEED	
ESSENCE POOL	

Qualities	Point	Drawbacks	Point

Skill/Power	Level	Power/Vulnerability	Level

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Sex

Age

Height

Weight

Hair

Eyes

Weapons/Hand to Hand

Type	Range	Damage	Cap	EV

Possessions

Allies/Contacts

Character History

Expand Your Game!

Terra Primate Corebook
EDN8100

WitchCraft Corebook
EDN4000HC

All Flesh Must Be Eateb
Revised Corebook
EDN8020

UNISYSTEM