

MONGOOSE PUBLISHING PRESENTS



Signs & Portents

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Roleplayer

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Ideas for robots in Judge Dredd

THE PITS WHERE MAD THINGS DRUM

A percussive adventure for *Conan*

S&P Roleplayer 49

October 2007

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In the grim darkness of Hello Kitty, there is only war. Massive fighting machines wage adorable war against tentacled invaders from a place beyond the universe and a time beyond time – or possibly just from a tin of Boulliabaise soup and a time several months past the sell-by date.

I'll bet good money that the creators of Cthulhutech never meant for it to be used like this. Still, the game is nearly done – it's been crawling over the horizon like some bloated beast of sanity-rending size for what seems like months... oh wait, it really has been months. Anyway, we finally found the right Mythos tome to ward our sensitive print machinery against 300-page, glossy, full-colour, high-resolution projects and the first actual copies of the game suitable for public release should come rolling off the presses some time this month.

And now a one-sentence summary of various philosophies from the world of Glorantha.

God Learners: If at first you don't succeed, cheat.

Empire of Wyrms' Friends: Dragons are awesome.

Orlanthi: Violence is ~~great~~ always an option.

Dragonewts: 紂組紂紂鑄鑄

Uz: *nom nom nom*

You know what? That's quite enough of that.

If you have some spare time this month, go and visit the Wikipedia entry for Nietzsche. Say what you like about his philosophy, the man knew how to pose for a photo. I strongly suspect that he will be making an appearance in a future 'Philosopher-spotter's Guide' in this very column.

I'm running low on ideas this month. Can you tell?

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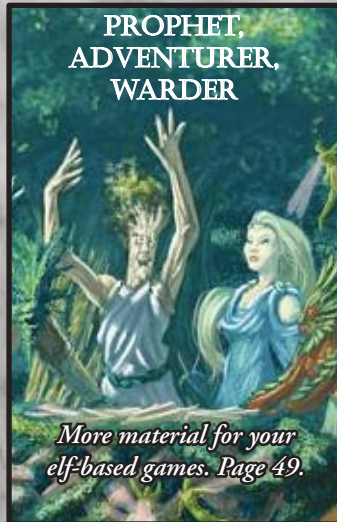
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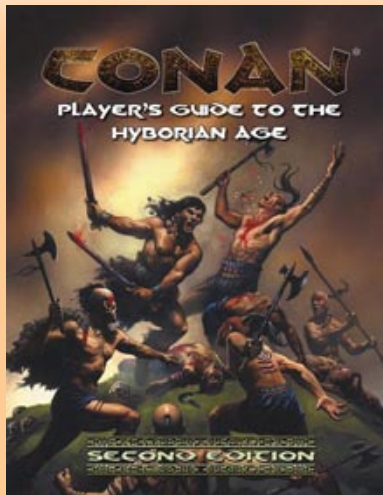
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Conan: Player's Guide to the Hyborean Age

The world of Conan is dark and dangerous and the people that inhabit it are well suited to their environs. The Player's Guide to the Hyborean Age contains new rules and information that can help your Player Character succeed where otherwise he might fail. No longer will Player Characters be relegated to being a mere collection of statistics... now a character can have hidden depths and goals too. Extensive guidelines on personality types are included, to help round out nascent Player Characters.

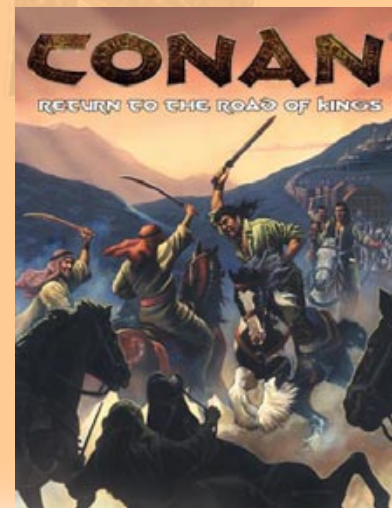
The Player's Guide to the Hyborean Age contains new races, feats and spells that can be used within the game, helping to make each character truly unique, with multiple equipment kits to allow characters to be properly attired either by their culture or location.

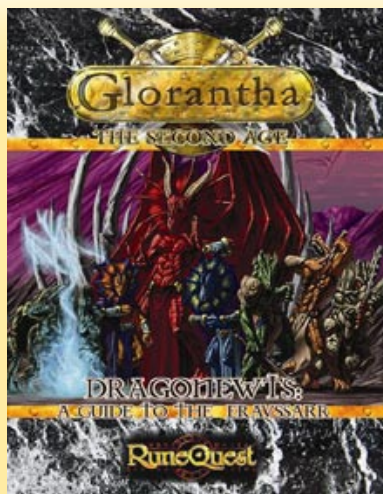
Also included are indexes detailing where to find the spells and character options already published in other Conan supplements. The Player's Guide to the Hyborean Age is an invaluable sourcebook for the Conan game, expanding upon the information provided in the main rulebook and other supplements to enhance the experience of adventuring in the Hyborean Age.

Conan: Return to the Road of Kings

Nemedia, Ophir, Brythunia, Hyberborea, Zamora with its dark-haired women and towers of spider-haunted mystery, Zingara with its chivalry, Koth that bordered on the pastoral lands of Shem, Stygia with its shadow-guarded tombs, Hyrkania whose riders wore steel and silk and gold. But the proudest kingdom of the world was Aquilonia, reigning supreme in the dreaming west. As the Road of Kings takes a traveller through the glittering and decadent realms of the lost Hyborian Age, so too does this tome work toward the same end. These fabled lands of ancient times are the shimmering background of your Conan The Roleplaying Game, the gleaming backdrop against which your action is set. These cultures, the grand forbearers of more modern times, are magnificent and degraded all at the same time. Each culture has its dark, rotten core and its flashy exterior, its gilt mask of civility.

The original Road of Kings supplement to the Conan, the Roleplaying Game, explored this harsh world. Return to the Road of Kings expands upon this great work and provides new rules and information for the 2nd Edition.





Glorantha: Dragonewts

The Dragonewts are perhaps the most alien of the races to inhabit Glorantha. With their continual cycle of reincarnation they are practically immortal and this makes them stand out and drastically alters their perception of the world.

This book looks in depth at the different life stages of these enigmatic beings, their history, beliefs and society and how they interact with the other races of Glorantha, even their relationship with the Empire of Wyrms' Friends, who claim to know much about the draconic races. But how much can one truly know about such a strange people?

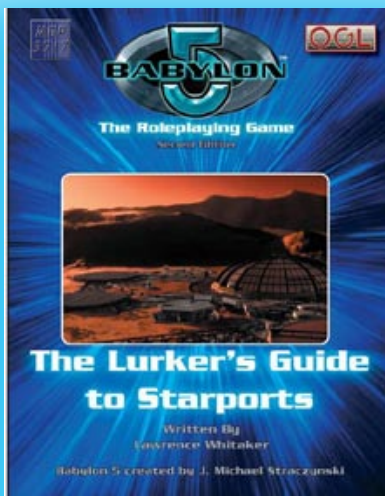
At long last the Eravssarr will take their rightful place amongst the races of RuneQuest, with Players and Games Masters alike being able to integrate them into their Glorantha games.

Glorantha: Elfs

The elves of Glorantha are beings as far removed from humanity as the great dragons and as such their motives are largely unfathomable. They are not even animals, but a form of plant life that is mobile and forms its own vibrant societies across the world. There are numerous subspecies of elf and, whilst they have their own names for the different races, humanity has tended to group them by type in an effort to categorise them more easily. Inside this book are extensive notes on elfin society, how its people interact with one another and the outside world, with their beliefs, culture and details on the various elf types. Their settlements and how they are organised are covered also, with two being described as examples of how they can be laid out (not that any two elf settlements are ever the same).

Extensive notes on how to play the various sorts of elf are available within, allowing Players and Games Masters alike to get to grips with these strange beings. Finally the religious cults are described in some detail, with some familiar to humans and others practically unknown outside of the elfin groves. With these descriptions are spells which are unique to these people.





Babylon 5: The Lurker's Guide to Starports

It is often said that a lot can be learned about an individual race, by the level of hospitality they offer to others. The Lurker's Guide to Starports provides gamers with a unique insight into the facilities boasted as the pride and joy of each major race. Some starports are designed to provide comfort and shelter to the weary traveller, whereas others are simply designed for commerce; some even cater for all.

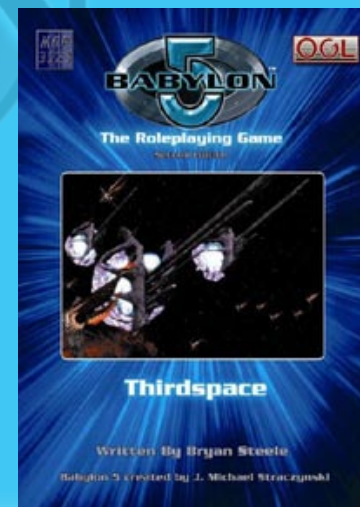
The Lurker's Guide to Starports is the first publication to provide in depth descriptions of varied space stations in the Babylon 5 universe. From the Abbai's welcoming haven that is the Qui'Tain, to the corrupt, corporation run Vhros Plateau of the Brakiri, The Lurkers Guide to Starports is an essential survival guide for any space faring character.

Whatever a character is looking for, from a relaxing stop over to an easy way to smuggle goods, they will find all the information they need in this comprehensive guide, along with details of interesting characters they may encounter along the way, who could prove to be useful allies or potentially difficult enemies. Contained within is not only a guide to travelling in space but also valuable information for surviving it!

Babylon 5: Thirdspace

In 2261 the galaxy was thrown into upheaval in the wake of the last great Shadow War, and the galaxy was caught between ages. It was a time of great change and the responsibilities of the younger races were compounded by the loss of the Ancients. The galaxy – and all within it – was theirs. When a huge and ancient artefact was found drifting in hyperspace by flight crews of the newly neutral Babylon 5, it was brought back to the station to be studied. Bringing the artefact into realspace would trigger a chain of events the Vorlons were only able to postpone at their strongest, that would test the tenacity of Captain Sheridan and his crew to the fullest. Through the artefact they found a dimension they called Thirdspace, and the Harbingers it was home to.

This is a sourcebook for the Babylon 5 Roleplaying Game Second Edition that explains in more detail the events that take place in the Babylon 5 telemovie Thirdspace. Such a massive event would send ripples through the galaxy, and this book explains a few of them. Containing rules on how the Thirdspace gate affected Babylon 5 and its occupants, statistics for the deadly Harbingers and the personalities involved, this sourcebook gives readers everything they need to use the events in their own campaigns – if they dare to do so.



OWNING THE GEAR YOU CARRY

STARTER PERSONAL PACK-OUTS FOR FIVE COMMON CHARACTERS.

BY MARK NEWMAN.

Spycraft 2.0's gear system promotes GC and player choice over economy. Rather than purchasing gear with money, players gain a number of 'picks' in several categories: Electronics, Gadgets (which can become magic items in a fantasy game or hi-tech in a science fiction game), Resources, Security Gear, Tradecraft Gear (which is more about covert action than just espionage), Vehicles, and yes, Weapons. Some picks are chosen at the start of each mission (adventure), representing a character's reaction to the situation. This is all the stuff their agency gives out, or that a character goes out and acquires from friends, stores, or other sources, depending on the setting, background, and campaign. The rest of a character's picks comprise his Possessions, or all the stuff that he has access to all the time. (Common Items are another facet of the *Spycraft* gear system, and we'll cover them separately in a minute.)

For me, Possessions have always been one of the best bits of *Spycraft* character creation, but then I like gadgets. I like toys. I like guns. Well-chosen Possessions can really make a difference to the feel of your character. They can turn a generic two-dimensional 'action hero' or 'spy guy' into a well-themed, well-considered individual. Unfortunately, it's hard for some players to wrap their heads around *Spycraft's* comprehensive gear chapter, which takes up more than a fifth of the rulebook. This guide strives to offer a little insight into how to put together thoughtful, balanced and – most importantly – useful sets of personal gear. It presents one possible set of picks for modern action-espionage

characters with various strengths at each Possessions level. Ideally, players could use these pre-set Possession packs to quickly establish their characters' gear without rifling through every gear table in the book.

These packs are by no means set in stone. Swapping out any pick in any pack is as easy as choosing any other item in the same category up to the same Caliber. That's the power of *Spycraft's* gear system at work; at its core, the process is as simple as choice, with all the power is firmly in your hands. Of course, your Possessions *should* reflect your character and how you want to play him. Remember that this gear is what your character has with him *at all times*. This isn't the stuff he carries into the field, orders from his superiors, or scrounges for as needed; rather, it includes his downtime belongings. It's therefore more telling of his personality than his tactics.

One important choice is whether your character includes a weapon in his Possessions. It's tempting to have him carry his preferred killing tool at all times, but not terribly plausible. Even in mercenary games where the characters are highly trained commandos, few folks keep armouries in their closets; that's behaviour that lands folks in prison. Sure, there's the worry that not including a weapon in your Possessions runs the risk of not having it if the Game Control springs a mission on you during downtime, but the point of those missions is to showcase your character when he's in a different place. Circumventing that kills strong roleplaying

potential to gain a strategic advantage, which is rarely a good idea. Trust your GC to run a fair game, even when your character's at home or on holiday, and choose your Possessions to show what he's like away from the action. The whole game will hang together a lot more cohesively that way.

Another reason players are tempted to choose weapons with Possession picks is that their mission picks might not fall in the right categories. There are solutions here as well. When you get to the action, you can grab a Bag Full of Guns, which offers several weapons with just 1 Resource pick. Alternately, you could rely on one of the game's greatest strengths: its built-in teamwork. Let another team member use one of his Weapon picks to grab your weapon and acquire something he needs with one of yours. Or... don't take a weapon at all. A lot of the time, especially in *Spycraft's* default genre, combat is a sign that something's gone horribly wrong. And even then, if combat's in the offing, the enemy has usually got weapons. Why not just pick up one of theirs?

One final word of advice: don't overlook or discount Common Items. Their power is in their versatility, but it's easy to get lost when the options are essentially unlimited. You can define each Common Item as anything not already designated a gear pick (by the rules or the Game Control), and it's easy to get lost in the vast selection. There are ways to narrow the field, however. Consider carefully how your Common Items will interact with the rest of your gear; maybe

you're missing a couple things that could enhance your picks in the field. Toothpaste goes well with bugs, for example. It can be used to patch the tiny holes you'll dig to mount them in drywall. Bubblegum, too, especially when planting bugs under furniture. Duct tape has so many uses I can't even scratch the surface here: the classic under/over configuration for makeshift rifles and grenade launchers, fixing laptops on dashboards and other unstable surfaces, binding and silencing enemies, the list goes on and on...

Keep in mind the many Common Items that find uses in countless situations: zip ties, surgical gloves, oven cleaner (useful for finding fingerprints and laser tripwires), lighters and the ever-trusty leatherman multi-tool, among many others. Don't underestimate a Common Item's power just because it lacks the big stats. That +1 bonus some Common Items grant is nice – more important in *Spycraft 2.0* than most d20 games due to the system's carefully controlled bonus structure – but it's how you apply Common Items that can mean the difference between glorious victory and crushing defeat. Food and water can keep your character alive when he's unexpectedly isolated in hostile terrain. Glow sticks and flashlights can help him find his way through unlit areas (and keep him from falling victim to opponents prepared to fight in the dark). Compasses, rope ladders and climbing gear, signal mirrors, binoculars, radiation monitors... Common Items can be your very best friend in thousands of tight situations.

THE RANGED COMBATANT

When assigning Possessions for the typical gun bunny, one thing rightly crosses most people's minds: which firearms are the best for me? This is a very important decision. The weapons your character uses drastically affect not only his image, but also the way he operates.

There are many important factors to consider. Are the character's weapons concealable? They better be if he's heading into a cover op, or prefers covert action. What's each weapon's ammunition capacity? This is less an issue for the occasional gunfighter, but a major concern in war zones. Scrounging bullets off bodies is sub-optimal even in prolonged conflicts.

In *Spycraft*, guns are more than just a damage value and a range increment. Each offers a unique experience to the player, defining his shooting strengths and weaknesses at distance. Weapon qualities, for example, handle all the little ways that guns vary. Some are easier to upgrade (and have more options), while others have greater concussive force or are particularly lethal under various circumstances. Some are harder to use, susceptible to various mishaps, or require special training. Guns also have base error and threat ranges, which boil down many factors such as the strength of the design, general workmanship, average performance over the life of the weapon, and more.

There's a lot to consider, and until you settle into the weapon that precisely complements your character's preferences and abilities, it's a good idea to think in the abstract. For a start, consider that most *Spycraft* characters are good generalists. Diversity can save a character's life, after all. With this in mind, one of the easiest, strongest starting points is to assume you'll be providing the team with effective fire support in a variety of circumstances. Be ready to help out no matter where a fight happens, no matter what training the opponents have and what they bring to the table. Avoid weapons that are specifically useful under narrow circumstances. Give up the 'big bang' every so often for the 'respectable bang' on a regular basis. Make yourself the team's 'everyday artillery' and you'll never see a dull moment at the table.

Possessions 1: Berretta 93R service pistol (with unmarked weapon Resource), tuxedo liner

The Berretta 93R is an excellent choice for your first weapon. It's cheap, easily replaceable and effective. Note the low recoil and weapon qualities; a burst-capable handgun can be a nasty surprise for those not expecting it. Securing an unmarked sidearm is a major boon for any field operative, helping to ensure that you're not taken to task for your necessary sins. Also, equipping yourself with some armour at this critical early stage can be extremely helpful. A tuxedo liner grants respectable protection, which you can sport with most people none the wiser.

Possessions 2: Berretta 93R service pistol (with reworked action I and shoulder holster upgrades, and the unmarked weapon Resource), tuxedo liner

This is a great time to upgrade your handgun. The shoulder holster makes for easier concealment, partially compensating for the fact that you probably don't have the greatest Sleight of Hand skill in the team. Combining these options with Common Item picks such as surgical gloves really helps with any Analysis/Forensics checks made to track the weapon, which can keep you out of those pesky justified force hearings (or in non-Agency games, perhaps jail).

Possessions 3: Colt M4 assault rifle, Berretta 93R service pistol (with reworked action I and shoulder holster upgrades, and the unmarked weapon Resource), tuxedo liner

By the time you get to Possessions 3, you should be thinking about playing with the big dogs. The Colt M4 carbine allows for multiple fire modes and features a collapsible stock for easier concealed carry.

Possessions 4: Colt M4 assault rifle (with 1 additional load of armour-piercing rounds), Berretta 93R service pistol (with reworked action I and shoulder holster upgrades, and the unmarked weapon Resource), tuxedo liner

Armour-piercing rounds make an excellent upgrade for your assault rifle here. They also make Swiss cheese out of armour, with enough piercing punch to blow holes in minions and occasionally take out a light vehicle.

Possessions 5: Colt M4 assault rifle (with 1 additional load of armour-piercing rounds), Berretta 93R service pistol (with reworked action I, threaded barrel, removable suppressor, and shoulder holster upgrades, and the unmarked weapon Resource), tuxedo liner

When you don't have the luxury of carrying your Colt M4, you can fall back on the silent kill. A standard suppressor imposes a hefty -10 penalty on Notice checks that could spoil your day.

Possessions 6: Colt M4 assault rifle (with 1 additional load of armour-piercing rounds), Berretta 93R service pistol (with reworked action I, threaded barrel, removable suppressor, and shoulder holster upgrades, and the unmarked weapon Resource), tuxedo liner, legal help: immunity (minor felony)

Occasionally, we all screw up. Very few people have a proven track record, and let's face it, while the Berretta 93R is an excellent weapon it's still traceable, especially with a threaded barrel leaving extra evidence on every shot you fire. Keeping a legal favour in reserve – making a friend on the force, saving some dirt on a judge, or just prepping your friends or the folks at the home office for a trip to bail you out – can give you that much-needed second chance when things go south.

TABLE 1: THE RANGED COMBATANT

Possessions	Gear
1	Berretta 93R service pistol (unmarked weapon), tuxedo liner
2	Berretta 93R service pistol (reworked action I, shoulder holster, unmarked weapon), tuxedo liner
3	Colt M4 assault rifle, Berretta 93R service pistol (reworked action I, shoulder holster, unmarked weapon), tuxedo liner
4	Colt M4 assault rifle (with 1 additional load of armour-piercing rounds), Berretta 93R service pistol (reworked action I, shoulder holster, unmarked weapon), tuxedo liner
5	Colt M4 assault rifle (with 1 additional load of armour-piercing rounds), Berretta 93R service pistol (reworked action I, threaded barrel, removable suppressor, shoulder holster, unmarked weapon), tuxedo liner
6	Colt M4 assault rifle (with 1 additional load of armour-piercing rounds), Berretta 93R service pistol (reworked action I, threaded barrel, removable suppressor, shoulder holster, unmarked weapon), tuxedo liner, legal help: immunity (minor felony)
7	Colt M4 assault rifle (with 1 additional load of armour-piercing rounds), Berretta 93R service pistol (reworked action I, threaded barrel, removable suppressor, shoulder holster, unmarked weapon), tuxedo liner, legal help: immunity (minor felony), modular tactical armour (vest only)
8	Colt M4 assault rifle (with 1 additional load of armour-piercing rounds), Berretta 93R service pistol (reworked action I, threaded barrel, removable suppressor, shoulder holster, unmarked weapon), tuxedo liner, legal help: immunity (minor felony), modular tactical armour (vest only, with personal tailoring or weight reduction upgrade)
9	Colt M4 assault rifle (with 1 additional load of armour-piercing rounds), Berretta 93R service pistol (reworked action I, threaded barrel, removable suppressor, shoulder holster, unmarked weapon), 3 concussive grenades, tuxedo liner, legal help: immunity (minor felony), modular tactical armour (vest only, with personal tailoring or weight reduction upgrade)
10	Colt M4 assault rifle (with 1 additional load of armour-piercing rounds), Colt M203PI grenade launcher (reworked action I) or Colt M4 SOPMOD (bipod, precision upgrade I, recoil pad), Berretta 93R service pistol (reworked action I, threaded barrel, removable suppressor, shoulder holster, unmarked weapon), 3 concussive grenades, tuxedo liner, legal help: immunity (minor felony), modular tactical armour (vest only, with personal tailoring or weight reduction upgrade)

Possessions 7: Colt M4 assault rifle (with 1 additional load of armour-piercing rounds), Berretta 93R service pistol (with reworked action I, threaded barrel, removable suppressor, and shoulder holster upgrades, and the unmarked weapon Resource), tuxedo liner, legal help: immunity (minor felony), modular tactical armour (vest only)

Once you have all the basics and an easy get-out-of-jail-free card, it's time to start suiting you up to face down some major enemy firepower. By the time you manage a Possessions score of 7, you're probably dealing with some really tough hombres on a regular basis. A modular tactical armour vest offers an excellent alternative in these cases, giving you some heavier protection when it's needed.

Possessions 8: Colt M4 assault rifle (with 1 additional load of armour-piercing rounds), Berretta 93R service pistol (with reworked action I, threaded barrel, removable suppressor, and shoulder holster upgrades, and the unmarked weapon Resource), tuxedo liner, legal help: immunity (minor felony), modular tactical armour (vest only, with personal tailoring or weight reduction upgrade)

Naturally, heavy armour is bulky and can slow you down an awful lot. When your Possessions score reaches 8, it's a good idea to lighten the load or tailor your armour a bit, depending on your need at the time.

Possessions 9: Colt M4 assault rifle (with 1 additional load of armour-piercing rounds), Berretta 93R service pistol (with reworked action I, threaded barrel, removable suppressor, and shoulder holster upgrades, and the unmarked weapon Resource), 3 concussive grenades, tuxedo liner, legal help: immunity (minor felony), modular tactical armour (vest only, with personal tailoring or weight reduction upgrade)

Both your weapons are great for close-range fire support, but you really can't beat a few hand grenades for explosive room clearance. Concussive grenades have a higher minimum and maximum damage value than standard fragmentation grenades, and you get just as many of them.

Possessions 10: Colt M4 assault rifle (with 1 additional load of armour-piercing rounds), Colt M203PI grenade launcher (with the reworked action I upgrade) or Colt M4 SOPMOD (with the bipod, precision upgrade I, and recoil pad upgrades), Berretta 93R service pistol (with reworked action I, threaded barrel, removable suppressor, and shoulder holster upgrades, and the unmarked weapon Resource), 3 concussive grenades, tuxedo liner, legal help: immunity (minor felony), modular tactical armour (vest only, with personal tailoring or weight reduction upgrade)

The ranged combatant's ultimate pack-out has two options: the M203PI grenade launcher can bolt onto your assault rifle's under-barrel rail or be used on its own, and can lay down a smoke screen or pulverize the enemy as you prefer. Don't forget the reworked action quality, though; the extra action dice required to activate any critical fails should ensure that the weapon will only jam, rather than blow up in your face. Alternately, the Colt M4 SOPMOD is the ultimate utility weapon, readily adaptable for a wide variety of roles and equally versatile as a sniper or cover fire weapon.

THE B&E (BREAKING AND ENTERING) SPECIALIST

Most of a good infiltrator or cat burglar's work is carried out after dark. Nighttime ambient light aids stealthy movement and a lot of the following pack-out options rely on this fact. The B&E specialist's gear centers entirely on getting into places you probably shouldn't be, and getting out alive.

It's important to remember that a good infiltrator is *not* a combat character. Contrary to popular opinion, not even the historical ninja were martial arts gods. When confronted by angry katana-wielding samurai, they'd quite sensibly turn tail and run like hell. Likewise, the B&E specialist *can* kill if he needs to, but he's much better off if he doesn't have to try in the first place.

Possessions 1: Lockpicking kit I, tuxedo liner (with the night camouflage upgrade)

Your basics picks assume you'll be working your magic at night. The tuxedo liner offers marginal protection and exploits pools of darkness, while the lockpicking kit is a must for nearly all B&E tasks.

Possessions 2: Night vision goggles, lockpicking kit I, tuxedo liner (with the night camouflage upgrade)

Continuing the night theme, it's always a good idea to make sure you can see when your enemies can't.

Possessions 3: Night vision goggles, lockpicking kit I, climbing kit I, average low-profile armour (with the night camouflage upgrade and silence Gadget (PR 4))

The right gadget can dramatically expand your character's capabilities – in this case trading in your tuxedo liner and replacing it with a powerful stealth engine built into a set of low-profile armour. With this pack-out you can stop sweating the occasionally low roll, counting on technology to carry you through unless you really botch. As an added bonus, this frees up a Caliber I pick you can use to pick up a climbing kit.

Possessions 4: Night vision goggles, lockpicking kit I, climbing kit I, garrotte, average low-profile armour (with the night camouflage upgrade and silence Gadget (PR 4))

TABLE 2: THE B&E SPECIALIST

Possessions	Gear
1	Lockpicking kit I, tuxedo liner (night camouflage)
2	Night vision goggles, lockpicking kit I, tuxedo liner (night camouflage)
3	Night vision goggles, lockpicking kit I, climbing kit I, average low-profile armour (night camouflage, silence Gadget (PR 4))
4	Night vision goggles, lockpicking kit I, climbing kit I, garrotte, average low-profile armour (night camouflage, silence Gadget (PR 4))
5	Night vision goggles, lockpicking kit I, climbing kit I, fiberscope, garrotte, average low-profile armour (night camouflage, silence Gadget (PR 4))
6	Night vision goggles, grapple gun (winch), lockpicking kit I, climbing kit I, fiberscope, garrotte, average low-profile armour (night camouflage, silence Gadget (PR 4))
7	Night vision goggles, grapple gun (winch), lockpicking kit I, climbing kit I, fiberscope, garrotte, average low-profile armour (night camouflage, silence Gadget (PR 4)), 5 smoke grenades
8	Night vision goggles, grapple gun (winch), lockpicking kit I, climbing kit I, fiberscope, garrotte, average low-profile armour (night camouflage, personal tailoring, silence Gadget (PR 4)), 5 smoke grenades
9	Night vision goggles, grapple gun (winch), corrosive acid (1 use), lockpicking kit I, climbing kit I, fiberscope, garrotte, average low-profile armour (night camouflage, personal tailoring, silence Gadget (PR 4)), 5 smoke grenades
10	Night vision goggles, grapple gun (winch), corrosive acid (1 use), lockpicking kit I, climbing kit I, fiberscope, garrotte, average low-profile armour (night camouflage, personal tailoring, silence Gadget (PR 4), invisibility), 5 smoke grenades



Inevitably, you'll come across guards – there are always guards – and sadly, guns aren't the B&E specialist's best friend. Even when silenced, their muzzle flash can give your position away. Knives aren't much better, offering your target the chance to scream unless the blade's used correctly. A garrotte gives you the chance to take opponents out quietly, if not quickly. Remember to use your first grapple benefit to pin the target, though. This prevents them from taking actions other than escape attempts, which has the happy side effect of killing any chance they'll raise an alarm.

Possessions 5: Night vision goggles, lockpicking kit I, climbing kit I, fiberscope, garrotte, average low-profile armour (with the night camouflage upgrade and silence Gadget (PR 4))

The fiberscope is a commonly overlooked piece of gear that can be a literal lifesaver. Why risk opening a door when you aren't sure what's on the other side? This handy little device lets you 'scout out' a room before you enter, and with your low vitality progression that's often a stellar idea.

Possessions 6: Night vision goggles, grapple gun (winch), lockpicking kit I, climbing kit I, fiberscope, garrotte, average low-profile armour (with the night camouflage upgrade and silence Gadget (PR 4))

When you need to scale a vertical surface in a hurry, the grapple gun can be your best friend, and the winch gives you that extra burst of speed that can sometimes mean all the difference between life and death. Also, with this item in hand, you can trade your climbing kit in for some caltrops to stymie pursuers.

Possessions 7: Night vision goggles, grapple gun (winch), lockpicking kit I, climbing kit I, fiberscope,

garrotte, average low-profile armour (with the night camouflage upgrade and silence Gadget (PR 4)), 5 smoke grenades

With a Possessions score of 7, we add another layer of insurance with a pick's worth of smoke bombs. These are great for reducing visibility during a quick retreat, and can also make for a nasty surprise when you're launching an ambush. When you're in a foul mood, you can even use them to make the enemy think his base is on fire.

Possessions 8: Night vision goggles, grapple gun (winch), lockpicking kit I, climbing kit I, fiberscope, garrotte, average low-profile armour (with the night camouflage and personal tailoring upgrades and silence Gadget (PR 4)), 5 smoke grenades

A few nips and tucks hones your low-profile armour to just the right fit, allowing you to evade a few more attacks and manoeuvre a little more fluidly.

Possessions 9: Night vision goggles, grapple gun (winch), corrosive acid (1 use), lockpicking kit I, climbing kit I, fiberscope, garrotte, average low-profile armour (with the night camouflage and personal tailoring upgrades and silence Gadget (PR 4)), 5 smoke grenades

When your Mechanics skill isn't enough to crack a device, or you fumble one of your Disable checks and break the lock, a vial of acid can rectify the situation. It's also a vicious improvised weapon. Just be careful not to make any unnecessary Acrobatics or Athletics checks because a mean GC might see any critical errors as the perfect opportunity to have you land the wrong way and shatter the vial in your pocket...

Possessions 10: Night vision goggles, grapple gun (winch), corrosive acid (1 use), lockpicking kit I, climbing

kit I, fiberscope, garrotte, average low-profile armour (with the night camouflage and personal tailoring upgrades, silence Gadget (PR 4), and invisibility Gadget), 5 smoke grenades

Possessions 10 should always provide something unique, like turning your low-profile armour into a skin of Predator-style, light-refracting polymers. Not only does applying the invisibility gadget to your armour decrease the number of items you have to carry, but it also keeps you from dropping or losing it unless you're captured and stripped of your gear. Sure, the invisibility only lasts a short while, but you can use those precious moments to run along right out in the open, which is invaluable.

THE INTELLIGENCE GATHERER

Calling upon the Spook class amongst others, a team's intelligence specialist is the 21st Century's master eavesdropper. He combines classic espionage tropes like phone taps and bugs with state-of-the-art telecommunications technology, which is all the basic gear he needs. More specialised equipment can be left for mission gear, where its narrow utility can be applied on an operation-by-operation basis.

The intelligence gatherer is an expert at turning a foe's environment against him. Everything can be bugged. Cameras can be positioned everywhere. Any phone can be tapped. Cell phone calls can be wirelessly intercepted. The following pack-outs cover all these activities and more.

Possessions 1: Audio bug (PR 2, ×4), field glasses, consumer-grade tape recorder

Settling the intelligence gatherer's basic gear pack-out can be a tricky proposition. So many things fit the bill, but what's most immediately useful? Field glasses are ideal for stakeouts and tailing targets and a tape-recorder lets you catch important conversations for later review. Meanwhile, audio bugs are your bread and butter, extending your eavesdropping reach to the limits of modern technology.

Possessions 2: Audio bug (PR 2, ×4), field glasses, parabolic microphone, consumer-grade tape recorder

A parabolic microphone expands your eavesdropping repertoire, giving you another way to listen in to conversations at a distance, now as easily as pointing and pulling the trigger. This item can be really helpful when you can't get close enough to plant a bug, and works well with your field glasses to get a clear view of the ground truth.

Possessions 3: Audio bug (PR 2, ×4), tracer bug (PR 4, ×4), field glasses, parabolic microphone, consumer-grade tape recorder

Sometimes your target's on the move, making it hard for you to get your job done. That's where a trusty tracer bug comes can save the day. Plant this little toy in the wheel well of your target's car, or in his briefcase, or even on his clothes, and you'll know exactly where he is at any time – assuming you stay within the bug's range, of course. Perhaps, if you're lucky, you'll even be able to follow him all the way back to his home or HQ!

Possessions 4: Audio bug (PR 2, ×4), tracer bug (PR 4, ×4), video bug (PR 2, ×4), field glasses, parabolic microphone, consumer-grade tape recorder

Video bugs take your eavesdropping capability to the next level, but they're overkill for some ops. Know when

you need to listen in, when you need a full view of the scene, and when you need both, and you'll be well on your way to mastering your career path.

Possessions 5: Audio bug (PR 2, ×4), tracer bug (PR 4, ×4), video bug (PR 2, ×4), field glasses, parabolic microphone, consumer-grade tape recorder, Makarov PB backup pistol

With this pack-out you'll fit the spy stereotype a whole lot better than most folks on your team. You've got all the primary eavesdropping tools under your belt and can start thinking about what happens if you get caught. The Makarov PB is an ideal defensive weapon. It comes with a removable silencer so you'll never have to worry about wasting valuable mission picks on noisy weapons that might be inadequate for your needs. It's got low recoil and packs quite a punch, and it does all this quietly – because sometimes it's necessary to do the deed without disturbing the neighbours.

Possessions 6: Audio bug (PR 2, ×4), tracer bug (PR 4, ×4), video bug (PR 2, ×4), field glasses, parabolic microphone, consumer-grade tape recorder, Makarov PB backup pistol, 3 doses of improved truth serum (3 doses)

Sometimes, watching just isn't enough, and you have to get your hands dirty. Improved poisons have higher saving throw DCs than basic poisons, and a truth serum with a save DC of 16 can cut your target's Wisdom score down in no time. Before you know it, your Interrogation Conflicts will have him singing like a canary.

Possessions 7: Audio bug (PR 2, ×4), tracer bug (PR 4, ×4), video bug (PR 2, ×4), field glasses, parabolic microphone, laser microphone, consumer-grade tape recorder, Makarov PB backup pistol, 3 doses of improved truth serum (3 doses)

Whilst useful with direct line of sight, parabolic microphones are easily countered by intervening obstructions, including many windows. Laser microphones, on the other hand, can work through glass and other thin surfaces, potentially letting you get the scoop on folks who think they're dealing in private. Even when your target's swept his rooms for bugs, you can rely on this device to get the straight dirt.

Possessions 8: Audio bug (PR 2, ×4), tracer bug (PR 4, ×4), video bug (PR 2, ×4), field glasses, parabolic microphone, laser microphone, consumer-grade tape recorder, Makarov PB backup pistol (with the unmarked weapon Resource), 3 doses of improved truth serum (3 doses)

TABLE 3: THE INTELLIGENCE GATHERER

Possessions	Gear
1	Audio bug (PR 2, ×4), field glasses, consumer-grade tape recorder
2	Audio bug (PR 2, ×4), field glasses, parabolic microphone, consumer-grade tape recorder
3	Audio bug (PR 2, ×4), tracer bug (PR 4, ×4), field glasses, parabolic microphone, consumer-grade tape recorder
4	Audio bug (PR 2, ×4), tracer bug (PR 4, ×4), video bug (PR 2, ×4), field glasses, parabolic microphone, consumer-grade tape recorder
5	Audio bug (PR 2, ×4), tracer bug (PR 4, ×4), video bug (PR 2, ×4), field glasses, parabolic microphone, consumer-grade tape recorder, Makarov PB backup pistol
6	Audio bug (PR 2, ×4), tracer bug (PR 4, ×4), video bug (PR 2, ×4), field glasses, parabolic microphone, consumer-grade tape recorder, Makarov PB backup pistol, improved truth serum (3 doses)
7	Audio bug (PR 2, ×4), tracer bug (PR 4, ×4), video bug (PR 2, ×4), field glasses, parabolic microphone, laser microphone, consumer-grade tape recorder, Makarov PB backup pistol, improved truth serum (3 doses)
8	Audio bug (PR 2, ×4), tracer bug (PR 4, ×4), video bug (PR 2, ×4), field glasses, parabolic microphone, laser microphone, consumer-grade tape recorder, Makarov PB backup pistol (unmarked weapon), improved truth serum (3 doses)
9	Audio bug (PR 2, ×4), tracer bug (PR 4, ×4), video bug (PR 2, ×4), field glasses, parabolic microphone, laser microphone, consumer-grade tape recorder, Makarov PB backup pistol (unmarked weapon), improved truth serum (3 doses), smuggling Resource (Caliber III)
10	Audio bug (PR 2, ×4), tracer bug (PR 4, ×4), video bug (PR 2, ×4), cellular interceptor, field glasses, parabolic microphone, laser microphone, consumer-grade tape recorder, Makarov PB backup pistol (unmarked weapon), improved truth serum (3 doses), smuggling Resource (Caliber III)

An unmarked weapon is a fantastic solution for sticky situations, letting you carry a weapon and throw it away when it becomes a liability.

Possessions 9: Audio bug (PR 2, ×4), tracer bug (PR 4, ×4), video bug (PR 2, ×4), field glasses, parabolic microphone, laser microphone, consumer-grade tape recorder, Makarov PB backup pistol (with the unmarked weapon Resource), 3 doses of improved truth serum (3 doses), smuggling Resource (Caliber III)

With all the... questionable items in your pack-out, it's probably a good idea to make sure you can get one of them through tight security when needed. Fortunately, this Possessions upgrade establishes some friends in the right places, or gives you an alternate way to slip gear across customs – a dead drop, perhaps, or a small space in a diplomatic pouch immune to border searches.

Possessions 10: Audio bug (PR 2, ×4), tracer bug (PR 4, ×4), video bug (PR 2, ×4), cellular interceptor, field glasses, parabolic microphone, laser microphone, consumer-grade tape recorder, Makarov PB backup pistol (with the unmarked weapon Resource), 3 doses of improved truth serum (3 doses), smuggling Resource (Caliber III)

A cellular interceptor is an expensive piece of equipment, but its value is unmatched when you're following a target in public. Combine it with your parabolic microphone and you can listen in to both sides of every conversation he has. Some people, especially in the modern business world, prefer their cell phone over landlines because it's well-known that landlines can be tapped. Well, cell phones can be, too, and now you have everything needed to do just that.

THE SUAVE SOCIALITE

Appearance is everything. This cannot be stressed highly enough. First impressions shouldn't last, but they do, and you can use this to your advantage. With suave social skills and complimentary gear, you can become the quintessential high-rolling super spy who operates completely out in the open, owning the field and everyone in it (or playing like you do). Manipulate, dominate, and even if somebody eventually suspects you of something, wear your public profile like a shield.

The suave socialite probably dedicates a lot more of his Wealth to Lifestyle than Possessions, but it's worth the trade-off. After all, that Appearance score's gonna net a great house, cool clothes, and probably more than one car. When playing this character, enjoy! Indulge! You deserve the very best, and you should relish using it to flash your opponents into submission.

Possessions 1: Limousine + designer clothes and bottle of champagne, tuxedo liner (miniature Common Item Gadget (headset radio))

Straight away you should pick up a limo. Sure, a car's provided by your Lifestyle, but anyone who's anyone should be chauffeured. So what if you don't have the Personal Lieutenant feat? The other agents in your team can drive, right? When you're done talking one of them into the driver's seat, pick up a tuxedo liner and slip it on under your designer suit. As the highest-profile member of your team, you make the biggest target so you'll need protection early on. The built-in headset radio is an added bonus; it'll let you discreetly stay in touch with the rest of your team, even when you're hip deep in champagne and caviar with the enemy mastermind.

Possessions 2: Limousine + designer clothes and bottle of champagne, tuxedo liner (hidden compartment

Gadget, miniature Common Item Gadget (headset radio))

As has been mentioned before, appearance is everything. It doesn't matter whether you are trying to get something in or take something out, a small hidden compartment in your clothing can be invaluable for any number of reasons.

Possessions 3: Cover identity (PR 4), limousine + designer clothes and bottle of champagne, tuxedo liner (hidden compartment Gadget, miniature Common Item Gadget (headset radio))

Of course, when attending important functions it's probably a silly idea to go around giving everyone the name on your birth certificate. A Power Rating 4 cover identity establishes enough background that casual checks won't turn up much. Just remember to stay in character.

Possessions 4: Cover identity (PR 4), limousine + designer clothes and bottle of champagne, tuxedo liner (hidden compartment Gadget, miniature Common Item Gadget (headset radio)), commercial bug sweeper

High-profile conversations can be a tricky business, and you usually want to have them in private. Also, when you're on deep cover operations, lingering in character for months or years at a time, it's good practice to know when you're under surveillance. A bug sweeper solves both these concerns and keeps you on top of the situation when someone tries to lure you into a trap.

Possessions 5: Cover identity (PR 4), limousine + designer clothes and bottle of champagne, tuxedo liner (hidden compartment Gadget, miniature Common Item Gadget (headset radio)), commercial bug sweeper, Walther PPK backup pistol (with concealed holster upgrade)

TABLE 4: THE SUAVE SOCIALITE

Possessions	Gear
1	Limousine + designer clothes and bottle of champagne, tuxedo liner (miniature Common Item Gadget (headset radio))
2	Limousine + designer clothes and bottle of champagne, tuxedo liner (hidden compartment Gadget, miniature Common Item Gadget (headset radio))
3	Cover identity (PR 4), limousine + designer clothes and bottle of champagne, tuxedo liner (hidden compartment Gadget, miniature Common Item Gadget (headset radio))
4	Cover identity (PR 4), limousine + designer clothes and bottle of champagne, tuxedo liner (hidden compartment Gadget, miniature Common Item Gadget (headset radio)), commercial bug sweeper
5	Cover identity (PR 4), limousine + designer clothes and bottle of champagne, tuxedo liner (hidden compartment Gadget, miniature Common Item Gadget (headset radio)), commercial bug sweeper, Walther PPK backup pistol (concealed holster)
6	Cover identity (PR 4), limousine + designer clothes and bottle of champagne, tuxedo liner (hidden compartment Gadget, miniature Common Item Gadget (headset radio)), commercial bug sweeper, jammer (PR 4), Walther PPK backup pistol (concealed holster)
7	Cover identity (PR 4), limousine + designer clothes and bottle of champagne, tuxedo liner (hidden compartment Gadget, miniature Common Item Gadget (headset radio)), commercial bug sweeper, jammer (PR 4), Walther PPK backup pistol (concealed holster), basic lethal poison (3 doses)
8	Cover identity (PR 4), limousine + designer clothes and bottle of champagne, tuxedo liner (hidden compartment Gadget, miniature Common Item Gadget (headset radio)), commercial bug sweeper, jammer (PR 4), Walther PPK backup pistol (concealed holster, threaded barrel, suppressor), basic lethal poison (3 doses)
9	Cover identity (PR 4), limousine + designer clothes and bottle of champagne, tuxedo liner (hidden compartment Gadget, miniature Common Item Gadget (headset radio)), commercial bug sweeper, jammer (PR 4), Walther PPK backup pistol (concealed holster, threaded barrel, suppressor), basic lethal poison (3 doses), legal help: immunity (minor felony)
10	Cover identity (PR 4), excessive yacht (custom appearance kit (Impress)), limousine + designer clothes and bottle of champagne, tuxedo liner (hidden compartment Gadget, miniature Common Item Gadget (headset radio)), commercial bug sweeper, jammer (PR 4), Walther PPK backup pistol (concealed holster, threaded barrel, suppressor), basic lethal poison (3 doses), legal help: immunity (minor felony)

As the Bond of yesteryear would attest, the Walther PPK is a gentleman's weapon, perfect for a person of your status. It fits equally well in a back-holster or a garter belt, and its low recoil won't punish you too much for a low-to-average Strength score. The wonderful Style Over Caliber feat is a great complement to this stylish weapon.

Possessions 6: Cover identity (PR 4), limousine + designer clothes and bottle of champagne, tuxedo liner (hidden compartment Gadget, miniature Common Item Gadget (headset radio)), commercial bug sweeper, jammer (PR 4), Walther PPK backup pistol (with concealed holster upgrade)

The jammer: another way of ensuring your privacy. Not only does it interfere with bugs and wireless interceptors, it blocks laser and parabolic microphones too.

Possessions 7: Cover identity (PR 4), limousine + designer clothes and bottle of champagne, tuxedo liner (hidden compartment Gadget, miniature Common Item Gadget (headset radio)), commercial bug sweeper, jammer (PR 4), Walther PPK backup pistol (with concealed holster upgrade), basic lethal poison (3 doses)

For those situations where the only option is taking someone out, there's always your favoured toxin, discreetly hidden in your tuxedo liner's handy compartment.

Possessions 8: Cover identity (PR 4), limousine + designer clothes and bottle of champagne, tuxedo liner (hidden compartment Gadget, miniature Common Item Gadget (headset radio)), commercial bug sweeper, jammer (PR 4), Walther PPK backup pistol (with concealed holster, threaded barrel, and suppressor upgrades), basic lethal poison (3 doses)

Time to push the envelope a bit with your sidearm. A couple minor upgrades and suddenly you're primed for some discreet dispatching, should such bloody business become necessary.

Possessions 9: Cover identity (PR 4), limousine + designer clothes and bottle of champagne, tuxedo liner (hidden compartment Gadget, miniature Common Item Gadget (headset radio)), commercial bug sweeper, jammer (PR 4), Walther PPK backup pistol (with concealed holster, threaded barrel, and suppressor upgrades), basic lethal poison (3 doses), legal help: immunity (minor felony)

It really wouldn't do for someone in your position to be arrested. How would that play out in the social columns? And the damage to your current identity could be devastating. So here we take out a little insurance. A few well-placed bribes and the occasional golf-match is a small price to pay for legal immunity. Just remember not to kill anyone – unless you have to, in which case remember not to get caught.

Possessions 10: Cover identity (PR 4), excessive yacht (with the custom appearance (Impress) upgrade), limousine + designer clothes and bottle of champagne, tuxedo liner (hidden compartment Gadget, miniature Common Item Gadget (headset radio)), commercial bug sweeper, jammer (PR 4), Walther PPK backup pistol (with concealed holster, threaded barrel, and suppressor upgrades), basic lethal poison (3 doses), legal help: immunity (minor felony)

What socialite's high life would be complete without a yacht? To set yours apart on the waves, we've added a custom appearance specifically conceived to boost your Impress checks, and that's just on the dockside... Wait until you get them below decks where you can start benefiting from the luxury vehicle quality. The living quarters even make the yacht an ideal base for your

team, which means you don't have to waste valuable cash or picks on hotels. Of course, you'll have to make sure they clean up after themselves, and that you have a decent answer for why you keep them around. That should be easy enough for you, though, right? After all, everyone needs bodyguards, and the more you have, the more important you must be.

THE WIRED WARRIOR

In this technological age, he who controls the flow of information controls the world. The wired warrior often uses the Hacker and Scientist classes to devastating effect, combining their potent abilities with tricked-out custom hardware to make the utmost of Hacking Conflicts.

Since a lot of computer storage is offline, the wired warrior often finds himself needing to get into an enemy installation, and much of this pack-out series is skewed toward this eventuality. One thing you won't find here, though, is software. Despite its ubiquitous utility, it's usually a good idea to leave programs to mission gear picks, as your requirements for each operation will vary.

Possessions 1: Desktop computer (PR 2), laptop computer (PR 2), electronics kit I

First things first: your hardware. Just as the ranged combatant shouldn't rely on his employers for his weapons, neither should you rely on them for yours. You'll find the electronics kit vital when you need to tinker with your gear in the field.

Possessions 2: Desktop computer (PR 2), laptop computer (PR 2), electronics kit I, cover identity (PR 1)

Naturally, you'll need a hacker alias. A cover identity with a Power Rating of 1 isn't concrete yet, but it's better than using your own details. Remember, information is power. Don't give them any more than you have to.

Possessions 3: Desktop computer (PR 4, skill boost Gadget (Computers +4)), laptop computer (PR 2), electronics kit I, cover identity (PR 1), police scanner

No hacker worth his salt would use an off-the-shelf deck, and at Possessions 3 you should be thinking about overclocking your processors and optimising your system with other hacking tweaks. The skill boost Gadget mechanism nicely simulates this for only short periods, but when with a clunky dinosaur of a security system or a n00b security hacker on the ropes, a few minutes is really all you need. Since the Gadget pick includes the computer (and upgrades it to boot), you can use the freed up Caliber I pick to secure a police scanner and stay one step ahead of the force.

Possessions 4: Desktop computer (PR 4, skill boost Gadget (Computers +4)), laptop computer (PR 2), electronics kit I, cover identity (PR 1), police scanner, 9mm P H&K P7 backup pistol (with the holdout holster, standard laser sight, and custom grip upgrades)

Heading into an enemy facility may be blasé for the team Soldier or Intruder, but not for you. At some point, you'll need to think about self-defense. The H&K P7 has a good punch, extended magazine, and can be tricked out with a few pretty upgrades. You won't be bursting with it anytime soon (unless your Strength score is higher than usual for one of your ilk), but really, if you have to, you're in deeper trouble than any sidearm's gonna solve.

Possessions 5: Desktop computer (PR 4, skill boost Gadget (Computers +4)), laptop computer (PR 2), audio/

video receiver (PR 3), electronics kit I, cover identity (PR 1), police scanner, 9mm P H&K P7 backup pistol (with the holdout holster, standard laser sight, and custom grip upgrades)

An A/V receiver is an excellent addition to your digital repertoire. It can be hooked up to your desktop or laptop machines, turning them into tactical bases of operations for your team. With this adjustment you can observe anyone in range with a radio or video transmitter, analyze data procured by operatives in multiple locations, and perform a wide variety of other nifty actions.

Possessions 6: Desktop computer (PR 4, skill boost Gadget (Computers +4)), laptop computer (PR 3), audio/video receiver (PR 3), electronics kit I, work group (PR 2), cover identity (PR 2), police scanner, 9mm P H&K P7 backup pistol (with the holdout holster, standard laser sight, and custom grip upgrades)

This is a huge improvement. Your laptop gets an upgrade, as does your cover identity, and you score some assistance from the work group of your choice – just in case you run into something with which you're not familiar.

Possessions 7: Desktop computer (PR 4, skill boost Gadget (Computers +4), self destruct Gadget (remnants)), laptop computer (PR 3), audio/video receiver (PR 3), electronics kit I, work group (PR 2), cover identity (PR 2), police scanner, 9mm P H&K P7 backup pistol (with the holdout holster, standard laser sight, and custom grip upgrades)

When the enemy's closing in, you can always just pick up your laptop and run, but it's not always as easy to pull the hard drive from your desktop. Fortunately, it's now equipped with a one-click self-destruct, rendering

TABLE 5: THE WIRED WARRIOR

Possessions	Gear
1	Desktop computer (PR 2), laptop computer (PR 2), electronics kit I
2	Desktop computer (PR 2), laptop computer (PR 2), electronics kit I, cover identity (PR 1)
3	Desktop computer (PR 4, skill boost Gadget (Computers +4)), laptop computer (PR 2), electronics kit I, cover identity (PR 1), police scanner
4	Desktop computer (PR 4, skill boost Gadget (Computers +4)), laptop computer (PR 2), electronics kit I, cover identity (PR 1), police scanner, H&K P7 backup pistol (holdout holster, standard laser sight, and custom grip)
5	Desktop computer (PR 4, skill boost Gadget (Computers +4)), laptop computer (PR 2), audio/video receiver (PR 3), electronics kit I, cover identity (PR 1), police scanner, H&K P7 backup pistol (holdout holster, standard laser sight, custom grip)
6	Desktop computer (PR 3, skill boost Gadget (Computers +4)), laptop computer (PR 4), audio/video receiver (PR 3), electronics kit I, work group (PR 2), cover identity (PR 2), police scanner, H&K P7 backup pistol (holdout holster, standard laser sight, custom grip)
7	Desktop computer (PR 4, skill boost Gadget (Computers +4), self destruct Gadget (remnants)), laptop computer (PR 3), audio/video receiver (PR 3), electronics kit I, work group (PR 2), cover identity (PR 2), police scanner, H&K P7 backup pistol (holdout holster, standard laser sight, custom grip)
8	Desktop computer (PR 4, skill boost Gadget (Computers +4), self destruct Gadget (remnants), voice control (20 ft.)*), laptop computer (PR 3, miniature gear pick Gadget*), audio/video receiver (PR 3), electronics kit I, work group (PR 2), cover identity (PR 2), police scanner, H&K P7 backup pistol (holdout holster, standard laser sight, custom grip)
9	Desktop computer (PR 4, skill boost Gadget (Computers +4), self destruct Gadget (remnants), voice control (20 ft.)*), laptop computer (PR 3, damage save bonus (+1), miniature gear pick Gadget*), audio/video transceiver (PR 6), electronics kit I, work group (PR 2), cover identity (PR 2), police scanner, H&K P7 backup pistol (holdout holster, standard laser sight, custom grip)
10	Desktop computer (PR 5, skill boost Gadget (Computers +4), self destruct Gadget (traceless), voice control (20 ft.)*), laptop computer (PR 3, damage save bonus (+1), miniature gear pick Gadget*), audio/video transceiver (PR 6), commercial GPS unit, electronics kit I, work group (PR 2), cover identity (PR 2), police scanner, H&K P7 backup pistol (holdout holster, standard laser sight, custom grip)

* You may only choose one of these options.

it largely useless at a moment's notice. You might want to baby-safe it, though, especially if your teammates like to push random buttons for fun.

Possessions 8: Desktop computer (PR 4, skill boost Gadget (Computers +4), self destruct Gadget (remnants), voice control (20 ft.)*), laptop computer (PR 3, miniature gear pick Gadget*), audio/video receiver (PR 3), electronics kit I, work group (PR 2), cover identity (PR 2), police scanner, 9mm P H&K P7 backup pistol (with the holdout holster, standard laser sight, and custom grip upgrades)

Even a Caliber I Possessions slot can mean real options. For example, you could add voice control to your desktop, allowing you to use it at up to 20 ft. away (especially helpful if you're taken captive before you can hit the self destruct). Alternately, you could miniaturize your laptop to the size of a wrist watch – damn helpful when you're on one of those pesky field operations, although the keyboard gets a bit fiddly.

Possessions 9: Desktop computer (PR 4, skill boost Gadget (Computers +4), self destruct Gadget (remnants), voice control (20 ft.)*), laptop computer (PR 3, damage save boost (+1), miniature gear pick Gadget*), audio/video transceiver (PR 6), electronics kit I, work group (PR 2), cover identity (PR 2), police scanner, 9mm P H&K P7 backup pistol (with the holdout holster, standard laser sight, and custom grip upgrades)

It's time to upgrade to an A/V transceiver so you can give as well as you get. This also lets you upgrade your laptop with a little extra casing to protect its valuable contents.

Possessions 10: Desktop computer (PR 5, skill boost Gadget (Computers +4), self destruct Gadget (traceless), voice control (20 ft.)*), laptop computer (PR 3, damage save boost (+1), miniature gear pick Gadget*), audio/video transceiver (PR 6), commercial GPS unit, electronics kit I, work group (PR 2), cover identity (PR 2), police scanner, 9mm P H&K P7 backup pistol (with the holdout holster, standard laser sight, and custom grip upgrades)

Your ultimate upgrade boosts your desktop's general utility and renders it to ash when the self destruct is enabled. This frees up a Caliber II pick you can use for a commercial GPS unit.





Call-Me-Robot

Ideas for how to use robots in your games of Judge Dredd. By Nick Robinson.

Robots are an every day part of the world of Judge Dredd. They are so commonplace that they are often ignored by Games Masters who miss out on their potential to enliven their games with these highly useful constructs. They are able to perform many functions within a typical campaign, and should make a significant contribution.

Robots can have many basic roles in any game of Dredd. They can be general background, villains, victims, civilians or comic relief. Some are able to achieve multiple roles, especially true if you include one robot in several investigations. (Walter from the comics has been in most of the listed roles at some point over the years.)

Background

Robots are commonplace in Mega-City One and are largely responsible for the incredibly high rates of unemployment suffered by its citizens. This very fact should make their appearance in every scenario within the city almost inevitable. These everyday robots should be included in descriptions of crowds and locations, describing robots going about completing the tasks their owners have set for them, be it garbage collection, doing the shopping or walking the robodog.

This is a necessity in any campaign where robots are to be placed in more prominent roles. If a patrol of judges is not used to having robots around having one suddenly appear that you hope will surprise them and cause them to do something rash is unlikely to work. Players are used to looking for the unusual, and it is up to a Games

Masters to hide it, preferably in plain sight. By having robots turn up so frequently and making them the normal background of the game will allow the Games Master to use the more interesting robot types more successfully in his campaign.

Besides the standard robots Player Characters may come across there are many unusual types that add to the atmosphere of gaming in Mega-City One. Some robots are huge, with demolition and construction models being larger than many buildings. This makes it possible to set scenes inside one of these juggernauts, with judges and criminals exchanging shots inside the machinery, an extremely dangerous location at the best of times.

Other robots are more friends to, and in some specialised cases the sexual partners of, citizens. These can provide many extra plot devices as they add a more personal element to cases than most robots do.

Robot Villains

There are several different ways in which robots can be villains in a game of Dredd. The simplest and most common is as slaves to criminal gangs, having to do the dangerous work because they are programmed to do so. 'Free' robots, those that have decided to throw off their oppression by the humans of the city, are also a recurring theme, having first appeared in the early years of the 2000AD comic with the rebellion led by Call-Me-Kenneth and making occasional appearances (on a much smaller scale) ever since.

Rogue robots are also fairly common, where damage, sabotage or faulty programming has caused an otherwise functional machine to turn to crime in one form or another. These can be very dangerous as the robot might appear perfectly normal and then suddenly present a deadly adversary at the most inopportune moment. A final category of villains are master criminal robots; these are extremely rare but have occurred and can provide an excellent recurring villain in any Dredd campaign.

Slaves

Slave robots are programs that follow their programming mindlessly – it is just that they have been programmed by criminals to carry out crimes. The simplest form is when a perp uses a robot that he has to hand to commit a crime for him, often a robbery. These are not normally difficult for the Justice Department to track down and apprehend, as frequently little thought has gone into covering the perp's trail, frequently the judges can simply follow the robot back to the villain and make an arrest there.

Assassin droids are highly dangerous constructs that have been in use by contract killer agencies for some time. Their use by the Frenzz criminal syndicate brought Justice Department to its knees, and the lesson learned has meant that there is now much inter-city co-operation in stamping down on the providers of such machines. However these are highly efficient killers and quite a number are produced off-world to supply the demand from criminal organisations.



Criminal gangs also use robots to carry out more mundane tasks. Protection rackets can be fronted by intimidating machines, bagmen can carry ill-gained wealth without risk of the robot running away with the loot or spilling the beans if caught – the possibilities are as unlimited as those the criminals (or Games Master) can come up with. Some

criminal gangs have followed the Frendz example and have taken to using robots for many of their enterprises. Even in the sphere of crime robots are beginning to make people unemployed!

Free Robots

Call-Me-Kenneth provided a wake-up call when he led a revolt against the judges and humanity in general. The carnage that ensued left the judges in no doubt that the use of robots had to be watched and controlled very carefully. This vigilance has prevented a number of similar outbreaks of robot rebellions, nipping them in the bud, often by using robots to infiltrate suspect groups to find out if there is a problem.

Besides preventing rebellions Justice Department is also keen on tracking down the robots from previous revolts. Some of the original followers of Call-Me-Kenneth can still be found hiding out in sectors devastated in the Apocalypse War, others in the Cursed Earth and the Undercity. There are even rumours that some left Earth entirely. Their original numbers have been slowly eroded but new recruits, such as stragglers from Precious Leglock's brief period of rulership in one of the ruined sectors, have ensured that these robots are

still out there. Only their limited threat and the more urgent need for resources elsewhere have prevented Justice Department from hunting down and destroying these rogues.

Another group of 'free' robots are the old mech warriors of President Booth. Although they are not much of a threat, their remains rusting away in some of the most inhospitable areas of the Cursed Earth, they are still a problem to any who might wander into their territory. Fortunately these robots have taken so much damage from battles, the weather and time that they can be dealt with easily by a well-equipped force. They are, however, quite relentless and capable of inflicting losses.

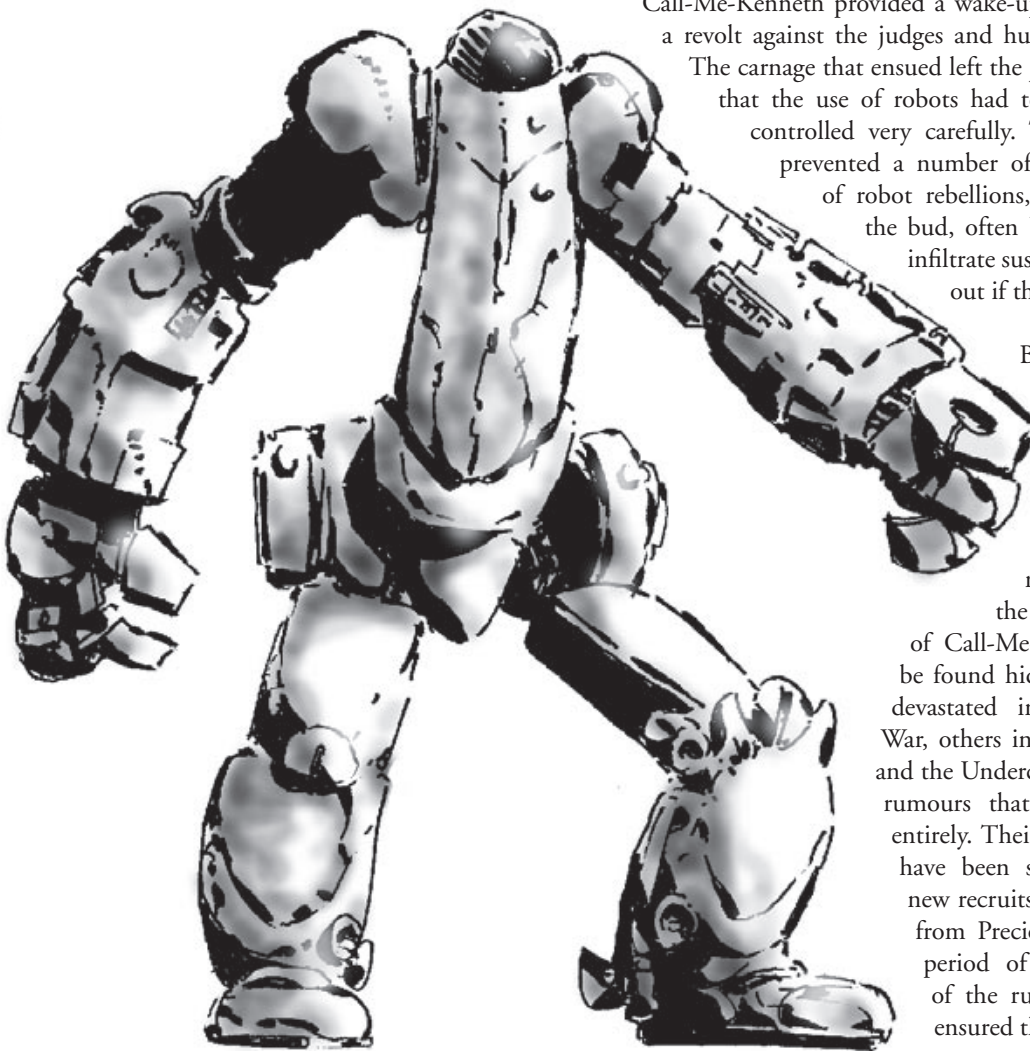
Free Robots can also occur elsewhere, off world. The realm of Grunwalder, first appearing during the Judge Child Quest, was one where humans (and aliens) were unwanted and attacked if they dare enter the independent state. It is safe to assume there have been other robot rebellions on other worlds that have been successful. If any of these ever become a threat to Mega-City 1 it is certain that the judges would take devastating action.

Rogues

Rogue robots, whether through malicious or faulty programming or accidental damage, are a constant thorn in the side of the judges, but are not much of a threat to the wellbeing of the city. Each time a robot has gone rogue it has always been hunted down and destroyed before causing too much damage, although the largest robots have caused far more notable carnage.

Master Criminals

Robots do not generally make good master criminals. Most are extremely limited in their artificial intelligence programming to prevent future problems, like those suffered at the hands of Call-Me-Kenneth. However, that is not to say that there cannot be a master criminal robot



out there. Such a potential Godfather of all things steel and chrome could make an extremely good recurring villain in a long-running campaign. Just when the judges finally track down such a metallic mobster and destroy it they may find out that it has a back-up, complete with its old memory, stored somewhere, ready to take over its former operation once the heat dies down.

Victims

Robots generally have no real rights, in and of themselves. Robots that have been granted citizenship have the same rights as any citizen; however these are very few and far between. Instead, robots are generally considered to be someone's (a citizen, resident alien, corporation, city administration or Justice Department) property. As such damaging, stealing or destroying a robot would most commonly be treated as the same as any other crime against property.

Robots are often costly and as such are targeted for theft. Stolen robots can be broken down for parts by criminal gangs, or even held for ransom if their owners have some sort of emotional attachment to them. The financial gains can be as great for kidnapping a robot instead of a person and any possible iso-cube sentence received is likely to be much lower if caught.

Mindless vandalism also occurs (especially as such anti-social behaviour is a fact of Mega-City life), although robots are often deliberately targeted by anti-robot groups such as the Neon Knights or Neo-Luddites. As they are often blamed for the woes of the ordinary citizen, most frequently for the lack of jobs, the pent up frustrations of the citizens are often unleashed against the generally harmless machines. Marches demanding jobs for the citizenship often break down into destructive anti-robot riots, often at the behest of rabble-rousers.

Civilians

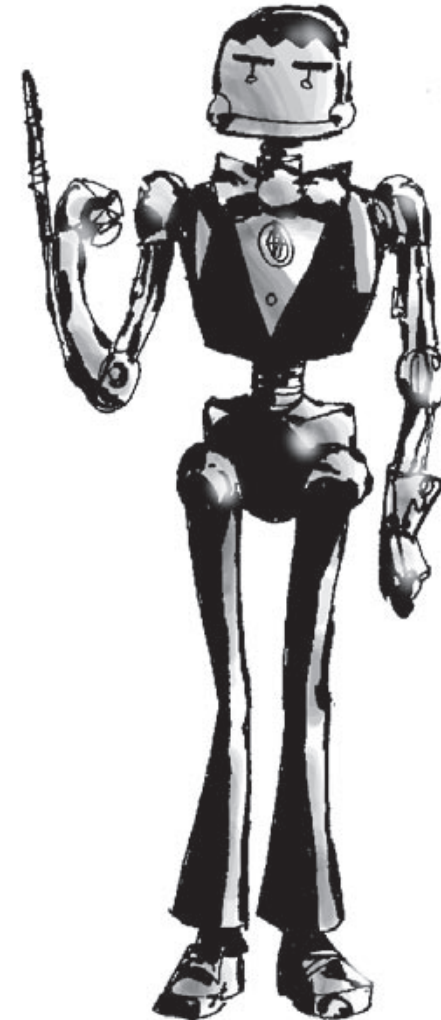
Similar to background robots but having far more of an input to the campaign are civilian robots. These are robots that the judges come into contact with during the course of their investigations.

Workers

Robots perform the day-to-day tasks that people do in our own world. They are the labourers, bank tellers, clerks, limo drivers and so on. As such the judges are likely to come across a robot in the course of its duties and even require it to act for them in some way. A ship's (naval or space) pilot might be needed to catch a fleeing perp-runner vessel, a sniffer droid might be needed to find a bomb or body or a doc-bot could be required to patch them up. Whenever the judges need backup in a non-combat role they may well find themselves making use of the services of a robot rather than a support judge or auxiliary. This should make them more appreciative of having robots around, especially considering their greater levels of performance and reliability compared to citizens.

Witnesses

Most crimes have witnesses. One thing that has consistently impeded police investigations in the real world is how variable the quality of witnesses can be. With robots the problem is partially solved. A robot is likely to remember pretty much exactly what a given perp looked like, but might not interpret things the same way as a citizen would, not comprehending that there is a crime in the first place, perhaps. Judges would do well to question potential robot witnesses with very carefully worded questions, if they do this then the information they will get will (on average) be far superior than that provided by a human witness.



Cannon Fodder

Civilian robots have one additional purpose for a Games Master. They can provide wonderful accidental victims. If players are a little too trigger happy then they could accidentally shoot a robot in the crossfire of a gun battle. Having a robot destroyed rather than a dead civilian might make a thoughtful group of judges take more care in the future when firing at perps in a crowd. A more gung-ho group that fails to heed such an implied warning deserves the demerits, demotions and possible negligent homicide charges they get. Titan is always an option for those who are carefree about the lives of citizens.

Comedy

The final major role robots can fill in a campaign is light relief. Humour has always played a major part in the world of Dredd, if only to prevent the grim reality of the place become totally overbearing. Robots are very good at getting in some cheap laughs by their very nature.

Telling a robot to do something might be taken too literally, especially as robots are programmed to follow any orders a judge gives them ('Go jump into a lake!' could cause problems when the robot's oil pollutes the block park mock-duck pond, creating a riot as disappointed blockers find that their peaceful haven from the horrors of everyday life has been ruined).

Robots are programmed to be dumb and literal for two reasons. Firstly, really good artificial intelligence is expensive to program. Secondly, really good artificial intelligence would allow robots to think for themselves – causing more problems than it is worth. Do not underestimate the value of a stupid robot to provide comic relief to a particularly dark adventure.

Their ability to misinterpret a situation given their limited programming is immeasurable. They can get in the way, prevent arrests, attempt to rescue judges or citizens from dangerous situations and otherwise cause havoc. In other words, after they have been beaten, blasted and burned whilst on patrol really let your players suffer as they have to deal with some truly stupid robot getting in their way.



A JOB WELL DONE

Rewards that won't derail your RuneQuest game, by Carl Walmsley

Sometimes, as Games Master, you wish to reward your players for a job well done. One temptation can be to dole out the magical items – or to provide enough cash for characters to go out and purchase their own. If done too often, however, this can detract from the mystique surrounding enchanted objects and may, in the long term, lead to the feeling that the Games Master has lost control of a campaign. Over-powerful characters can thwart the best laid plans and do not tend to increase players' enjoyment of games – in fact, the opposite is often true.

Presented here are some alternative rewards for characters which should keep them happy, but which are far less likely to lead to an unbalanced game.

Potions

Potions, elixirs and other alchemical concoctions can be a good way to reward characters without threatening to change the long-term balance of a campaign. Powerful as a potion might be, its uses are limited.

It is recommended that each potion a character finds should contain more than a single draft. Players are reluctant to employ single-use items: there is a tendency to wait and see whether a more dangerous monster or more cunning trap, or whatever else it might be, presents

itself. Typically, a potion should therefore contain three draughts, though the Games Master may prefer to roll a D6 to determine the number at random.

Note that quaffing multiple draughts of a potion usually has no added benefit for a character.

Potion of Tongues

A character who drinks this potion finds that he is able to understand any language he hears spoken. It is as though every utterance he hears is in his native tongue.

Similarly, the character's own words are effortlessly translated into any language he chooses, so long as he has heard that language spoken at least once. Even a single sentence is enough to facilitate this magical translation.

Drinking a Potion of Tongues is a very strange experience. The imbiber feels his tongue shift and squirm within his mouth, and he experiences the sensation that he is not entirely in control of his lips. The first time a character uses this potion, he receives a -5% penalty on Influence, Oratory, Sing and any other Skill Tests which rely on clear enunciation.

The effects of the potion last for one day.

Potion of Insight

Drinking a potion of this kind provides a character with a stunning flash of insight. How this manifests is determined by the Games Master. The character might suddenly figure out an important clue, realise something that has previously eluded him (perhaps in a previous adventure) or in some other way deduce something that is advantageous to him.

The inspirational flash usually occurs within a matter of moments, but can take as long as a week to occur.

A Potion of Insight can be an excellent way for a Games Master to provide exposition or a handy hint to characters who are stumped: *glug glug glug. Ah, I suddenly see – we need to go back to the temple and take along that key we found all those weeks ago!*

Potion of Slipperiness

Quaffing a potion of this kind provides a character with a glistening sheen that can make it look as though he is sweating slightly.

The effect of the potion is to cover the drinker in a slick coating that makes him almost impossible to get hold of. All Grapple attempts made against the character suffer a -50% penalty.

In addition, the drinker receives a +10% bonus on all Dodge tests – he is so slippery that glancing blows just slide off him.

Note that a character who has quaffed one of these potions has no trouble grasping objects himself, donning clothing, and so on.

The effects of this potion last for 3 hours.

Potion of Fortune

Drinking this potion makes the character unfeasibly lucky. It is as though the universe smiles down on him and everything seems to go his way.

The character receives a +10% bonus on all Skill tests, and characters who attempt any actions which are to the detriment of the character receive a -10% penalty.

In addition, the character gains a special Hero Point which may only be used for the Glancing Blow, Second Chance or Luck of the Heroes (*RuneQuest* page 59) effects. This point must be spent before the potion's effects wear off.

A Potion of Fortune's effects last for 12 hours.

Potion of Putrefaction

Drinking this potion makes a character smell like a rotting corpse. Beyond the embarrassing social consequences that this might have (the character receives a -30% penalty on all interactions with living creatures), the drinker will find that he is treated as a zombie by all forms of undead. In most instances, this will mean that the character can mingle freely with the walking dead, infiltrating their ranks in whatever way he sees fit.

The effects of this potion last for 1 day – or until the character is bathed in holy water.

Elixir of Adrenalin

Triggering the body's fight or flight responses, a draught of this potion can give a character the edge he needs when entering – or fleeing from – combat.

Immediately upon quaffing this potion, the character feels a surge of strength and speed pulse through his muscles. His STR and DEX are increased by 6 (resulting in +1 Combat Action, a one-step increase in damage modifier, a +3 Strike Rank modifier and any skill bonuses, including +12% to most melee combat skills). In addition, he temporarily gains 1 point of natural armour on all hit locations – his body is so pumped full of adrenalin that he is far less sensitive to pain and shock.

The character's Movement is also increased by 2m.

When the effects of the potion wear off, the character immediately acquires 2 levels of Fatigue.

The effects of this potion last for 1 hour.

Potion of Thorns

Upon quaffing this concoction the drinker grows hundreds of tough thorns, which force their way up through any areas of exposed skin. Flesh covered by clothing or armour remains unaffected, so as to avoid damaging the drinker's apparel.

The thick thorns and toughened skin provide 1 point of armour to all hit locations. In addition, any creature which strikes the character with an unarmed blow suffers 1D3 damage to the appropriate body part.

A creature which attempts to Grapple the character suffers 1D6 damage to a random location each round that the Grapple is maintained.

The thick thorns may also be used to aid the character when climbing. Athletics (climbing) tests receive a +10% bonus.

The effects of a Potion of Thorns last for 3 hours.

Order of Merit

It is often the case that, given enough time, a group of adventurers will perform valiant service for a nobleman, rescue a kidnapped princess or perhaps liberate a town or two. Such heroic deeds deserve a reward of some kind, and one option is to bestow the adventurers with membership of some sort of elite order. In games where cults do not play a great role, one of the following options may be an option.



Knightly Order

Perhaps the most traditional title which may be conferred within a fantasy campaign is a knighthood. An honorary title is often more appropriate within a campaign, as accepting the responsibilities usually associated with this role may curtail a character's adventuring career.

A knighthood (honorary or not) bestows a number of benefits. Firstly, the character can expect to be treated favourably by other members of the order. Interactions such as Influence or Oratory Tests receive a +15% bonus. When in contact with individuals and groups that are allied to the order there is +5% bonus.

Members of a knightly order are free to use whatever headquarters and premises the order owns: there will usually be some sort of central chapel or keep but, depending upon the order, there may also be outposts spread throughout the region or country.

It is not uncommon for a title to come with the deeds to a property or some land. This can be a useful way for a character to support himself financially between adventures. This is not without responsibilities, however – any servants working the character's land or attending his home are entitled to his protection. In addition, a landed knight may be expected to do service to his liege lord should the need arise. Failure to do so may result in expulsion from the order.

A knight in need can request help from members of his order. Within reason, they may be willing to provide him with shelter, supplies and even fight at his side. An honourable knight helped in this way may one day find himself on the receiving end of a similar request.

Finally, knights are often provided with equipment – armour, weapons and a warhorse. If a character already has such trappings, they may be emblazoned with a heraldic crest identifying the knight's allegiance.

Guild Champion

Being awarded the status of Guild Champion means that a character has performed some service that has been acknowledged throughout the entire guild.

Depending upon the type of guild to which the character belongs, the title he is awarded may differ. Some examples include:

Thieves' Guild – Nightmaster, Twilight Keeper

Warriors' Guild – Battle Lord, Swordmaster

Assassins' Guild – Shadowblade, Unseen Slayer

Wizards' Guild – Master of Arcana, Eldritch Lord

Merchants' Guild – Master of Coins, Acquisitionary

Guild Champions enjoy the same bonuses to interaction as do knights, though only within their own guild and with those allied to it.

They may make requests for personnel, equipment, resources and information. Assuming that fulfilling a request does not damage guild interests and that it is reasonable (as determined by the Games Master), it is likely to be met.

The position of a Guild Champion should carry some responsibilities, though these should not be so onerous as to make a player consider relinquishing his position. Taking new guild members out on their first mission or helping to track down a missing guild member are the sort of fun assignments that can be meted out from time to time.

Freeman of the City

Being made a freeman of a city grants a character considerable local prestige and influence. Within the city, town or village in question, the character is considered a local hero, and must have done something heroic to earn this status. He receives a +20% bonus on all interactions for one year. After this time, it is likely that the character's fame will have diminished somewhat and the bonus falls to +10%.

In addition, a freeman will often be granted drinks, meals and accommodation free of charge. However, he would do well not to overstay his welcome in any single establishment, lest he lose his privileges. Typically, a landlord or restaurateur will happily house or feed a freeman for 1 week. After this time, and for at least a month after that, he will be expected to pay as normal.

Finally, the price of equipment purchased within the settlement of his fame by a freeman is 10% lower than normal for the first year. After this, the discount becomes 5%.

Mechanical Marvels

Ingenious inventions can be every bit as useful as magical items, and just as intriguing. Here are a few that characters might manage to lay their hands on.

Kit-bow

This collapsible mini-crossbow can be broken down into six components and packed away inside a small, wooden box. This storage case measures 20 cm x 10 cm x 3 cm, making it small enough to be hidden away inside a cloak or even beneath a shirt.

Skill	Damage	STR/DEX	ENC	AP/HP	Cost
Crossbow	2D4	5/9	1	2/6	300 SP

The precision design of a kitbow means that it can be assembled or disassembled in just two combat rounds. A character who passes a Sleight test can reduce the construction time to a single round. However, failure increases the time it takes to three rounds.

All Kitbows come equipped with an optical scope. If the wielder spends actions taking aim through this sight, he receives a +15% bonus to hit per action, rather than the usual +10%.

One of the most common uses to which a kitbow is put is as a grapnel launcher. There is a slot within the case to store a specially designed *grapnel-bolt*. The head of this bolt is fashioned from tough, flexible wood bound with twine. It makes far less noise when striking a rooftop or ledge than would a metal head. A spool of silk rope, 15 metres in length, is located within the storage case and may be attached to the grapnel bolt before it is fired.

Nautilus Mask

This miraculous invention allows a character to breathe water. The device filters both salt and fresh water through a pair of mechanical gills, rapidly extracting the oxygen and feeding it through to the wearer.

This process is not quite efficient enough for a character to remain underwater indefinitely. He is, however, quite safe for the first five minutes. After this time, the slight lack of oxygen may begin to tell. For each additional minute spent beneath the water, the character must pass a Resilience Test. Each time a test is failed, the

character acquires one level of Fatigue, as his body struggles to cope with the lack of oxygen.

Once a character who has acquired levels of Fatigue through overuse of a Nautilus Mask re-surfaces and is able to take a few good, deep breaths he immediately loses one level of Fatigue. Any other levels must be recovered as normal.

Cost: 500 SP

Alchemical Grenades

Like potions, no matter how powerful they are, alchemical grenades are unlikely to unbalance a campaign because they will not be around forever.

Typically a character should find 1D3 alchemical grenades, which can come in three varieties:

Acid – designed to explode when they strike their target, showering the area with highly corrosive acid, these grenades inflict 1D6+1 damage to 2D3 locations on all creatures within 3m of the point of impact. If a target is struck directly, the point of impact must be the first area that suffers damage.

Each point of damage absorbed by armour permanently lowers the AV of a location by one.

For example, Therik hurls an acid grenade at an onrushing opponent, striking him squarely in the chest. The man suffers 3 hits – the first must be to the chest, but the other two locations are rolled randomly. A 3 and a 5 indicate that acid has splashed onto both of the man's legs.

The only location struck where the man is wearing armour is on his chest – a leather vest. This area suffers 5 damage. 2 points are absorbed by the armour – effectively destroying it – and 3 points go through to the man's chest.

A location struck by acid suffers an additional point of damage one round after it was first damaged. This occurs on the same Strike Rank as the original attack.

Cost: 300 SP

Magnesium – filled with a metal that burns brighter than a thousand candles, these grenades can be used both to blind opponents and to start fires.

Magnesium grenades are set off by a fuse. 1D3 rounds after the fuse is lit, the grenade will go off. The time until the detonation should be determined in secret by the Games Master.

Any creatures within 5m of the grenade when it detonates run the risk of being dazzled. Unless the creature can pass a Resilience test with a -10% penalty, it is blinded for 1D10 rounds. The creature is treated as being in Pitch Black conditions (*RuneQuest* page 86).

In addition, there is a 50% chance that any flammable objects within 1m of the grenade at the moment it detonates will be set alight.

Cost: 200 SP

Slick – containing an especially slippery form of oil, these grenades are most often used to coat an area of ground making it hazardous to cross.

When they explode, slick grenades cover an area 3m in diameter. Any creature crossing the area coated in oil must pass an Acrobatics test or fall prone. Standing up whilst within the oiled area requires a successful Acrobatics test. Each attempt counts as an action.

Cost: 200 SP

The Cult of Myrddin

Working For the wizard in RuneQuest Stáine. By Nick Robinson.

Background

Myrddin is a legendary figure in the lands of Tir Nan Og, a demi-god who thwarts evil at every turn and a staunch ally of the druids. He has built up around him an organisation that functions much like a cult, allowing him to fight the evil of his father, the Guledig. His cult is mostly of use to Games Masters as useful allies of any party in the Land of the Young, and also to help point the heroes in the direction of adventure. The players may never realise that they are acting as Myrddin's agents much of the time. Whilst it is possible for players to rise in the ranks of the cult, they would quickly become very limited in what they can do, for the highest ranks of the cult never leave Myrddin's home of Dinas Emrys. As such this cult's primary use is one for non-player characters that interact with the party. Of course, should any Games Master wish to set a campaign within Dinas Emrys itself, allowing the players to rise to high positions within the cult is entirely appropriate.

Pantheon: Cyth / Tribes of the Earth Goddess

Worshippers: Allies and friends of Myrddin, members of the various descendants of Atlantis, inhabitants of Dinas Emrys

Worshippers Duties: To carry out the will of Myrddin by foiling the plans of the Cythrons and their dark gods.

Allies: Earth goddess tribes and cults, Atlanteans

Enemies: The Cyth, Cythrons, Fomorian, Drune Lords Mythos and History

When Atlantis was in her prime and humanity was becoming increasingly resistant to the evil of the Cyth

and their pawns one of the Cyth, the Guledig, conceived a plan to make the rebellious Atlanteans bow to his will. By kidnapping and impregnating a princess of the Atlantean royal family he hoped to create a son that would lead his people back into the fold.

The resultant child was Myrddin, but he was not the obedient offspring that the Guledig hoped for. Myrddin's mother was also a powerful witch of Danu, and drew upon her powers to escape, taking with her the newborn babe. Handing him over to the most powerful sorcerer of her people she then fled, leading the hounds of the Cyth away from her son. She was caught and died horrifically, but succeeded in her aim, for her son was safe. Myrddin himself was placed under assorted protective enchantments that hid him from his father's view, indeed he was often hidden within time itself, with much of his childhood actually occurring prior to his own birth!

It soon became clear to the druids that Myrddin was powerful indeed and as a young man he was amongst the first Atlanteans to colonise Tir Nan Og. Perfecting his arts he began to collect allies and friends, building a fortress to protect him from his father, for he knew that one day the Guledig would discover where his son was hidden.

With the destruction of Atlantis the fortress received many refugees, eager allies who were a great boon for the sorcerer. However they also betrayed his whereabouts to his father, for the trail of these people led him to his son. Ever since that time in the distant past Myrddin's fortress has been under intermittent siege, although with

the fall of Atlantis the Cyth regained some of their former control over mankind and the original purpose for which Myrddin was created was largely forgotten. The Guledig still wanted to gain control over his rebellious son, though, and every so often his agents will make a serious attempt to bring him to heel.

Ever since he became ensconced within his fortress Myrddin has chosen to try and thwart the plans of his father and the other Cyth, although he is severely hampered by the enchantments his mother and the druids cast upon him whilst still a babe. Realising the Guledig's plans through the use of divinations they sought to prevent the Guledig from locating his infant son by the use of powerful and permanent spells. As such no servant of evil can ever detect his presence magically. However there is a potent side effect to these enchantments, partially because of Myrddin's very background, whereby every direct action he takes to further the cause of 'good' (that is any action he takes to thwart his father and the Cyth) is balanced by an increase in the power of 'evil' (that of the Cyth). Thus by casting a spell to bolster his allies he might find that his enemies are able to summon a mighty evil from the Otherworld. As such Myrddin has sought to achieve his aims through the actions of his pupils and allies, as well as agents who remain oblivious to his guiding hand. By acting in such a way he can attack his enemies indirectly without strengthening them.

The fact that Myrddin is unable to act directly to smite his enemies and protect the descendants of Atlantis does not prevent him from thwarting the Cyth's evil plots



by the use of agents. It is these agents that make up the 'cult' of Myrddin, they often act in his name and with his blessing, although some are unaware that they are acting on his behalf. These agents become more trusted as they complete more and more of the cult's missions and they will rise in the informal hierarchy until they become closely allied with the demi-god. The cult is not a true religious institution, more a collection of individuals who fight under Myrddin's banner against his foes.

Nature of the Cult

A. Reason for Continued Existence

For as long as Myrddin lives and the Cyth remain to be struggled against he will employ agents to act on his behalf.

B. Social/Political Position and Power

Myrddin's personal influence in all things political is enormous within the Tribes of the Earth Goddess. He is descended from Atlantean royalty and is the mightiest sorcerer that the world will ever see. He has spun intricate plots that take decades to come to fruition. Powerful druids are frequently among his students and even those that do not benefit from his tutelage come to him for advice on many matters. Although he has little contact with the various tribes and kings directly it is his influence upon the druids and witches that act as advisors to the kings and chieftains that ensure that his influence is felt far and wide. Most druids are taught signs that only agents of Myrddin will show them, and will aid these agents whenever they are able to do so.

C. Particular Likes and Dislikes

Myddin is fond of humanity in general and the descendants of his mother's people specifically. In their rebelliousness he sees a little of himself and his struggles against his father. He is an implacable enemy to the Cyth and all their agents, and constantly seeks to defeat their schemes.

Organisation

A. Inter-Cult Organisation

There is no real formal structure within the cult. Whatever Myrddin wills is done. Few members of this cult live beyond Dinas Emrys, however whenever different members of the cult meet each other away from the place they are expected to aid one another whenever possible (although given the nature of Agents of the cult (see below) they are quite likely to be unaware of their membership).

B. Intra-Temple Organisation

There are no temples to Myrddin. He is not worshipped as a god (despite his background and abilities).

C. Centres of Power, Holy Places

Dinas Emrys is the centre of this organisation. If it were to fall completely to the forces of Myrddin's father the cult would cease to be. It is an immense structure that exists partially out of time, and is frequently assaulted. However Myrddin has always been able to count upon his many allies throughout time to come to his aid whenever sorely pressed and the Cyth have never been able to attack the place with the overwhelming force necessary. Dinas Emrys is described in the main Slaine rulebook on page 177.

D. Holy Days and High Holy Days

There are no holy days for this cult, as Myrddin is not worshipped.

Lay Membership (Agents)

Requirements: To be chosen by Myrddin or a high ranking member of the cult to perform a task.

Lay members are normally chosen from the mass of humanity for their bravery and abilities to perform some specific task. Most often they will not be told by the cult that they are actually performing actions on behalf of

Myrddin, and may remain ignorant of the fact forever. Once the task is completed they effectively are no longer members of the cult unless contacted later.

By successfully completing the tasks allotted to them they will be seen as potential agents worthy of more formal recruitment at some later date. Other than this there are no further benefits or requirements for Lay Membership. Any cult member of Acolyte or above can assign such missions.

Initiate Membership (Champions)

Requirements: To have successfully completed at least one mission for the cult in the past and show that they are staunch foes to the enemies of the Atlantean peoples.

Cult Skills: Ogham, any Weapon Skill

Cult Spells: Initiates can be taught any standard spell they would normally have access to if they should wish, normally when such a spell would be useful in completing a mission. No special spells would be taught to initiates at this stage.

Initiates are those who have showed ability and success in the past, helping to protect the Tribes of the Earth Goddess against their external enemies and who have managed to impress one of the high ranking members of the cult enough to be called upon to carry out the cult's will.

Acolyte Membership (Friends)

Requirements: To have shown repeated steadfastness in the fight against evil and a willingness to follow the directions of more senior members of the cult. The candidate must have 50% skill in five of the following: Up to two weapon skills, Lore (Dragons), Riding (Dragons), Ogham and up to four spells.





Cult Skills: Ogham, any Weapon Skill, any spells

Cult Spells: Acolytes have access to the speciality spells Glamour Path and Fire Blood. This spell allows them to send agents of the cult to where they are needed.

Special Notes: It is the duty of Acolytes to go out in the world to find worthy heroes and allies that may aid Myrddin and humanity in their fight against the Cyth. They must assign them tasks to test their mettle, and if they are found to be competent and worthy they should try to have these heroes journey to Dinas Emrys to help the cult directly.

Rune Priest Membership (Allies)

Requirements: Priests have personally aided Myrddin in his plots and plans. They will be considered both allies and friends to the eternal sorcerer. The candidate must have 75% skill in five of the following: Up to two weapon skills, Lore (Dragons), Riding (Dragons), Ogham and up to four spells.

Cult Skills: Ogham, any Weapon Skill

Cult Spells: Rune Priests have access to Glamour Path, Fire Blood and Time Warrior.

Special Notes: Rune Priests can expect to receive aid from any other member of the cult when requested. Rune Priests are normally taught a new spell every few months from Myrddin himself, choosing from any spell that they would normally be able to cast.

Special Benefits:

All members of the rank of initiate or above will gain a +10% to their skill when casting spells, this is due to the positive effect of Myrddin's power making the casting of spells much easier. This is not an actual increase in the skill, but a bonus added to the skill roll.



Cult Spells:

Glamour Path

Casting Time 6, Duration 1 day, Magnitude 8, Progressive

Glamour Path is a spell taught by Myrddin to a very few allies and heroes who work alongside him as he tries to thwart the machinations of evil. It is possible to be taught this spell by one of these heroes or Myrddin himself if a sorcerer performs many tasks to help the inhabitants of Tir Nan Og over a long time period (at least several years), thus proving himself a worthy champion.

The spell can be cast on an individual or group of up to ten people, and for every two extra Earth Power points up to another ten can be enchanted, allowing them to traverse great distances in a relatively short period of time. The enchantment lasts for a day and the target will reach the end of their journey in mere minutes, although they could be travelling from one end of Tir Nan Og to the other during that time.

It is possible to make repeated trips during the duration of the spell, if the caster so desires. Whilst the spell is in effect the caster is aware of the location of the target at all times.

Physically the target will enter some mists, travelling through dense fog before reaching the desired destination. During this trip, skirting the border of the otherworld, the target will not be able to see any landmarks until he steps out of the mists at the end of the journey. The only things that will be visible will be any companions that are also under the same enchantment, who will always remain clearly in sight, no matter how far they are from the target.

Fire Blood

Area 3 (see below), Casting Time 1, Duration special (see below), Magnitude 2, Progressive, Resist (Resilience or Dodge (see below))

Fire Blood is an extremely effective offensive spell that is taught to members of the cult and is a spell that Myrddin himself uses to overcome his enemies if in dire need. Once this spell is learned the caster will have two small wounds in the palms of his hands that will never fully heal. However, whenever the spell is cast it allows the caster to have his blood spray out of these wounds in a 3 metre long, 90 degree fan. The blood is turned into a magical fire that sticks to the victims and can not be put out by water (although other magical spells that can extinguish flames, or smothering the fire with blankets or similar methods will still work), and is extremely deadly.

However as the spell draws upon the blood of the caster it inflicts damage to him as well. For every extra point of Earth Power spent beyond the initial two the spell also inflicts one point of damage to a hit location of the caster's choice (multiple points of damage can be spread across multiple locations). The first two Magic Points do not cause any damage to the caster as this is the excess blood in the caster's system.

For every Magic Point the caster spends on the spell he causes two points of fire damage to his target to a random location, after the initial damage the target is set alight and an additional one point of damage per Magic Point is inflicted for three further rounds to the same location, unless the fire is somehow extinguished.

A successful Resilience Test will reduce the initial damage inflicted by this spell by half, whilst a successful Dodge Test will avoid damage altogether.

Time Warrior

Casting Time 10, Instant, Magnitude 12, Touch

Time is a spiral, in that it is possible for one with the correct sorcerous knowledge, to travel from one loop to another at the corresponding point on that loop, jumping many years into the past or future. Time Warrior allows the caster to send a single individual into a different time.

This spell requires a large amount of Earth Power to cast successfully and can only be used to send an individual back and forth in time but three times, otherwise he will be permanently aged, becoming old before his time. It requires the eggs of a time worm to be cast successfully, and can only be cast in a specially prepared place. Only Cythraul (city of the Cythrons) and Dinas Emrys are locations permanently able to have this spell cast, but other locations can be used at certain times of the year.

The spell is normally used by the Cyth or Myrddin to send champions back and forwards in time to change events in their own favour, whenever it becomes possible to cross over to a critical period in time. Dinas Emrys is often attacked, in an attempt to prevent Myrddin from intervening in the plans of the Guledig or other Cyth.



SPECIAL COMPETITION!

See the big, shiny picture below? That's the cover to the extremely limited-edition RuneQuest Sláine - in *colour*. That's right: all that lush Clint Langley art in high-res colour, wrapped around one of the best RuneQuest interpretations we've produced to date.

And you know what? It can be yours. We were originally going to stage a giant axe tournament with druids and wicker men and to the survivor go the spoils, but Health and Safety said no (spoilsports). Instead, we're going with something a little more sedate. All you have to do to win this excellent product is to write an article for publication in Signs and Portents Roleplayer. It can be for any of our game systems - not necessarily Sláine or even RuneQuest - and can be anywhere from 1,000 to 10,000 words in length. Any articles we use we will pay for, and the best article (as judged by us at Mongoose Towers) will win a colour copy of RuneQuest Sláine and be generally feted throughout the land. So not only will you get some spending money and your name in print, you'll have one of only TWENTY copies of this book in existence.



RuneQuest Sláine in colour.
Not available for sale! If you
want one, you'll have to win it.

Email your entries to clonghurst@mongoosepublishing.com with 'Sláine Competition' in the subject line.
If you don't mention the competition, it won't count as an entry, so remember!

The closing date is the 30th of November. The winner will be announced in January's S&P Roleplayer.

WARS: Kizen, Part 1

Part 11 of the unreleased supplement, *Soul and Steel*. Written by Greg Lynch

Kizen energy is still new to the Solar System, and still offers far more questions than it does answers for those who attempt to study and quantify it. Every day it seems new kizen powers are arising, each one of them changing the face of the Solar System in its own way, challenging long established beliefs about the way the universe works and creating more and more people with what a few years earlier would have been considered unexplainable abilities.

This article (and others to follow) expands on the kizen abilities of the core rulebook for the *WARS Roleplaying Game*, offering players and Games Masters new options for kizen characters. From the scoundrel with Matter Density Control who can slip between the molecules of solid objects to the Quantum Creation master who can form massive objects out of nothing but the omnipresent and invisible rift energy, the powers detailed below list new ways for Player Characters and Non-Player Characters to embrace the terrible and glorious strength that is kizen. Additionally, the two of these new trees in this issue introduce a wholly new means of using kizen – forcing it into a single object to create a ki (kizen infused) item.

Kizen powers listed in this chapter are defined as in the core rulebook for the *WARS Roleplaying Game*, along the following criteria:

Kizen Infused Items

The new kizen trees detailed in this issue deal with the creation of kizen infused items, sometimes simply referred to as 'ki' items. The exact mechanics of this process are discussed in the appropriate kizen trees, but the items themselves are worthy of their own discussion.

Essentially, kizen infused items are imbued with kizen power by their creator, and that power can be manifested by the holder of the item, even if he himself is not kizen. For example, a Gongen katana can be infused with the *kindle weapon* kizen power. Thereafter, anyone holding the katana may summon forth the *kindle weapon* power one or more times per day, depending on the specifics of the item's construction. Manifesting a non-innate kizen power in a kizen infused item requires merely a conscious act of will on the part of the creature holding it – no gestures or words are necessary. Generally, this is a standard action, unless the power in question requires more or less time to manifest. The kizen infused item is neither faster nor slower than an actual kizen in manifesting a power.

Infusing an item with kizen power is by no means cheap or easy – doing so costs the kizen permanent points from his kizen pool. Further, only the most minor creations are possible for someone who has not devoted himself wholly to his kizen abilities by taking the path of the Kizen Master Prestige Class (see core rulebook for the *WARS Roleplaying Game*, page 55).

Considering the cost of creation, and the very limited number of people who can infuse an item with kizen power, it is no surprise that kizen infused items are exceedingly rare throughout the Solar System. Finding such an item for sale is practically unheard of, even in the markets of a place like Ceres Station. There are no 'official' prices for kizen infused items, simply because they are so difficult to find. Their sale price is whatever the market will bear, though Games Masters looking for a general guideline should consider a sale price of 1,000 to 2,000 creds per kizen point invested in the item itself.

The chances of finding a kizen infused item for sale anywhere in the Solar System are remote, not only because so few are made but also because so few ever leave the hands of the various powers of the Solar System. Whether it is the CGC or the Accord, the Gongen or the Shi, all factions are interested in acquiring as many of these strange and useful devices as possible.

What Items can be Kizen Infused?

Kizen infused items can take virtually any form. It is just as possible, no more or less difficult, to infuse a rusty old kitchen knife with kizen power as it is to infuse kizen into a newly crafted katana fashioned by Ming Hu Tran, considered the greatest of Gongen's swordsmiths. However, most items that become kizen infused are quality items, or at the very least unblemished. As the kizen is literally imparting some amount of his soul or spirit into the item, most want to be sure it is something

that will stand the test of time. Thus, though it is possible to kizen infuse a piece of paper, the likelihood of someone even doing so is exceedingly remote.

An item that is infused with kizen is not physically changed in any way. It retains its hardness, hit points and any other physical properties it possesses.

Most kizen who practice the Kizen Infusion tree find it easier to infuse kizen into an item that has some sort of symbolic link toward the power being placed inside it. For example, placing a power from the Clairvoyance tree into a pair of sunglasses comes more easily than placing the same power into a belt or cigarette lighter. Likewise, placing a power from the Kizen Speed tree into a pair of boots is easier than placing it in a rifle or a helmet.

Though it has been attempted on several occasions, it is impossible to infuse kizen powers into a living being, be it a human, a dog or a tree. However, it is possible to infuse kizen powers into organic objects like wood or bone, provided they are no longer part of a living being. The reasons for this are baffling to scientists throughout the Solar System, who observe there is no inherent difference between a living piece of wood and a dead piece of wood, and has served to bolster the arguments of those who believe a soul or a spirit is an essential element of life.

Note that it is only living things that cannot be infused with kizen power. It is just as possible to infuse a bot with kizen abilities as it is to infuse a sword. However, unless the bot is a true AI, the bot itself will not be able to manifest the kizen power infused into it.

What Powers can be Infused?

Almost anything. Mastery of the Kizen Infusion tree allows a kizen to imbue an item with powers as high as 15th level. The most potent abilities, those from

15th to 20th level, are simply too strong for an item to hold. Though at some point a true master of the Kizen Infusion tree may find a way to do so, it is currently believed that trying to instill an item with a power of such high level will result in the destruction of the item, and the permanent loss of all kizen points intended to power the ability.

Although kizen are required to learn all appropriate prerequisite powers before learning those of higher levels (for example, a kizen who wishes to know the *reroute flow* power from the Electrical Control tree must first learn, in order, *electrical sense*, *follow flow* and *block flow*), the kizen need not imbue an item with all prerequisite powers in order to infuse the power he truly wishes the item to have. Thus, if the kizen wishes to create a kizen infused item capable of manifesting the *reroute flow* power once per day, he must only spend the item and points required for that specific power.

The Game Mechanics of Kizen Infused Items

Essentially, a kizen infused item is a stand-in, a proxy for its creator. All variables based on level, on race, on ability scores, on advantages or disadvantages or anything else that modifies a kizen ability based on the individual manifesting it are retained in the kizen infused item. Thus, such things as duration and saving throw DCs are identical against a power manifested from a kizen infused item as they would be if the power was manifested directly by the item's creator.

Of course, this mirror-like reflection of the creator's abilities does not last forever. While the kizen who created the ki item will continue to learn and grow, the item itself remains simply that – an object. The kizen will continue to gain character levels and increased kizen abilities, while the item itself will remain completely static.

Kizen Infusion

I'm telling you, I don't know how to describe it. I think I was one of the first humans to go kizen, like they say, and I've been working on it hard ever since, even if I was laying low on Earth. But I still don't understand how it happened. I was concentrating on this little rubber ball here, trying to truly sense it, truly see it, if that makes sense. Anyway, I'd been staring at it for hours, when I suddenly felt this connection form, and it was like some tiny part of me went into the ball. I don't know what it means ... I've never heard of anything like this before. I just knew I had to get off of Earth. If the CGC found out about this, no telling what would happen to me.'

– Harold Kim of Earth, in the Vortex Tavern on Titan Station the night he disappeared

Kizen Infusion is one of the rarest and most unusual of all kizen power trees. A kizen with this ability can literally instill kizen powers into an inanimate object, whether on a single use basis or as a renewable resource.

The Kizen Infusion tree consists of two main branches. The first is the Infuse Kizen branch, which involves the sacrifice of permanent points from a kizen pools in order to permanently imbue an object with a kizen ability.

The second branch is the Bestow Kizen branch, which allows a kizen to use a prepared object to contain a single manifestation of a kizen power. The ability can be used by anyone holding the object, but will only function one time.

Kizen Infusion and Self Preservation

One of the biggest reasons there are so few kizen infused items in circulation is that there are no acknowledged practitioners of the tree anywhere in the Solar System – at least, none among the three human factions. The Shi and Quay may each have such practitioners working openly within their societies, but if so the humans certainly do not know about it.

The reason the human kizen who have access to the Kizen Infusion tree keep such a low profile is a simple matter of self-preservation. The CGC, the Tenryu Party and the various major Maverick gangs are all aware of the existence of this kizen tree, and all of them are very interested in acquiring as many kizen infused items as they can get their hands on. No matter how powerful any individual kizen may be, he is no match for the strength wielded by any of these powers, and so long as he is not an utter fool, he knows he must keep his rare facility with this tree hidden.

A kizen with command of the Kizen Infusion tree who openly reveals himself as such cannot expect to maintain his freedom for very long. Once the secret is out, he will become a hunted man, with everyone from governments to crime bosses seeking to capture him and milk kizen infused items from him until he is emptied of all kizen power. There are rumours that the CGC, the Tenryu Party, the Accord and the Cartel each have their own facilities set up already, where any luckless kizen with control over this tree is brought and forcibly drained of every drop of his power.

Kizen Infusion Tree

Prepare Item (1st level)

└ *Infuse Kizen I* (3rd level)

└ *Infuse Kizen II* (5th level)

└ *Infuse Kizen III* (10th level)

└ *Infuse Kizen IV* (15th level)

└ *Infuse Kizen V* (20th level)

└ *Bestow Kizen I* (3rd level)

└ *Bestow Kizen II* (5th level)

└ *Bestow Kizen III* (10th level)

└ *Bestow Kizen IV* (15th level)

└ *Bestow Kizen V* (20th level)

└ *Multiple Bestowment I* (5th level)

└ *Multiple Bestowment II* (10th level)

└ *Multiple Bestowment III* (15th level)

└ *Multiple Bestowment IV* (18th level)

Prepare Item

Type: Spiritual (innate)

Favoured: All

Tree: Kizen Infusion

Prerequisite Power: None

Level: 1

Range: Touch

Saving Throw: None

Dominant Attribute: None

Point Cost: 1 (or more, depending on mass of the item)

Action: One hour

Before any item can become *kizen infused* or *kizen bestowed*, it must be *prepared* with this power. *Prepare item* requires the kizen to spend an entire, uninterrupted hour concentrating on the item to be *prepared*, in what some practitioners of the tree refer to as communing or interfacing with it. During this time, the kizen forges a link between himself and the item, represented by the cost of this power. At the end of the hour, the kizen must expend one point from his permanent kizen pool into the item, the final step in preparing

it to receive *kizen infusion* or *kizen bestowment*. Which branch of this tree the item will be used for must be decided at this time – an item made for the *infuse kizen* branch cannot be used for the *bestow kizen* branch, and vice versa.

While there is no theoretical limit to how large an item being used for the *prepare item* power can be, there is a rather daunting realistic limit. So long as the item is five kilograms or fewer in weight, *prepare item* costs only one permanent kizen point. For every additional five kilograms of weight, the power costs an addition permanent kizen point. Thus, a kizen wishing to use a hardplas vest (5 kg) for this power would only need to spend one kizen point, while another kizen wishing to use a suit of CGC trooper armour (12 kg) would need to spend three points from his permanent kizen pool simply to prepare the item for infusion.

Infuse Kizen I

Type: Spiritual (innate)

Favoured: Gongen, Shi

Tree: Kizen Infusion

Prerequisite Power: *Prepare Item*

Level: 3

Range: Touch

Saving Throw: None

Dominant Attribute: None

Point Cost: see below

Action: One hour per point

Once an item has been readied with *prepare item*, the kizen can begin the process of infusing it with kizen power. *Infuse kizen I* allows the kizen to permanently imbue an inanimate object with any 1st level kizen powers he can command. This power may be either active or innate.



Infusing an item with an innate power requires the kizen to invest a number of kizen points into the prepared item equal to the point cost of the power. Thus, a kizen who wishes to infuse his companion's flexiplas vest with the *combat awareness* power from the Combat Awareness kizen tree must spend three points from his permanent kizen pool in order to do so. Obviously, as the kizen can only *infuse* a power he already has, *infusing* innate powers is rarely something he does for himself. Rather, such items are usually intended as princely gifts to a trusted companion, or as an astronomically priced item intended for sale when the kizen really, really needs money.

Infusing an item with an active power offers more options to the kizen. Such items lack the constant kizen effect of an item infused with an innate power. Rather, they are able to, at the conscious command of the creature holding them, manifest the active power. Infusing an item with an active power requires, at minimum, that the kizen invest a number of points from his permanent kizen pool into the item equal to the minimum amount required to manifest the power. Thus, if a kizen wishes to create an item that could manifest the *empathic sense* power from the Empathy tree once per day, he must invest two kizen points into the item. If he wishes the item to be able to manifest *empathic sense* twice per day,

he must invest four kizen points into the item. There is no limit on the maximum number of times per day a kizen infused item can manifest a power, other than the demands placed on the kizen's pool of points. For example, there is no reason a kizen cannot imbue the item with enough power to manifest *empathic sense* ten times per day, other than the fact that it will permanently drain him of 20 kizen points (21 if the single point required to *prepare* the item is included), a hefty price tag for any item. Regardless, the minimum number of times in any given day the item may manifest an active power is one – it is impossible to create a kizen infused item that works only once a week or once a month.

Just as there is no actual limit to the number of daily uses a *kizen infused* item may have, there is no actual limit on the number of kizen powers with which the item may be *infused*. A kizen may *infuse* an item with the *combat awareness* innate power, then with the *empathic sense* and the *shield* power from the Field Manipulation tree. Of course, this would cost him a total of eight points from his permanent kizen pool (1 point for *prepare item*, then three points for *combat awareness* and two points each for *empathic sense* and *shield*).

The inclusion of more than one active power in a kizen infused item boosts its versatility in more ways than one. Obviously, having access to more than one power is often useful. However, having two or more active powers infused into an item creates a kizen point pool within the item itself, which may be used to power any of its active powers. Thus, in the above example of an item with both *empathic sense* and *shield*, the item will have a total of four kizen points invested in its active powers. These four points may be used to activate each of its powers once in a given day, or may be used to activate one of its powers twice in a given day. Obviously, any points *infused* into a kizen item for an innate power are used to constantly sustain that innate power, and are not

available as fuel for any of the item's active powers. Note that the kizen cannot access the power points stored in a *kizen infused* object to power his own abilities.

A kizen power infused into an item works just as if it were manifested by the item's creator himself, as he was at the time he created the object. This determines all appropriate level and ability score based modifiers on the power, as well as the DC to resist, if applicable. Any advantages or disadvantages (see the *WARS Roleplaying Game* core rulebook) the item's creator has attached to that particular power will be present as well. Thus, a kizen power manifested from a kizen infused item may be subtle and weak, or it may be easy and painful. Note that in the case of a disadvantage like painful, the individual using the item feels the pain – it does not damage the item itself, nor does it cause the creator pain.

If the kizen wants the active power or powers he is *infusing* into the item to be sustained, he has two options. If he is planning to use the item himself, he may simply pay the minimum cost for the power and, at the time he manifests it from the item or the power's duration begins to expire, pay the additional cost for sustaining the power from his own pool of kizen points. On the other hand, if he wants the power to sustain itself, with no additional input from him, he must pay the sustaining cost in the form of more permanent kizen points *infused* into the item. This will give the item an additional reservoir of kizen points which the wielder may elect to use to sustain a power, or even to use to fuel another manifestation of one of the item's powers.

In higher level versions of *infuse kizen* (see below), the kizen will be able to *infuse* powers above 1st level into an item. Many of these powers have a base cost, and optional costs for additional effects. For example, *shocking aura*, from the Electrical Control tree, has a

base cost of three kizen points. If the individual with *shocking aura* active is attacked, that person may elect to spend an additional six points to lash out at the attacker with an electrical attack. This works identically to sustaining a power from a kizen infused item. If the user is himself a kizen, he may choose to spend the extra points from his own kizen pool to fuel to *shocking aura* counterattack, or, even if the wielder of the item is not kizen, but the item still has sufficient unused points for the day inside it, the wielder may use those points to power the counterattack. Lastly, the item's creator may choose to expend six or more points from his permanent kizen pool into the item to power the counterattack.

Infusing a kizen ability into a prepared item requires one hour of uninterrupted work for every kizen point to be expended. If the kizen is interrupted during that time, he must start over again, though he does not lose or waste any kizen points because of the interruption. Each individual power must be infused in a single session of work. For example, if the kizen is trying to infuse an item with *combat awareness*, he must work for three hours straight to do so. However, the initial creator, the one who prepared the item in the first place, may add new powers to the item at any time. For example, if the kizen infuses *combat awareness* into the item, then decides a few months later that he would like to have *shield* infused into the item as well, he may do so at that time. A *kizen infused* item regains kizen points at the same rate as its creator did at the time of the item's creation, even gaining the benefit of the kizen's Charisma modifier.

Although *kizen infused* items can be used by anyone, so long as they are not *attuned* (see page 40), only the creator of the item may change its properties, except for those with the *modify item* powers (see page 47).

Infuse Kizen II

Type: Spiritual (innate)

Favoured: Gongen, Shi

Tree: Kizen Infusion

Prerequisite Power: *Infuse Kizen I*

Level: 5

Range: Touch

Saving Throw: None

Dominant Attribute: None

Point Cost: see below

Action: One hour per point

This power works identically to *infuse kizen I*, except the kizen may *infuse* any power he knows up to 3rd level into an item.

Infuse Kizen III

Type: Spiritual (innate)

Favoured: Gongen, Shi

Tree: Kizen Infusion

Prerequisite Power: *Infuse Kizen II*, Kizen Initiate

Level: 10

Range: Touch

Saving Throw: None

Dominant Attribute: None

Point Cost: see below

Action: One hour per point

This power works identically to *infuse kizen I*, except the kizen may *infuse* any power he knows up to 5th level into an item.

Infuse Kizen IV

Type: Spiritual (innate)

Favoured: Gongen, Shi

Tree: Kizen Infusion

Prerequisite Power: *Infuse Kizen III*, Kizen Acolyte

Level: 15

Range: Touch

Saving Throw: None

Dominant Attribute: None

Point Cost: see below

Action: One hour per point

This power works identically to *infuse kizen I*, except the kizen may *infuse* any power he knows up to 10th level into an item.

Infuse Kizen V

Type: Spiritual (innate)

Favoured: Gongen, Shi

Tree: Kizen Infusion

Prerequisite Power: *Infuse Kizen IV*, Kizen Master

Level: 20

Range: Touch

Saving Throw: None

Dominant Attribute: None

Point Cost: see below

Action: One hour per point

This power works identically to *infuse kizen I*, except the kizen may *infuse* any power he knows up to 15th level into an item.



Bestow Kizen I

Type: Spiritual (active)

Favoured: Maverick, Quay

Tree: Kizen Infusion

Prerequisite Power: *Prepare Item*

Level: 3

Range: Touch

Saving Throw: None

Dominant Attribute: None

Point Cost: see below

Action: Standard

Sometimes wrongly referred to as the poor man's *infuse kizen*, *bestow kizen* has entirely different advantages and applications.

Bestow kizen does not involve the permanent loss of kizen points (except, of course, for the one required for the *prepare item* power). Rather, it allows the kizen to use the prepared item as a sort of empty vessel, into which he may place a single activation of a kizen power. *Bestow kizen I* allows the kizen to place an active kizen power of 1st level into the prepared item.

The kizen power stored in the prepared item is essentially a power held in reserve, which can be released as a standard action by the conscious effort of anyone holding the item. For example, a kizen may use *bestow kizen I* to store *shield*, a 1st level active power, in a *prepared* item. Doing so will require the kizen expend the normal amount of kizen points required to activate the power (in this case two points) plus one additional point for the *bestow kizen I* power itself. Thus, by expending three kizen points, the kizen has stored one activation of the *shield* power in the *prepared* item. Once the *shield* effect stored in the *prepared* item is used, the item is empty again, and the kizen may choose another 1st level power to *bestow*.

The true benefit of this power is that the kizen may store powers indefinitely in a *prepared* item – so long as it is never used, the power will always be there, ready and waiting. Additionally, the kizen may regain as normal all the kizen points expended in manifesting the power to store it in the item. Thus, the two points the kizen would spend to activate and store the *shield* power itself will be regained by the kizen by the next day. However, the single point required by the *bestow kizen I* power itself is not regained by the kizen until the power is actually expended from the item in which it is stored. For example, a kizen could use the *prepare item* power five times (permanently expending five kizen points in the process) and store a *shield* power in each. If he stored five shield powers in a single day, he would expend 15 kizen points from his pool (ten for the five *shield* powers, five for the five *bestow kizen I* powers). By the next day, he would have regained the ten points used for the *shield* powers themselves, but would still be down five points from the *bestow kizen I* powers. As the *shield* powers began to be expended from the five items, he would begin to get those five kizen points back. Distance is not a barrier to this; if the kizen is on Pluto and the person using the item he has placed *shield* into is on Mercury when the power is activated, the kizen will still get the kizen point back.

Obviously, as innate powers require the permanent expenditure of kizen points, they cannot be used with *bestow kizen*.

As with an item created through *infuse kizen*, the powers manifested through *bestow kizen* are identical to those cast by the kizen himself.

Although the power stored in the *prepared* item can be manifested by anyone (so long as the item is not *attuned*, see page 40), only the kizen who created the item may store powers in it.

Bestow Kizen II

Type: Spiritual (active)

Favoured: Maverick, Quay

Tree: Kizen Infusion

Prerequisite Power: *Bestow Kizen I*

Level: 5

Range: Touch

Saving Throw: None

Dominant Attribute: None

Point Cost: see below

Action: Standard

This power is identical to *bestow item I*, except the kizen may store powers up to 3rd level. Additionally, this power carries a cost of two power points on top of the cost of the power to be stored, which cannot be regained until the stored power is expended.

Bestow Kizen III

Type: Spiritual (active)

Favoured: Maverick, Quay

Tree: Kizen Infusion

Prerequisite Power: *Bestow Kizen II*

Level: 10

Range: Touch

Saving Throw: None

Dominant Attribute: None

Point Cost: see below

Action: Standard

This power is identical to *bestow item I*, except the kizen may store powers up to 5th level. Additionally, this power carries a cost of three power points on top of the cost of the power to be stored, which cannot be regained until the stored power is expended.

Bestow Kizen IV

Type: Spiritual (active)
Favoured: Maverick, Quay
Tree: Kizen Infusion
Prerequisite Power: *Bestow Kizen III*
Level: 15
Range: Touch
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: None
Point Cost: see below
Action: Standard

This power is identical to *bestow item I*, except the kizen may store powers up to 10th level. Additionally, this power carries a cost of four power points on top of the cost of the power to be stored, which cannot be regained until the stored power is expended.

Bestow Kizen V

Type: Spiritual (active)
Favoured: Maverick, Quay
Tree: Kizen Infusion
Prerequisite Power: *Bestow Kizen IV*
Level: 20
Range: Touch
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: None
Point Cost: see below
Action: Standard

This power is identical to *bestow item I*, except the kizen may store powers up to 15th level. Additionally, this power carries a cost of five power points on top of the cost of the power to be stored, which cannot be regained until the stored power is expended.

Multiple Bestowment I

Type: Spiritual (active)
Favoured: Maverick, Quay
Tree: Kizen Infusion
Prerequisite Power: *Bestow Kizen I*
Level: 5
Range: Touch
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Wisdom
Point Cost: see below
Action: See below

This power allows the kizen to store up to one plus his Wisdom modifier of 1st level kizen powers in the same prepared object. For example, a kizen with a Wisdom ability score of 16 (+3 modifier) may store up to four 1st level kizen powers in the same prepared object. The kizen must pay the cost in kizen points for each active power to be stored, plus one kizen point for each power. As with *bestow kizen*, the kizen will recover all kizen points except for the one point per power cost, which is only regained as the stored powers are expended.

Multiple Bestowment II

Type: Spiritual (active)
Favoured: Maverick, Quay
Tree: Kizen Infusion
Prerequisite Power: *Multiple Bestowment I*
Level: 10
Range: Touch
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Wisdom
Point Cost: see below
Action: See below

This power is identical to *multiple bestowment I*, except the kizen may store up to one plus his Wisdom modifier

in 3rd level or lower powers. The cost per power is two kizen points, in addition to the base cost of the powers themselves.

Multiple Bestowment III

Type: Spiritual (active)
Favoured: Maverick, Quay
Tree: Kizen Infusion
Prerequisite Power: *Multiple Bestowment II*
Level: 15
Range: Touch
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Wisdom
Point Cost: see below
Action: See below

This power is identical to *multiple bestowment I*, except the kizen may store up to one plus his Wisdom modifier in 5th level or lower powers. The cost per power is three kizen points, in addition to the base cost of the powers themselves.

Multiple Bestowment IV

Type: Spiritual (active)
Favoured: Maverick, Quay
Tree: Kizen Infusion
Prerequisite Power: *Multiple Bestowment III*
Level: 18
Range: Touch
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Wisdom
Point Cost: see below
Action: See below

This power is identical to *multiple bestowment I*, except the kizen may store up to one plus his Wisdom modifier in 10th level or lower powers. The cost per power is four

kizen points, in addition to the base cost of the powers themselves.

Kizen Manipulation

'Well done, McManus, well done. No one's ever managed to get the axe away from me before. Yes, you know what it can do, don't you? You've heard the stories about lightning leaping from it and frying people in the blink of an eye 50 metres away. Well, yes, I admit it, those stories are all true. Every last one of them. I made the axe to do just that, and it works like a friggin' dream. And now you have it, there in your hands, and all I have is this old pistol. So go ahead. Use it. Finish me off. Hmmm. Something wrong? Oh, then I guess you don't know the whole truth? There's something missing from those stories, something no one would ever know. That axe doesn't work for anybody but me. Not the kizen parts anyway. I guess you could still use it as an axe. But then, you're 20 metres away and this pistol I got works just fine. Good bye, McManus.'

— Jonah 'Sparks' Uzbesky, Maverick Kizen

The Kizen Manipulation tree is inextricably tied to the Kizen Infusion tree, but whereas Kizen Infusion is concerned with creating kizen infused items, Kizen Manipulation is concerned with altering those same items. The kizen may alter an item he himself has created, or he may modify an item created by another kizen. Much like the Kizen Infusion tree, the majority of the powers in the Kizen Manipulation tree demand permanent sacrifice of kizen points.

Through the use of this kizen tree, a kizen may change the function of a kizen infused item created by another kizen, may select who may use an item or even track down a kizen infused item simply by sensing its ambient power. This is one of the most varied kizen trees in existence, allowing the user access to a large number of disparate abilities.

Kizen Manipulation Tree

Prepare Item (1st level)

Attuned Item (5th level)

- Attune to Race (8th level)
- Attune to Region (10th level)
- Arbitrary Attunement (12th level)
- Modify Attunement (7th level)
- Transfer Kizen (10th level)
 - Transfer Creator (12th level)
- Break Attunement (12th level)

Detect Ki Item I (3rd level)

- Detect Ki Item II (5th level)
 - Detect Ki Item III (10th level)

Kizen Talisman (5th level)

Conjoining (12th level)

- Conjoining Transfer (15th level)

Draw the Power (10th level)

- Drain the Power (12th level)
 - Absorb the Power (15th level)
 - Vampire (18th level)

Modify Item I (4th level)

- Modify Item II (6th level)
 - Modify Item III (12th level)
 - Modify Item IV (16th level)
 - Modify Item V (20th level)

Prepare Item

Type: Spiritual (innate)

Favoured: All

Tree: Kizen Manipulation

Prerequisite Power: None

Level: 1

Range: Touch

Saving Throw: None

Dominant Attribute: None

Point Cost: 1

Action: One hour

This is identical to the *prepare item* power listed under Kizen Infusion (see page 34).

Attuned Item

Type: Spiritual (innate)

Favoured: All

Tree: Kizen Manipulation

Prerequisite Power: *Prepare item*

Level: 5

Range: Touch

Saving Throw: None

Dominant Attribute: Charisma

Point Cost: 1

Action: One hour

The greatest fear many kizen who create a kizen infused item have (aside from being discovered as possessing the capability and being forced into slave labour by a greedy government or gang) is that the items they have spent so much time and irreplaceable kizen energy creating will be taken away from them, even used against them. There is little such a kizen can do to prevent the former, but the *attuned item* power goes a long way toward preventing the latter.

With attuned item, a kizen can invest a single additional

permanent kizen point into any item he creates to 'lock' the use of that item to himself alone. After the completion of this one hour process and the investment of the single permanent kizen point, only the kizen may use the kizen abilities of a ki item. Whether the item is *kizen infused* or designed for *kizen bestowment*, only the kizen who has used *attuned item* may use any of its powers. Obviously, this does not keep anyone else from using the ki item's purely physical properties (a nanosharp combat axe is still a nanosharp combat axe, after all, and is a deadly melee weapon whether it is *attuned* or not), but any kizen abilities the item might possess are sealed off from anyone but the kizen.

Attune to Race

Type: Spiritual (innate)

Favoured: All

Tree: Kizen Manipulation

Prerequisite Power: *Attuned item*

Level: 8

Range: Touch

Saving Throw: None

Dominant Attribute: Charisma

Point Cost: 1

Action: One hour

This power is identical to *attuned item*, except that instead of *attuning* the item to himself alone, the kizen *attunes* the item to all members of a specific race. This may be the Quay, the Shi or humanity – though the three human factions are far apart in culture and society, they are all humans, and cannot be differentiated by this kizen power. Conversely, the item may be *attuned* to exclude a specific race. For example, an item can be made that is useful to humans and Shi, but is blocked to the Quay.

Attune to Region

Type: Spiritual (innate)

Favoured: All

Tree: Kizen Manipulation

Prerequisite Power: *Attuned item*

Level: 10

Range: Touch

Saving Throw: None

Dominant Attribute: Charisma

Point Cost: 1

Action: One hour

Attune to region is a departure from the other *attune* powers, in that it does not restrict who can use the ki item, but instead restricts where that item may be used. By investing a single permanent kizen point in the item, the kizen may choose to restrict the item's usage to a specific geographical locale. The strictures on what kinds of places may be chosen are at once general and specific. The region chosen can be of almost any size, but must be distinct from its surroundings. For example, it is possible to attune an item so that it may only be used on Ceres, but not one that can only be used in the Rat's Nest in the Pit of Ceres Station. Likewise, it is possible to create an item that may only be used on Earth, or one that can only be used in the New York Plex, but not one that can only be used in a specific building of the New York Plex. However, it is possible to create an item that can only be used aboard a specific ship, though if the ship is ever destroyed, the item will be useless until the *attunement* is *broken* (see page 42). The Games Master should retain the final decision over which regions are and are not acceptable for this kizen power.

Like *attune to race*, *attune to region* can be reversed. Instead of restricting a ki item's use to a specific locale, it restricts the item's use to everywhere but that specific locale. For example, a *kizen infused* Gongen katana may be *attuned* to function normally everywhere but Earth.

Arbitrary Attunement

Type: Spiritual (innate)

Favoured: All

Tree: Kizen Manipulation

Prerequisite Power: *Attuned item*

Level: 12

Range: Touch

Saving Throw: None

Dominant Attribute: Charisma

Point Cost: 1

Action: One hour

The pinnacle of the *attunement* powers, *arbitrary attunement* allows the kizen to restrict the use of the ki item to any group he desires, however large or small. This can truly be any group the kizen can imagine, from 'only female humans' to 'only Makal' to 'only red-haired Gongen' to 'only those people in the room with me now.' This power is most often used by adventuring kizen who wish to restrict the use of an item they have created to their eclectic group of companions.

Modify Attunement

Type: Spiritual (innate)

Favoured: All

Tree: Kizen Manipulation

Prerequisite Power: *Attuned item* (and see below)

Level: 7

Range: Touch

Saving Throw: None

Dominant Attribute: Charisma

Point Cost: 10

Action: One hour

Once a ki item is *attuned*, that *attunement* is set in stone and cannot be changed without the use of this power. For example, if a kizen had used *regional attunement* to *attune* an item to his ship, which was later destroyed in

a vicious firefight with a roving band of Quay Hekaton, the kizen would need to use *modify attunement* to delete the regional *attunement* on the item, or change it to a new region.

Obviously, the kizen must have command of any *attunement* powers he intends to *modify*. Unlike other attunement powers, modify attunement costs the kizen no points from his permanent kizen pool, merely ten temporary points and an uninterrupted hour of his time. *Modify attunement* works only on those *attunements* the kizen himself has placed on a ki item. A single application of this power allows the kizen to delete or *modify* any and all *attunements* he has placed on the item.

Transfer Kizen

Type: Spiritual (active)

Favoured: Earther, Maverick

Tree: Kizen Manipulation

Prerequisite Power: *Attuned item* (and see below)

Level: 10

Range: Touch

Saving Throw: None

Dominant Attribute: Charisma

Point Cost: 1 permanent, plus 3 per point transferred

Action: One hour

Transfer kizen is a useful utility power that allows a kizen to combine the powers of multiple ki items into a single, more powerful item. The kizen must be the creator of both items, whether through actually creating them, or becoming the *de facto* creator through *transfer creator* or *break attunement*.

By spending one hour in meditation, sacrificing one point from his permanent kizen pool and expending three points of temporary kizen energy for each point within the two ki items, the kizen may withdraw the kizen power stored within one of the items and transfer

it to the other. For determining the point cost of this ability, the points of both items are combined, thus a kizen attempting to transfer the powers of a ki item with five kizen points into another with six would have to pay a total cost of 33 temporary kizen points ($11 \times 3 = 33$).

Once this ritual is complete, one of the ki items holds all the powers of both original items, while the other is an empty shell (no longer even counting as a *prepared* item).

Transfer kizen can only be used on two ki items of the same type, be it *kizen infusion*, *kizen bestowment* or *kizen talisman*. Combining the powers of two ki items of different types requires the use of *conjoining transfer* (see page 45). Although only two items can be combined with any single use of *transfer kizen*, the power may be invoked a second time to add a third time, a third time to add a fourth and so on.

Transfer Creator

Type: Spiritual (active)

Favoured: Earther, Maverick

Tree: Kizen Manipulation

Prerequisite Power: *Transfer kizen*

Level: 12

Range: Touch

Saving Throw: None

Dominant Attribute: Charisma

Point Cost: See Text

Action: One hour

This power is unusual in that it requires two kizen to utilise it, but only one of whom must possess this power. *Transfer creator* allows one kizen to gift another kizen with a ki item he has created, essentially making the second kizen the item's creator and allowing him to make any modifications to the item normally reserved for the creator alone.

Transfer creator requires both kizen to spend one hour together concentrating on the ki item. At the end of that time, the kizen gifting the item must expend one point of temporary kizen energy for each point of permanent energy within the item, while the kizen receiving the item must expend one point of permanent kizen energy to bond the item to himself.

Break Attunement

Type: Spiritual (innate)

Favoured: All

Tree: Kizen Manipulation

Prerequisite Power: *Attuned item*

Level: 12

Range: Touch

Saving Throw: None

Dominant Attribute: Charisma

Point Cost: 1

Action: One hour

As any good thief knows, every lock can be picked. Though the *attunement* powers go a long way toward ensuring no one the kizen does not want to use his painstakingly crafted ki item will be able to do so, the very fact that the *attunement* powers exist means most ki items will be *attuned*. Consequently, it is no surprise that a way to break that *attunement* was discovered.

Break attunement is a useful, if dangerous, power. With it, a kizen can shatter the *attunement* that prevents him from using the just-recovered Gongen katana bristling with five separate *kizen infused* powers. Attempting to do so carries with it a significant risk, however.

Essentially, a kizen using *break attunement* is attempting to use the force of his personality and will to break the bonds placed on the ki item by its creator (or by someone who has previously used *break attunement* on the same item). The kizen must spend an hour focusing his will

on the item, expend a single point from his permanent kizen pool and roll a Charisma ability check (1d20 plus his Charisma modifier). If this Charisma ability check exceeds the total number of permanent kizen points invested in the item (including the points expended for *prepare item*, any *attunement* of the item and the points powering its abilities), the item's *attunement* is broken and the kizen may use it at his will. If the Charisma ability check does not exceed this total, the item remains locked and the kizen has utterly wasted the single point from his permanent kizen pool he used in manifesting the *break attunement* power.

A side effect of a successful use of the *break attunement* power is that it resets the item, with the kizen who broke the *attunement* now essentially acting as the item's creator. He may augment the item's powers, *attune* it to himself or do anything else he pleases with it, even things normally restricted to the creator of the item. For this aspect of the power alone, *break attunement* is sometimes used on non-*attuned* ki items.

Detect Ki Item I

Type: Spiritual (active)

Favoured: Gongen, Shi

Tree: Kizen Manipulation

Prerequisite Power: *Prepare item*

Level: 3

Range: Close (8 metres + ½ metre per character level)

Saving Throw: None

Dominant Attribute: Wisdom

Point Cost: 3 (plus See Text)

Action: Full-round

A ki (*kizen infused*) item that is not active often bears no physical evidence of its unusual nature. A katana with 20 points of kizen energy infused into it may very well look like any other katana, betraying nothing of its



vast powers until the wielder wills them into existence in battle. Obviously, knowing which items are imbued with kizen and which are not is a very useful ability for any number of people, from the battlefield commander deploying his troops against an enemy to an intrepid cat burglar sneaking into Raving Red Jane's treasury on Titan Station, looking for the best loot to steal.

Detect ki item I allows the kizen manifesting the power a chance to locate any *prepared* item (one that has undergone the *prepare item* process) that is close at

hand. However, the power is notoriously unreliable, and cannot be counted on to always reveal the presence and location of a ki item. The kizen can increase his chances somewhat by the expenditure of additional kizen points. The chance also varies depending on the kizen's familiarity with the ki item in question. To determine the kizen's chances of locating a ki item within the power's area of effect, the Games Master should consult the following table and roll percentile dice to indicate whether or not the power was successful.

Familiarity with Ki Item	Chance to Locate Item
Never seen	25%
Seen casually	50%
Previous physical contact	70%
Kizen is item's creator	80%

The kizen may increase his chances of locating a nearby ki item by expending additional kizen points. Each additional kizen point used by the kizen upon activation of the power increases his chances of finding the item by 5%. However, the chance to locate an item with this power may never be greater than 95%.

The prevailing theory as to why *detect ki item I* (and its more advanced versions) have such difficulty with accuracy and reliability blames the Mumon Rift itself. According to this theory, the vast amounts of quantum energy the Rift is spewing into the Solar System on a constant basis create a sort of 'quantum fog' that cloaks specific manifestations of kizen energy. If the Mumon Rift were to suddenly slam shut, this theory posits, the *detect ki item* powers would work perfectly, as there would be no ambient quantum energy to cloak them. This is also the most common theory as to why there is no '*detect kizen individual*' power tree.

The increased range modifier (see the *WARS Roleplaying Game* core rulebook) may *not* be applied to this power.

Detect Ki Item II

Type: Spiritual (active)
Favoured: Gongen, Shi
Tree: Kizen Manipulation
Prerequisite Power: *Detect ki item I*

Level: 5
Range: Medium (30 metres + 2 metres per character level)
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Wisdom
Point Cost: 4 (plus See Text)
Action: Full-round

This power is identical to *detect ki item I* except in its range, kizen point cost and as follows.

The base chance to *detect* a ki item is reduced as indicated on the chart below. Further, each addition kizen point expended only increases the base chance of detection by two, not five.

Familiarity with Ki Item	Chance to Locate Item
Never seen	15%
Seen casually	40%
Previous physical contact	60%
Kizen is item's creator	70%

Detect Ki Item III

Type: Spiritual (active)
Favoured: Gongen, Shi
Tree: Kizen Manipulation
Prerequisite Power: *Detect ki item II*
Level: 10
Range: Long (150 metres + 16 metres per character level)
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: Wisdom
Point Cost: 8 (plus See Text)
Action: Full-round

This power is identical to *detect ki item I* except in its range, kizen point cost and as follows.

The base chance to *detect* a ki item is reduced as indicated on the chart below. Further, each addition kizen point expended only increases the base chance of detection by one, not five.

Familiarity with Ki Item	Chance to Locate Item
Never seen	10%
Seen casually	35%
Previous physical contact	55%
Kizen is item's creator	65%

Kizen Talisman

Type: Spiritual (innate)
Favoured: Gongen, Quay
Tree: Kizen Manipulation
Prerequisite Power: *Prepare item*
Level: 5
Range: Touch
Saving Throw: None
Dominant Attribute: None
Point Cost: See Text
Action: One hour

With *kizen talisman*, the kizen may elect to do something entirely different with a *prepared* item than what is possible under the Kizen Infusion tree. Instead of investing the prepared item with various kizen powers, he may use it to create a reservoir of kizen points for his own use (or that of anyone else to whom it is *attuned*).

For every point of his permanent kizen pool the kizen invests in the prepared item, the kizen creates a reservoir

of five kizen points within the item. So long as the kizen remains in physical contact with the item, he is able to access these points, drawing them out to power his own kizen abilities. For example, if Kharrash, a Quay kizen, uses *prepare item* on her dalaka to set it up as a kizen talisman, then invests four points from her permanent kizen pool into the dalaka (in addition to the one point from *prepare item*) she will have a reservoir of 20 kizen points to draw upon to power her various active kizen abilities. The kizen points in a kizen talisman regenerate at the same rate as its creator did at the time of the item's creation, even gaining the benefit of the kizen's Charisma modifier.

Conjoining

Type: Spiritual (innate)

Favoured: Earther, Shi

Tree: Kizen Manipulation

Prerequisite Power: *Prepare item*, Kizen Master

Level: 12

Range: Touch

Saving Throw: None

Dominant Attribute: None

Point Cost: See Text

Action: One hour

Only recently discovered, even by the Shi, this power represents the 'holy grail' of ki item creation. With conjoining, the kizen is able to combine multiple uses for a prepared item into a single item. For example, an item could be capable of both *kizen infusion* and *kizen bestowment*, or *kizen infusion* and *kizen talisman* or even all three.

Conjoining can be applied to an item when it is first prepared, or it may be applied to an already existing ki item, so long as the kizen manifesting *conjoining* is the item's creator (or has reset the item through *break attunement*). For each of the three main functions of

a ki item (*kizen infusion*, *kizen bestowment* and *kizen talisman*) the item will be capable of, the kizen must sacrifice one point from his permanent kizen pool. In the case of a preexisting item, which already has one of the three powers in it, the kizen must merely sacrifice the kizen points to add the additional powers (adding *kizen talisman* to a preexisting item, for example, would cost only one permanent kizen point).

Conjoining Transfer

Type: Spiritual (innate)

Favoured: Earther, Shi

Tree: Kizen Manipulation

Prerequisite Power: *Conjoining*, *transfer kizen*, Kizen Master

Level: 15

Range: Touch

Saving Throw: None

Dominant Attribute: None

Point Cost: See Text

Action: One hour

This power works exactly like *transfer kizen*, except that the kizen may combine two ki items of separate types into a single item.

Draw the Power

Type: Spiritual (active)

Favoured: Maverick, Quay

Tree: Kizen Manipulation

Prerequisite Power: *Prepare item*, Kizen Acolyte

Level: 10

Range: Touch

Saving Throw: None

Dominant Attribute: Wisdom

Point Cost: 6

Action: Full-round

Even more disturbing than the thought of losing a ki item after investing so much personal kizen energy into it is the thought of the item falling into the hands of someone with this power.

Draw the power and its subsequent abilities were first discovered by Quay kizen, who had hoped to find a way to regain some of the power invested into the first, feeble ki items they had created, items that were no longer useful in the struggle against the Shi. However, it was soon suborned by kizen who were far less discriminating in the application of the power.

Draw the power enables a kizen to literally suck kizen energy out of a ki item, using it like a *kizen talisman* to power his own abilities. Unlike *kizen talisman*, however, *draw the power* permanently drains the item of some or all of its kizen power. For every point of permanent kizen energy drawn from the item, the kizen using *draw the power* receives three temporary points for his kizen pool. The kizen may exceed his normal amount of kizen energy using this ability, though once the points are used, they are gone forever. Likewise, if they are not used within 24 hours, they will dissipate and the kizen energy drawn from the ki item is wasted.

A kizen may only use *draw the power* on an item he could use normally – if it is *attuned* to exclude him in any way, he must first break the *attunement*.

Drain the Power

Type: Spiritual (active)

Favoured: Maverick, Quay

Tree: Kizen Manipulation

Prerequisite Power: *Draw the power*, Kizen Master

Level: 12

Range: Touch

Saving Throw: None

Dominant Attribute: Wisdom

Point Cost: 8

Action: Full-round

This power is identical to *draw the power*, except the kizen receives six additional points for his temporary kizen pool for every permanent point of kizen energy drawn from the item.

Absorb the Power

Type: Spiritual (active)

Favoured: Maverick, Quay

Tree: Kizen Manipulation

Prerequisite Power: *Drain the power*, Kizen Grand Master

Level: 15

Range: Touch

Saving Throw: None

Dominant Attribute: Wisdom

Point Cost: see below

Action: One hour per point drawn

While *draw the power* and *drain the power* enable a kizen to suck the permanent kizen energy from a ki item in order to gain temporary kizen points to power their own abilities, *absorb the power* allows the kizen to use this energy to refresh his permanent kizen pool.

This is a difficult and time consuming process, and not without some risk to the kizen himself. For every point of energy drawn from the ki item, the kizen must expend five temporary points from his kizen pool and spend an hour in concentration. Before the kizen begins, his player must declare how many points of kizen energy the kizen intends to draw out of the item. At the end of the power's duration, the kizen must make a Will saving throw (DC 10 + 2 for every point drawn from the item). If the saving throw succeeds, the kizen gains permanent points to his kizen pool (as detailed

below). If the saving throw fails, the kizen is subject to a quantum backlash and takes 1d6 energy damage for every point he attempted to withdraw from the item, in addition to the permanent loss of one point from his permanent kizen pool. This applies even if the kizen is the item's creator.

For every two points of permanent energy drawn from a ki item, the kizen replenishes his permanent kizen pool by one point. It is impossible for the kizen to exceed his normal maximum kizen points with *absorb the power*; however, he may use this ability to regain permanent kizen points lost through innate powers or the creation of ki items.

A kizen may use absorb the power even on an item that is attuned to exclude him, though this is considerably more difficult, increasing the Will saving throw DC to 20 + 2 for every point drawn from the item.

Vampire

Type: Spiritual (active)

Favoured: Maverick, Quay

Tree: Kizen Manipulation

Prerequisite Power: *Absorb the power*, Kizen Grand Master

Level: 18

Range: Touch

Saving Throw: None

Dominant Attribute: Wisdom

Point Cost: 15 and See Text

Action: Standard

One of the rarest and most feared kizen abilities is *vampire*, a power that allows a kizen to literally suck permanent kizen points from another kizen to replenish his own depleted pool. With *vampire*, a kizen may drain a number of permanent kizen points from his victim equal to two plus his Wisdom modifier for every

successful use of the power. For every two permanent kizen points drained, the attacking kizen may add one point to his permanent kizen pool.

To use *vampire*, a kizen must succeed with a touch attack against the kizen he intends to drain. If he succeeds, both kizen must then roll a kizen level check (1d20 + kizen level) and compare the results. If the attacking kizen has the higher score, he may drain permanent kizen points from the victim. If the attacking kizen has a lower roll, he may not drain any permanent kizen points, and all energy he expended in the attack is wasted. Both the attacker and defender may elect to expend kizen energy to increase their kizen level check rolls, at a rate of five kizen points for each +1 bonus to the roll. However, this expenditure has a ceiling equal to the kizen's Wisdom modifier. For example, if the kizen has a Wisdom of 18, he may only increase his kizen level check by +4, with the expenditure of 20 kizen points.

Though the attacking kizen stands no chance of losing permanent kizen points himself, even if he loses the kizen level check, using this ability is not without risk. The quantum energy flowing between the combatants in a kizen level check is immense and turbulent, and the loser of the check (whether it is the attacker or defender) will feel the brunt of it. The loser of this check is automatically *stunned* for 1d3 rounds.

It is impossible for the kizen to exceed his normal maximum kizen points with *vampire*, but he may use this ability to regain permanent kizen points lost through innate powers or the creation of ki items. Even if the kizen cannot gain any more kizen points to his permanent pool, however, he may still use *vampire* upon another kizen to deplete the target's own permanent pool.

Modify Item I

Type: Spiritual (innate)

Favoured: Earther, Maverick

Tree: Kizen Manipulation

Prerequisite Power: *Prepare Item*

Level: 4

Range: Touch

Saving Throw: None

Dominant Attribute: None

Point Cost: see below

Action: One hour

This kizen power allows a kizen to modify a *kizen infused* item created by another kizen, something which is normally impossible. Doing this is slightly more difficult than working on an item the kizen himself creates, but does spare the kizen the necessity of *preparing* the item himself, and allows him to make additions to any *kizen infused* item he happens to acquire.

Modify item powers work very much like *kizen infusion* powers, except as follows. In addition to expending the permanent kizen points required to *infuse* the new power into the item, the kizen must also expend an equal number of temporary kizen points. These kizen points return normally. Note that *modify item* powers can only be used to permanently *infuse* a kizen ability into an item. These powers do not allow a kizen to *bestow* a power on an item he did not create.

Modify item I allows a kizen to *infuse* any kizen power of 1st level known to him into a *kizen infused* item created by another kizen.

Note that if the kizen item has been *attuned* (see page 40), the *modify item* powers will not be able to affect it.

Modify Item II

Type: Spiritual (innate)

Favoured: Earther, Maverick

Tree: Kizen Manipulation

Prerequisite Power: *Modify Item I*, Kizen Initiate

Level: 6

Range: Touch

Saving Throw: None

Dominant Attribute: None

Point Cost: see below

Action: One hour

This power works identically to *modify item I*, except the kizen may *infuse* any power he knows up to 3rd level into an item.

Modify Item III

Type: Spiritual (innate)

Favoured: Earther, Maverick

Tree: Kizen Manipulation

Prerequisite Power: *Modify Item II*, Kizen Acolyte

Level: 12

Range: Touch

Saving Throw: None

Dominant Attribute: None

Point Cost: see below

Action: One hour

This power works identically to *modify item I*, except the kizen may *infuse* any power he knows up to 5th level into an item.

Modify Item IV

Type: Spiritual (innate)

Favoured: Earther, Maverick

Tree: Kizen Manipulation

Prerequisite Power: *Modify Item III*, Kizen Master

Level: 16

Range: Touch

Saving Throw: None

Dominant Attribute: None

Point Cost: see below

Action: One hour

This power works identically to *modify item I*, except the kizen may *infuse* any power he knows up to 10th level into an item.

Modify Item V

Type: Spiritual (innate)

Favoured: Earther, Maverick

Tree: Kizen Manipulation

Prerequisite Power: *Modify Item IV*, Kizen Grand Master

Level: 20

Range: Touch

Saving Throw: None

Dominant Attribute: None

Point Cost: see below

Action: One hour

This power works identically to *modify item I*, except the kizen may *infuse* any power he knows up to 15th level into an item.

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PROPHET, ADVENTURER, WARDER

Aldryami Addendum #1: three elf Non-Player Characters. By Shannon Appelcline.

Elfs: A Guide to the Aldryami, released this month, is the definitive guide to the elves of Second Age Glorantha. Though they may look somewhat humanoid in appearance, they are an entirely alien species, with philosophies and views that are scarcely understandable to even the all-knowing God Learners and the draconic EWFers.

This article, the first of a few intended *Aldryami Addenda*, builds on the background detailed in *Elfs* by presenting new people, places, and gods for use with the book. In this issue you will find three elf Non-Player Characters who can be featured in any Second Age Glorantha campaign. Resthin Tigharrow comes from Arstola and Theril Ashblossom comes from Tallseed, the two forests detailed in depth in *Elfs*, while Jareena Silverthorn hails from Elder Wilds, which will be more fully described in a future Addendum. Each Non-Player Character is not only fully outlined, but also includes three story seeds to help you integrate them into your own Glorantha campaign.

JAREENA SILVERTHORN Dryad female, Initiate of Veratha

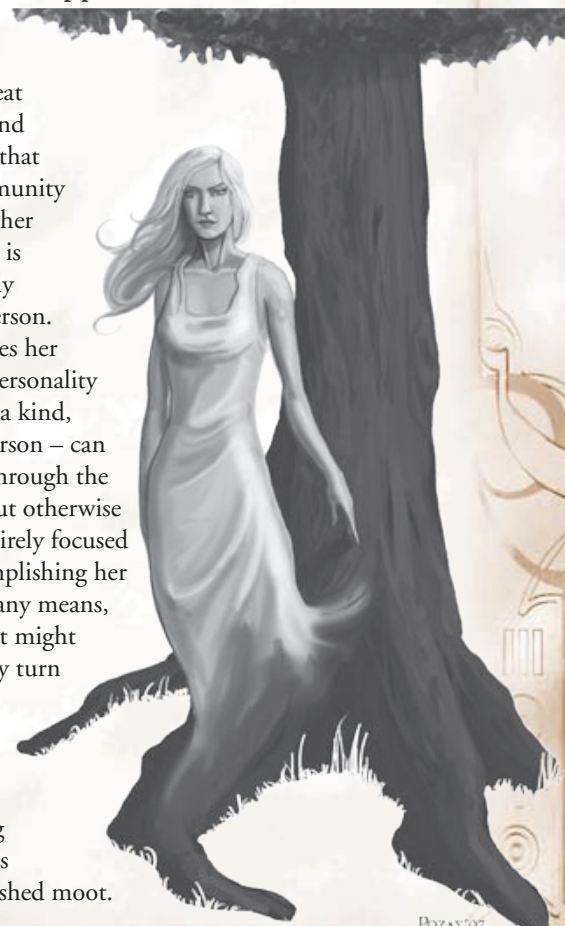
The Aldryami of the Elder Wilds were devastated by Arkat's Burn in the Dawn Age, then by the centuries of

warfare against trolls that followed. When the human Votanki tribes came to the land, the Aldryami enjoyed a short respite thanks to this new ally, but these new friends too turned against the Aldryami when the EWF came. Nonetheless, the elves of the Wilds live on. Their leader, Tolarin Bendpine, plans assaults upon the Empire, but there are also other, even more secretive groves of resistance within the sundered forest.

Jareena Silverthorn is the selected prophet of just such an organization. She is the chosen daughter of The Secret Glistening Haven, a grove in the Wilds which can only be found at certain times of year by those who know the three secrets of Veratha, goddess of rebirth. Jareena is a dryad, connected to a sturdy Hawthorn Tree, but her grove engages in a powerful elf ritual which allows her to walk the land beyond her tree.

Jareena follows the hero path of Throna Silverleaf, a dryad heroine of the Dawn Age who proved that her people could change the world. Using Throna's questing secrets Jareena intends to regrow the Great Tree of the Wilds that was lost to The Burn. To fulfill this goal she must engage in a long and complex quest that will take her across all of Glorantha, and which will doubtless put her at odds with the EWF and the God Learners alike.

Because of her great quest – and the trust that her community places in her – Jareena is an entirely driven person. Sometimes her natural personality – that of a kind, caring person – can be seen through the cracks, but otherwise she is entirely focused on accomplishing her goals by any means, a fact that might eventually turn her away from Veratha itself, rendering all she has accomplished moot.



POZAS '07

Jareena is an entirely non-violent diplomat, but when traveling through particularly dangerous lands she may have a group of Aldryami warders with her, borrowed from a nearby forest that supports her quest.

Characteristics

STR 7
CON 13
DEX 21
SIZ 12
INT 21
POW 25
CHA 21

Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	0/5
4-6	Left Leg	0/5
7-9	Abdomen	0/6
10-12	Chest	0/7
13-15	Right Arm	0/4
16-18	Left Arm	0/4
19-20	Head	0/5

Special Rules

Combat Actions: 4

Strike Rank: +21

Movement: 4m

Traits: Forest Magic, Herbanoid, Plant Control (in home grove), Spiritual Essence (in home grove), Tree Empathy (to home tree)

Skills: Athletics 50%, Influence 63%, Language (Aldryami) 93%, Life Sense 82%, Lore (Animal) 45%, Lore (Botany) 43%, Lore (Elder Wilds) 71%, Lore (Plant) 62%,

Lore (World) 47%, Perception 55%, Persistence 47%, Play Instrument (Harp) 66%, Sing 39%

Magic Skills:

Runecasting (Fertility) 67%,
Runecasting (Plant) 57%

Spells:

Accelerate Growth (Plant),
Endurance (Fertility),
Heal (Fertility)

Magic Points:

25

Equipment:

Runes of *Fertility* and *Plant*, Silver Harp, Various plants and seeds to be given as gifts.

Legendary Abilities: Prophecy. Jareena was chosen from birth as a child of prophecy. As such she is regularly visited by visions and dreams that help her understand Veratha's ways. To understand any individual vision, Jareena must succeed at a Life Sense test.

Story Seeds

Life Quest One: In the East Wilds of Ralios lies a secret shrine called Slaughterground, which remembers the slaughter near Kustria which brought the Walker's Curse to the Wilds. One of Jareena's life quests is to destroy this shrine. This will require the aid of artifacts from the ancient Galanini horse people and will also bring down the disfavor of certain Orlanthi traditionalists from the area. Jareena will thus need adventurers to aid and protect her.

Life Quest Two: In the Eastern Rockwoods lies the Vale of Flowers, a valley of huge blossoms said to have been brought from the Elder Wilds by giants. Another of Jareena's life quests requires her to come here to rediscover a lost blossom in a buried canyon. Again, there will be obstacles, including roving trollkin gardening patrols and interested seekers from the land of Cragspider.

(To accomplish her ultimate goal, Jareena must conduct many deeds for Veratha all across Glorantha, collecting life magics and destroying death. Players could be involved in this just once or twice, sporadically, or as part of an extended campaign.)

Assault on the Grove: Instead the players could find themselves at odds with Jareena. Both the EWF and the God Learners would love to delve into the dryadic magical secrets of The Secret Glinting Haven. Discovering the means to do so could be an interesting quest of exploration, but actually entering the grove would require going up against the military might of the Aldryami of the Elder Wilds – and the magic of Jareena.

Resthin Tigharrow

Brown Elf male, Initiate of Aldrya

A deciduous oak Mreli from Arstola Forest, Resthin is a rogue elf who travels the world simply to satisfy his own curiosity. He loves discovering new viewpoints and exploring new ways to look at the world, and thus in recent years he has become particularly enamored of the Empire of Wyrms' Friends. He has never committed to actually joining them – indeed, he swears that he will never split his tongue – but nonetheless he has engaged in many of their rituals and is welcomed in many of their towns.

Despite his flirtations with the EWF, Resthin remains rooted. His ties to the Song of Aldrya are somewhat weak, but he returns to Arstola Forest at least once a year to make sure that they are not lost entirely. This is made possible thanks to Resthin's sapkin, Gerith Tigharrow, who leads the Marching Aldrya of Womangrove, a trading settlement in southern

Arstola. Most Aldrya would ostracize Resthin for his alien investigations, afraid that his strange new views could poison entire groves when propagated through Life Sense, but Gerith insists that his brother will always be welcome in Womangrove. Thus far no one has opposed him in this fact.

Resthin could be an able – if odd – guide for players seeking to delve deep into EWF lands. Because he is quite diplomatic, he could likewise be an excellent go-between if EWF players wanted to negotiate peaceably with God Learners. Resthin would consider this a delightful opportunity to discover yet another way to look at the world.

Characteristics

STR	13
CON	16
DEX	19
SIZ	12
INT	20
POW	14
CHA	16

Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	2/6
4-6	Left Leg	2/6
7-9	Abdomen	3/7
10-12	Chest	3/8
13-15	Right Arm	2/5
16-18	Left Arm	2/5
19-20	Head	0/6

Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage/AP
Elf Bow	54%	2D8 / 8
Bastard Sword	57%	1D8 / 8

Special Rules

Combat Actions: 4

Strike Rank: +20

Movement: 4m

Traits: Forest Magic, Herbanoid

Skills: Athletics 77%, Influence 56%, Language (Aldryami) 80%, Life Sense 43%, Lore (Arstola Forest) 29%, Lore (EWF Lands) 33%, Lore (Plant) 35%, Lore (Theology) 32%, Lore (World) 27%, Persistence 46%, Sing 40%, Sleight 22%, Survival 51%

Magic Skills: Runecasting (Plant) 49%

Spells: Accelerate Growth (Plant), Clear Path (Plant)

Magic Points: 14 + 9 in Elf Bow

Equipment: Rune of *Plant*, assorted maps, bastard sword, elf bow, wood armour, wood greaves, wood treads

Story Seeds

The Sixth Totem. Resthin has been searching for an ancient Orlanthi artifact called the Sixth Totem. It is said to be an ancient golden figurine depicting the mythical dragon Akora which Orlanth defeated in the Godtime. Resthin wants the totem because there is said to be a ritual associated with it which shows the world through a dragon's eyes. However EWF priests from Dara Happa have learned of Resthin's quest and are using him as a stalking horse, hoping to capture the relic for themselves; they believe it is an ancient depiction of

The Dragon Sun itself. Players could be hired by either side as mercenaries and will ultimately be a part of the conflict between Resthin and the EWF.

Breaking into Womangrove: Despite the best efforts of Gerith, Resthin has finally been banished from Womangrove. However he left a cache of maps and several important notebooks there, and now he wishes to recover them. Resthin would be detected at once if he tried to sneak back into Arstola, due to the power of Life Sense, and so instead he hires the players to do so. They could try and infiltrate a trading caravan destined for Womangrove, or alternatively they could sneak in past Arstola's dangerous warders.

Wyrmy Arstola: Unfortunately, the fears of Resthin's foes in Arstola have proven true. His draconic visions, shared through Life Sense, have affected the forest. Oldtree Grove, lying just east of Womangrove, has gone over to the EWF. They are regularly accepting missionaries into the forest and learning more of the ways of the dragon. Resthin is aghast at what he has done. He hires the players to uncover some of the EWF's less savory practices, to try and turn Oldtree Grove back to the way of Aldrya. Or, alternatively, the elves of Arstola decide that Oldtree must be pruned. The players could either be hired for this task – or in nearby lands they could face a sudden wave of Oldtree refugees.

Theril Ashblossom

Green Elf Female, Initiate of Bengara

Theril Ashblossom is a pine Vronkali from the Brontosaurus Hills in Tallseed Forest. She is one of the most fearsome of Aldryami: not just a member of the mighty Marching Aldryami – the elf's huge standing

army – but also a worshiper of Bengara, the bloody Aldryami Goddess of death and brutal warfare.

Theril's main role is to act as a roving avenger and protector for Tallseed Forest. Though she spends much of her time in the forest itself – particularly in the dark seasons when the Mreli are helpless – she also roves across Dragon Pass and through the eastern Rockwoods. Theril occasionally accompanies Tallseed's diplomat, Soritia Fartreader, when she is bringing gardeners to the dragonewt city of Contemplative Rest. She sometimes fights chaos incursions that come from Snakepipe Hollow. She has even been known to war against EWF parties who presume too much upon the Tallseed.

A stern believer in the Aldryami philosophy of Balance, Theril is a notable antagonist to the races that the elves believe were spawned by the Taker. Though she will not randomly attack trolls or dwarfs, she has on occasion come upon a skirmish involving them and sided against them even when she knew none of the participants. Theril has thus twice saved EWF missionaries from hungry trolls, and they incorrectly think she is her friend now.

Characteristics

STR 16
CON 17
DEX 22
SIZ 12
INT 15
POW 15
CHA 9

Armour & Hit Points

D20	Hit Location	AP/HP
1-3	Right Leg	2/6
4-6	Left Leg	2/6
7-9	Abdomen	5/7
10-12	Chest	5/8
13-15	Right Arm	2/5
16-18	Left Arm	2/5
19-20	Head	5/6

Weapons

Type	Weapon Skill	Damage/AP
Elf Bow	80%	2D8 / 8
2H Axe	85%	2D6 + 2 + 1D2 / 8

Special Rules

Combat Actions: 4

Strike Rank: +19

Movement: 4m

Traits: Forest Magic, Herbanoid

Skills: Athletics 85%, Dodge 65%, Language (Aldryami) 84%, Life Sense 41%, Lore (Tallseed) 44%, Perception 75%, Resilience 78%, Tracking 74%

Magic Skills: Runecasting (Death) 67%,

Runecasting (Metal) 55%

Spells: Bladesharp (Metal), Hand of Death (Death), Repair (Metal), Transfer Life (Death)

Magic Points: 15 + 11 in Elf Bow

Equipment: Runes of *Death* and *Metal*, ironwood armor, copper plate helm, wood greaves, wood trews.

Legendary Abilities: Cyclical Rebirth. This special ability was given to Theril by Bengara's sister, Veratha, the elf goddess of rebirth. If killed during Sea Season or Sacred Time, unless she is entirely dismembered, Theril will rise again the next day, entirely healed.

Story Seeds

Into the Hollow: Since the Arkat Wars that ended the Dawn Age, chaos has been mainly quiescent in Genertela. However, one of the remaining cesspools of chaos is Snake Pipe Hollow, which lies just southeast of Tallseed. A new power is growing in the Hollow, and Theril is hiring mercenaries to aid her in the dangerous journey inside and the battle that is to follow.

Darkness Entreaties: Though it pains her greatly, Theril must travel to the Shadow Plateau to negotiate with advisors to Ezkankekko, the Only Old One, who is the troll demigod-ruler of the land. This negotiation is a necessary thing, because Ezkankekko is an old friend of both the elf people and the Aramites of Tallseed. Tallseed's Council thus believes he might help the elves of Tallseed to deal what the Aramites have become. Theril has been selected to go because she can survive the trip into the troll lands, but she requires aid to keep her temper – and her belief in Balance – in check. Thus the players are offered the opportunity to not only aid Theril in her journey, but also to war against her own worst nature.

Human Vengeance: One of Theril's duties is to destroy those peoples who harm the Tallseed and refuse to grow back what they have taken. These are usually humans. Occasionally such a task is too big for Theril, and thus she hires the players to aid her. When they find themselves attacking a village of human foresters, they may have second thoughts.



THE PITS WHERE MAD THINGS DRUM

AN ADVENTURE FOR CONAN THE ROLEPLAYING GAME, BY VINCENT N. DARLAGE.

OVERVIEW: HIDDEN HELLS AND GHASTLY TUNES

There were vast ungodly tombs where slimy monsters dreamed;
There were clouds like blood-drenched plumes where unborn
demons screamed.

There were ages dead to Time, and lands lost out of Space;
There were adders in the slime, and a dim unholy face.

— Robert E. Howard, *The Song of a Mad Minstrel*

Robert E. Howard hints that descendants of the ancient Acheronians still live in the hills of Nemedia, a perfect seed for a lost-city-themed adventure. Among a small enclave of these Acheronians has arisen a minstrel named Demophon who has seen strange things in visions and, according to him, drug-induced trips to the Outer Voids. He has touched an intelligence from ages long dead to time, and that intelligence speaks to him – it is the voice of Kathulos of Atlantis, whom the minstrel merely calls ‘the Master.’ The minstrel has begun a dark cult to worship a recovered mummy from the age before the oceans drank Atlantis.

To create a new empire of darksome worship, the mad minstrel has been kidnapping or luring the sons and daughters of powerful nobles with the intent of presenting them to the Master, who turns them into assassins. He hooks them on dark drugs, then, when they are broken by their unnatural cravings he cures them with a golden elixir – an elixir that binds the unfortunate victim more surely than ever before, even while granting them superhuman strength. To this end, he has caught two of the younger daughters of the King of Nemedia and bound them to his peculiar drugs. Using powerful sorcery, he has embedded a command within the heart of the elder of the royal siblings to assassinate the king.

The adventure begins when the characters stumble onto a pursuit. Tall, gaunt soldiers with dogs are hunting down a girl. If the players intercede, then the game is afoot. The girl has stolen half of a powerful amulet belonging to an ancient dead man, but her sister is still captive. She saw a chance for escape and she took it.

The characters, should they heed the call to adventure, will return with the girl to rumour-shadowed Abulia, a decayed village of remnant Acheronians deep in the heart of Darkwood forest. Once there, the characters will descend into the nameless catacombs of haunted

Abulia to battle with Demophon, the Herald of Horror and Hate, and take the second half of an important talisman.

Armed with the entire talisman, the characters will find the stronghold of the Master, a skull-faced scholar from long-dead Atlantis. There they will battle the minions of this wretched mummy and put an end to his nefarious schemes of empire and resurrection.

DARKWOOD OF NEMEDIA

At the onset of this adventure, the characters are walking through Darkwood, an extensive forest in Nemedia. This pine forest extends along the east of Nemedia. Few people travel the faint trails through this shadowed forest. Wildlife abounds within, especially wolves and bears. Bandits also make lairs in the shade of its tall pines. The forest is home to brooding stone castles and stalking werewolves hungry for prey. Rumours persist of satyrs, vampires and ogres.

About Darkwood: Darkwood is an immense pine forest and can be divided into three categories: sparse,



medium, and dense. All three categories can be found within its borders, with more sparse terrain at the outer edge of the forest and dense forest at its heart. The great trees shelter the ground the hot sun, creating a cooler ground that holds moisture, and creating an environment suitable for shade-tolerant plants. A traveller through these woods will see a lot of old, decaying tree trunks on the ground amid thick undergrowth that clings to the legs and hides animals and other dangers.

See the box on page 311 of Conan the Roleplaying Game (2nd Edition) for more details on forest terrain.

THEY COME WITH THE SLAVERING DEAD

Never the sun goes forth, never the moon glows red,
But out of the south or the north, I come with the slaving dead.
I come with hideous spells, black chants and ghastly tunes;
I have looted the hidden hells and plundered the lost black
moons.

— Robert E. Howard, *The Song of a Mad Minstrel*

The characters are on a trail in the midst of Darkwood. In the gloomy mists of early morning, the barking of dogs can be heard. Suddenly a scream pierces through the shroud of mist. A young woman, hardly more than a girl, stumbles into the path. The girl wears a gold belt from which depend strips of silk in front and behind. Her soft shoes are torn and bloody from her run through the forest. Even dishevelled she is obviously high-born and beautiful.

Several brigands appear out of the shadows of the pine trees, apparently chasing the girl. Two of the brigands hold leashed war-dogs (two each for a total of four; see pages 375-376 of Conan the Roleplaying Game (2nd Edition) for statistics).

This band of soldiers is led by a 6th level master sergeant. During the ensuing fight he will use his officer ability to allow the 1st level brigands to count towards the other soldiers' heavy infantry formation combat. There are one or two animal-handlers in the Acheronian group. The remainder of the Acheronian party are first level soldiers. Their number is at least equal to the number of player characters (adjust based on relative strength of player party).

The Acheronians who live in Darkwood are a private, inbred lot. Paranoid still about outside exposure, they do not trust outsiders. They speak Nemedian as well as Acheronian. These guards are tall, white-skinned and dark-haired, with full beards. They are thin to the point of gauntness, and their eyes tend to glitter with feral intensity. These guards are the protectors of ancient ways and methods and serve their village with an unmatched loyalty. They believe their race will rise again and they are ever alert to any opportunities toward that end. These guards are especially trained to root out spies and dissidents. They do not generally announce their racial heritage, so if characters have never met an Acheronian before and recognised him for what he is, it is unlikely the characters will suddenly know these soldiers are Acheronians. They are from Abulia, and account for half the soldiers of that haunted village. They were sent to find the girl by Demophon, whom they call the Herald of Horror and Hate. They know Demophon serves someone called 'the Master', but they do not know who this master is nor where he can be found. They know the layout of any building in Abulia. They know

Demophon can speak to the dead and is afraid of birds. They also know Demophon wants the half-amulet stolen by the girl, and that the words on the back of the amulet is written in ancient Atlantean, but they cannot read Atlantean.

Tactics: The girl is grabbed by a brigand, and the others warn the characters to flee. The girl pleads for help. If the characters do not immediately flee, the brigands loose the hounds on them. Any hesitation is seen as disobedient. The soldiers are moving cross-country and are not on a trail. This will hinder their movement and prevent them from charging. The soldiers will devote special attention to any character tripped by the dogs. The soldier with the girl will grapple with her and drag her away through the forest. If any of the soldiers are captured, they will be considered hostile and unlikely to reveal much information unless the appropriate Intimidate or Diplomacy checks are made.

PRINCESS PHAEDRA

Princess Phaedra is a daughter of King Tarascus of Nemedias, but she introduces herself as Lady Phaedra, a handmaiden to the Duchess Phaethusa of Abulia, a duchy of Nemedias. Without the royal bodyguards, the princess is uneasy and prefers to pretend to be of lower rank than she really is. She is not in direct line to ascend to the throne, having a few older brothers and sisters. Phaedra is a notable gossip, and is especially good at using her network of friends and nobles to utterly destroy or create reputations. She suffers horrible nightmares, and is addicted to the dreams of the Upas blooms, a notoriously powerful narcotic. Now Phaedra is an unknowing assassin. Her intended target is none other

ACHERONIAN SOLDIERS (BRIGANDS)

	1 st level soldiers	4 th level soldier Dog-Handlers	6 th level soldier Master Sergeant
Hit Dice:	1d10+1 (7 hit points)	4d10+4 (26 hit points)	6d10+12 (45 hit points)
Initiative:	+1 (+1 Dex, +0 Ref)	+2 (+1 Dex, +1 Ref)	+2 (+1 Dex, +1 Ref)
Speed:	25 ft.	25 ft.	25 ft.
Dodge Defence:	11 (+1 Dex, +0 base)	13 (+1 Dex, +2 base)	14 (+1 Dex, +3 base)
Parry Defence:	15 (+1 Str, +0 base, +4 shield)	19 (+2 Str, +3 base, +4 shield)	21 (+2 Str, +4 base, +1 parry, +4 shield)
DR:	7 (mail hauberk, steel cap)	7 (mail hauberk, steel cap)	7 (mail hauberk, steel cap)
Base Attack/ Grapple:	+1/+2	+4/+6	+6/+8
Attack:	+2 Heavy Mace (1d10+1, AP 5)	+6 Heavy Mace (1d10+2, AP 6)	+8 Heavy Mace (1d10+2, AP 6)
Full Attack:	+2 Heavy Mace (1d10+1, AP 5)	+6 Heavy Mace (1d10+2, AP 6)	+8/+3 Heavy Mace (1d10+2, AP 6)
Special Attacks:	—	Formation Combat (<i>Heavy Infantry</i>)	Formation Combat (<i>Heavy Infantry</i>)
Special Qualities:	—	—	Officer
Saves:	Fort +3, Ref +1, Will -1	Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +0	Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +2
Abilities:	Str 13, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 9, Cha 12	Str 14, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 9, Cha 12	Str 15, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 10, Cha 13
Skills:	Climb +5, Craft (alchemy) +6, Craft (herbalism) +6, Diplomacy +0, Gather Information +2, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Perform (ritual) +3, Perform (soldier drills) +3, Search +8	Climb +6, Craft (alchemy) +6, Craft (herbalism) +6, Diplomacy +0, Handle Animal +8, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Perform (ritual) +3, Perform (soldier drills) +3, Ride +3, Search +10	Climb +6, Craft (alchemy) +6, Craft (herbalism) +6, Diplomacy +0, Gather Information +6, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Perform (ritual) +3, Perform (soldier drills) +3, Search +13
Feats:	Investigator, Combat Expertise	Investigator, Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm, Power Attack, Animal Affinity	Investigator, Combat Expertise, Improved Trip, Power Attack, Improved Disarm, Parry, Improved Bull Rush
Possessions:	Mail hauberk, steel cap, shield, heavy mace	Mail hauberk, steel cap, shield, heavy mace	Mail hauberk, steel cap, shield, heavy mace



than the King of Nemedra, her father. Princess Phaedra is a young woman with dark eyes and a mass of shimmering hair. She is extremely beautiful. Her voice is soft and musical. Demophon has fallen for her and has been promised her by the Master after the new empire is established. She does not know this, however. She also does not know that the Master has performed a permanent sorcery upon her, making her an unwitting assassin destined to kill her own father. She does know that something horrible is going to happen to Nemedra if she does not intercede. Unfortunately, her memory is veiled in the fog of days and nights of addicted drug use so she does not know what malevolent event is about to befall Nemedra.

Princess Phaedra's Story: After meeting Xaltotun (at some untold point during the events of *The Hour of the Dragon*), she began dabbling in the occult arts. She sought out other Acheronians after the fall of Xaltotun so she could learn more of the arts and possibly avenge her father's defeat and help conquer Aquilonia from the hated barbarian usurper. She found shadowed Abulia, a village not shown on common

maps or spoken of in polite circles. Intrigued by stories about bargains with fiends from the Outer Dark and awful sacrifices made in honour of ancient rituals and festivals whose meanings have long been forgotten, she worked hard to gain the confidence of the unwholesome people who lived in Abulia. In doing so, the Master managed to get her hooked on the timeless, spaceless journeys through strange lands belonging to drugged dreams. Finally, she was brought to meet Demophon the Minstrel. Demophon cured her addiction with another drug, a golden ambrosia that gave her superhuman strength, but was even more addictive than the previous drug. She was brought further into the Inner Circle, and Demophon used her to satiate his own lusts. Eventually her drugged dreams became more and more frightful. She saw a skeletal face leering at her through her mists of her drugged dreams, a horrible face that commanded her to do sinful things. She cannot remember the details, but she knows (although she does not know how she knows) that she has done the most sinister of acts and performed the most debased of rituals under the commands of that horrible entity. The worst of it, and the only act she can clearly remember, was that she brought her younger sister into this drugged and depraved nightmare world of debauchery and immorality. In a moment of clarity, she snatched half of an important talisman from Demophon and escaped, hoping to find someone to help her rescue both sister and kingdom. She curses that she was not able to retrieve the entire talisman. She also knows that she has two days before her addiction will force her back to Abulia – or kill her if she cannot receive the drug. She begs the player characters to help her rescue her sister, kill Demophon and save her country. She promises rich rewards, including, but not limited to wealth, estates, or even her sexual favours. Use whatever will motivate your players. She will even offer them the talisman.

The Atlantean Talisman: The talisman stolen by the princess is a black half-moon on a white-gold chain. Extremely ancient, it predates the Cataclysms. It was created by an enemy of the Master in the days before the coming of Kull. The whole talisman has the power to render the possessor immune to the magic of Kathulos of Atlantis. The talisman was in the safe-keeping of Demophon, who knows what it does. He obtained the amulet in case his dealings with the Master do not turn out in his favour and is keenly aware that half the amulet is useless. The Master, Kathulos, does not know Demophon has the talisman. The princess also knows what the amulet does.

A HIDDEN HELL

Oh, the heart in my breast turned stone, and the brain froze
in my skull –

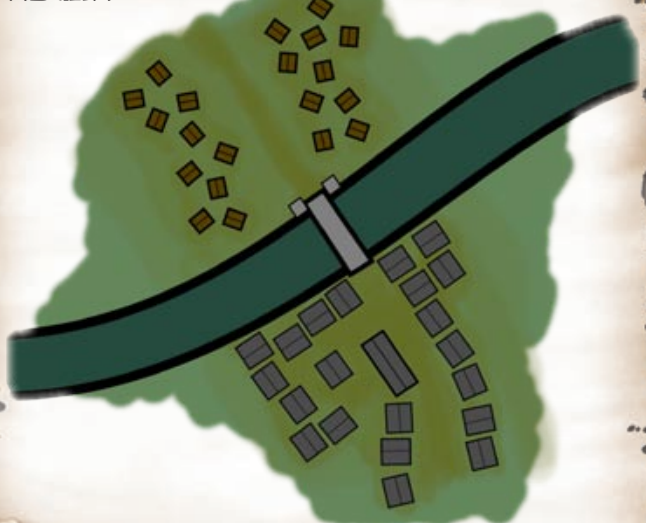
But I won through, I alone, and I poured my chalice full
Of horrors and dooms and spells, black buds and bitter roots –
From the hells beneath the hells, I bring you my deathly fruits.

– Robert E. Howard, *The Song of a Mad Minstrel*

Characters will come to the grimly repulsive town of decayed Abulia. This is an Acheronian village forgotten by time and lost to maps of even this age, hidden well by the depths of Darkwood. The village is separated from the characters by a 50 foot wide river. The characters will arrive from the north. A set of double gate towers rises on the north side of the river, squat piles of dismal stone carrying a suggestion of latent

malignancy. On the north side of the double towers is a small leper town, a thick tangle of huts crumbling under wormy decay. On the other side of the towering double gate, which serves more of a symbolic purpose than a true one, as the town does not have an actual wall, is a bridge crossing over a dank, slow-moving river. The village of Abulia truly begins here in the minds of the decadent inhabitants. The vast huddle of sagging houses and ramshackle huts stretches away from the mosquito-infested river, each of them in various states of decay. There are few people here in the streets. Deformed children play near the weed-choked river, digging unwholesome things out of the mud to eat or toy with. Unfriendly adults, each with feral eyes that reflect back direct light, glare at the intruders. Near the disagreeable gate, just off the main street, is a squalid tavern. This is the destination of the player characters, for this is the disgusting abode of the Herald of Horror and Hate.

ABULIA



The atmosphere within the unnamed tavern is revolting. The suggestion of evil crawls serpent-like throughout the establishment. The sight of wretches writhing in their dreams from the smoke of unseen censors to the ghastly tunes of a curious quartet of musicians greets the eyes of the characters. Powerfully charismatic denizens lurk in the shadowed alcoves, each with a sinister appearance and a wary feral eye. The room is filled with burning opium and other drugs. Characters must make a DC 17 Fortitude save for each ten minute period spent in the tavern or take 1d4 points of Wisdom damage as they start to experience exotic visions of haunting places where slimy monsters dream and unborn demons scream. If a character fails that save, he must also make a DC 14 Fortitude save or become addicted to the dreams of the Upas blooms in use here, taking 1d6 Dex and Wisdom damage, and 1d2 Con damage per week spent without taking the drugs.

If the characters do not cause problems this is unlikely to become a violent situation. Most of the denizens are engrossed in their own private hells and heavens, performing rituals they keep to themselves. Herein can be found servants of the Master, who will recognise the princess, if she is with the characters. They may try to kidnap her or will bargain with characters to lead them to Demophon. Their goal is to get the girl to Demophon one way or another. Demophon also rules here – in the basement where the catacombs can be found. Characters who manage to use diplomacy or intimidation to find out where Demophon can be

found will be directed to the malodorous stairs in the back of the tavern – the entrance to another hidden hell, the darksome abode of the Herald of Horror and Hate.

ABODE OF THE HERALD OF HORROR AND HATE

I am the thorn in the foot, I am the blur in the sight;
I am the worm at the root, I am the thief in the night.
I am the rat in the wall, the leper that leers at the gate;
I am the ghost in the hall, herald of horror and hate.

– Robert E. Howard, *The Song of a Mad Minstrel*

The basement of the tavern is a labyrinth of rooms and corridors. Within, trapped innocents feed Demophon's lusts and magical power. At the end of the maze, a hole has been broken into the wall and a rough tunnel connects the tavern to the towns ancient catacombs. Two servants of the Master, high on Upas ambrosia (see page 50 for the effects of Upas ambrosia), patrol the labyrinthine corridors. If violence breaks out one will take off running to warn Demophon while the other tries to hold off the characters.

Afraid of birds and bird images, Demophon lives among the dead in the catacombs. He has taken to sleeping among the corpses, often in their alcoves or in their coffins. He has ordered a sarcophagus to be created for him (it can be found in one of the village huts), but the craftsman has not finished it yet. If he is warned

SERVANTS OF THE MASTER

Medium Humanoid
(6th level Acheronian commoners)

Initiative: -1

Senses: Listen +7, Spot +7

Languages: Acheronian, Nemedian

Dodge Defence: 12

Parry Defence: 13

Hit Points: 21 (6 HD); **DR** -

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +2

Speed: 30 ft.

Melee: Flaming torch +3 (1d6 + 1d6 fire, AP 1)

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +3

Magic Atk: +1

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 9, Con 12,

Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10

Special Qualities: Illiteracy

Feats: Dabblers (Curses), Skill Focus

(Intimidate), Toughness

Skills: Intimidate +7, Listen +7, Spot +7

Possessions: Clothes, torch

of the coming of the characters, he will have raised up several of the corpses in the catacombs to fight the characters while he casts spells. If he has no warning, the characters will encounter him sitting on a sarcophagus, serenading a long dead corpse of a girl he fancies adores him from whatever afterlife she lingers in.

If Demophon overcomes the player characters, he will assemble the amulet and take

the characters to his Master, Kathulos. There they will be ritually sacrificed in a horrible ceremony. The characters may be drugged if the games master desires, but will awaken just before the knife begins to fall, giving them a chance to continue the fight, although they will have to battle Demophon and Kathulos at the same time. Demophon does not know where Kathulos' stronghold is but the complete amulet points in the direction of Kathulos, serving as a curious sort of compass.

Likewise, if the characters defeat Demophon, they may not know how to find Kathulos and Phaedra's sister. If they assemble the complete amulet they can feel it tugging in the direction of Kathulos. The ruined stronghold of Kathulos lies to the south through thickening forests and dense, overgrown paths little used anymore. If characters are using the amulet as a guide, they will not get lost on the way to the stronghold.

Demophon is a mad sorcerer-minstrel of foul disposition. Frightened of birds, he believes the dead speak to him and give him the secrets of Creation. He is gaunt and thin, his body wasting away as he becomes more and more corrupted. He has feral eyes and long, wispy black hair with a natural curl to it. He also sports a lengthy, curled beard. He is not handsome by any means, but is so desiccated he looks nearly like a mummy. Only his glittering eyes and the lustre of his beard show any proof that he is alive. He uses his *usurpation of the soul* spell to inhabit grubs, worms, rats and other people to spy on others. He likes to inhabit the bodies of lepers to experience the rotting sensations of the black disease that grips them. He met Kathulos of Stygia not long ago and agreed to serve him for further training in the black arts. He runs errands for Kathulos and travels to distant climes to find rare herbs and esoteric tomes for his master. Demophon lusts after Phaedra and

her sister, and Kathulos has promised them both to Demophon after the new empire is established. He still possesses the other half of the amulet the player characters now carry. He intends to use it if Kathulos reneges on his promises.

STRONGHOLD OF THE UPAS BLOOMS

The characters must journey through a twisted

↓ warp and wither with drought, ↓ work in the swamp's foul yeast;
↓ bring the black plague from the south and the leprosy in from the east.
↓ rend from the hemlock boughs wine steeped in the petals of dooms;
Where the fat black serpents drowse ↓ gather the Upas blooms.

— Robert E. Howard, *The Song of a Mad Minstrel*

maze of pine forests, heavy with undergrowth and curiously tainted plants of the most mysterious sort. Apparitions and strange sounds trail the characters at times, preceding them at other times. The characters may hear the howling of wolves, recalling to mind terrifying tales of werewolves and vampires.

Eventually, the characters will see the broken battlements of a ruined castle looming high over the trees. This ancient pile of stones had been abandoned long ago when the depredations of a grisly monster (some claim the monster was a werewolf, others a vampire, and still others a madman) gave the place a bad reputation.

Permanent raised corpses guard

DEMOPHON

'HERALD OF HORROR AND HATE'

Medium Humanoid

10th level Acheronian scholar

Initiative: +5

Senses: Listen +3, Spot +3

Languages: Acheronian, Nemedian, Demonic, several others

Corruption: 8 (corrupt)

Insanities: Voices, delusion (believes birds are watching him), sleeplessness, phobia (birds), delusion (the dead speak with him and are on his side), delusion (believes Kathulos is from Stygia)

Dodge Defence: 15

Parry Defence: 12

Hit Points: 55 (10 HD); **DR** –

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +12

Speed: 30 ft.

Melee: Hatchet +9/+4 finesse (1d6–1, x3 critical, AP 0)

Base Atk +7; **Grp** +6

Special Attacks: Spells

Magic Atk: +10

Spell Knowledge:

Divination – *astrological prediction, visions, dream of wisdom, sorcerous news, psychometry, mind reading*

Nature Magic – *summon beast, sorcerous garden*

Necromancy – *raise corpse, death touch, usurpation of the soul*

Summoning – *demonic pact, master, aid me!, summon demon, form demon*

Power Points: 10 (30 maximum)

Abilities: Str 8, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 20

Special Qualities: Background (independent), knowledge is power, increased maximum power points (triple)

Feats: Iron Will, Ritual Sacrifice, Tortured Sacrifice, Steely Gaze, Performer, Magic Power Attack, Improved Evil Eye, Opportunistic Sacrifice

Skills: Concentration +3, Craft (alchemy) +9, Craft (herbalism) +18, Diplomacy +4, Gather Information +8, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Knowledge (nature) +16, Knowledge (history) +10, Perform (ritual) +20, Perform (sing) +17, Perform (oratory) +17, Perform (string) +17, Perform (percussion) +17, Profession (minstrel) +10, Search +13

Possessions: 2 doses of black lotus smoke, 3 globes of Acheronian demon-fire, ½ of the magical amulet



NEW ADVANCED SPELL

NECROMANCY: USURPATION OF THE SOUL

PP Cost: 4/HD of victim

Components: V, S, F

Casting Time: 1 round

Range: Magical Link

Target: One creature

Duration: 1 hour/level or until you return to your body

Saving Throw: Will negates; see text

Magic Attack Roll: Sets DC for target's saving throw

By casting *usurpation of the soul*, you place your soul in a nearby body, forcing its soul into submission. You may move back to your body (thereby returning the trapped soul to its body), which ends the spell. When you transfer your soul upon casting, your body is, as near as anyone can tell, dead.

This spell is blocked by *warding* or a similar protective spells. You possess the body and force the creature's soul into submission unless the subject succeeds on a Will save. Failure to take over the host leaves your life force in the in your own body, and the target automatically succeeds on further saving throws if you attempt to possess its body again.

If you are successful, your life force occupies the host body and the host's life force is suppressed. You keep your Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma, level, class, base attack bonus, base save bonuses, alignment, and mental abilities. The body retains its Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, hit points, natural abilities, and automatic abilities. A body with extra limbs does not allow you to make more attacks (or more advantageous two-weapon attacks) than normal. You cannot use any special abilities or spells that the victim possessed.

As a standard action, you can shift freely from a host to another host if the new target is within range, replacing any usurped souls back in control of their bodies. The spell ends when you shift from a host to your own body.

If the host body is slain, you return to your body, if within range and the life force of the host departs (it is dead). If the host body is slain beyond the range of the spell, both you and the host die.

If the spell ends while you are in another body, you return to your body (or die if your body is out of range or destroyed) and the usurped soul retakes control of its own body, remembering only nightmarish images at best of the experience. Destroying the host body ends the spell immediately.

Focus: A magical link to the prospective host.

the gate to the ruin, but the walls are so crumbling and broken, characters may sneak into the castle and bypass the shambling corpses. The raised corpses should not number less than two, but may be as great as twice the party size; the games master should decide on the level of challenge he wants here.

The path through the ruined edifice takes the characters to the main keep. Along this path, the characters will pass through the inner courtyard, where Kathulos grows a sorcerous garden. This sorcerous garden includes a Yothga plant, several black lotus plants and an Upas tree. The Yothga and Black Lotus plants are detailed in *Scrolls of Skelos*. They can be of whatever strength or power the games master deems to be appropriate. The Upas Tree is detailed below.

UPAS TREE

Gargantuan Plant

Climate/Terrain: Warm jungle

Organisation: Patch (5–10) or grove (11–30)

Initiative: +1

Senses: Listen –4, Spot –4

Dodge Defence: 4

Hit Points: 38 (12 HD); **DR** 2

Saves: Fort +18, Ref +1, Will +0

Speed: 0 ft.

Space: 20 ft.; **Reach:** 20 ft.

Melee: None

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +31

Special Attacks: Poison, miasma

Abilities: Str 30, Dex 4, Con 30, Int –,

Wis 2, Cha 26

Special Qualities: Plant traits

Advancement: 5–6 HD (Large)

Voyagers to Khitai often return with grisly tales of a poisonous tree growing on the islands near Paikang, which is called the upas, the tree of poisons. The 150 foot tall trees are greyish white and much of the tree is covered with rough brown hairs. The tree has a yellowish-brown sap, both sticky and poisonous; the sap, after exposure to air, becomes a type of poisonous latex that can coat weapons. The leaves are thin and leathery, rough to the touch and shaped as irregular triangles. Dark, edible fruit grows just behind older leaves and are pear-shaped, with fine velvety hairs coating the outside. They are red or purplish when ripening, turning black when the fruit is full grown. The blooms produce narcotic and toxic fumes which kill plants and animals for miles around. If one were to fall asleep in the shade of this tree, he would never awaken. Khitans supposedly executed prisoners by tying them to the trunk of this great tree. Its seeds, leaves and barks have medicinal uses, being good for fevers, epilepsy and dysentery. The tree can also be used for light construction.

COMBAT

Though upas trees are stationary, they are somewhat sentient and can activate their passive defences at will. They tend to automatically activate their defences as soon as they are aware of trespassers, but a successful Diplomacy check against their hostile attitude may allow a character to carefully approach it to pick its fruit, its poisonous blooms, or tap the tree for its latex sap. They do not understand languages, but can usually pick up soft tones and soothing voices.

Miasma: Upas trees give off a heady scent at will that forces all within 20 feet of the plant to make Fortitude saves (DC 26) or be affected by the tree's poison. The save DC is Constitution-based. Reptiles are drawn to the miasma, especially snakes, and are immune to the poison.

Poison: Inhaled or Injury, DC 26, damage 1d2 Constitution. Saves are every round while within the plant's miasma and then every round for 1d6 rounds after leaving.

The poison has one other side effect – it increases Str by the same amount as it damages Constitution. Snakes and other reptiles are immune to the poison.

Plant Traits: Plants are immune to all mind-affecting effects and any poison or paralysis effect not specifically designed to affect them. They are not subject to critical hits or death by massive damage.

UPAS AMBROSIA

The golden liquid of the Upas fruit can be combined with the upas blossom to create an ambrosia that provides instantaneous relief from addictions to any sort of drug. It also provides a +1d6 boost to Str for up to two hours after taking it. Unfortunately, the upas ambrosia is itself highly addictive. Taking it requires a DC 25 Fortitude save or the drinker becomes addicted to the ambrosia. After addiction, the victim must imbibe it daily or suffer 1d6 Con and Dex damage, as well as 1d8 Wis damage daily until a dose is taken. Creating this ambrosia requires a DC 25 Craft (herbalism) check. There exists also an antidote, which can be crafted with a DC 30 check. The antidote is potentially deadly, doing 2d8 Con damage upon taking.

UPAS BLOOM

When a upas tree is in bloom its poisonous scent becomes even more potent. While blooming, those who inhale the unwholesome aroma must make a Fortitude save (DC 26) or die (replacing the normal effects of a upas tree's miasma). Those who succeed must make a second save, DC 13, or fall asleep for 1d4 hours. The scent attracts snakes, which are immune to the poisonous effects. Snakes tend to grow larger and larger if they live around upas blooms.



THE PITS WHERE MAD THINGS DRUM

Once characters get past the sorcerous garden, they can enter the main keep. Due to the reputation of the castle and the remoteness of its location, Kathulos has not established many guards beyond the small force of raised dead at the main gate. The

There was never a king or priest to cheer me by word or look,
There was never a man or beast in the blood-black ways I took.
There were crimson gulfs unplumbed, there were black wings over a sea;
There were pits where mad things drummed, and foaming blasphemy.

— Robert E. Howard, *The Song of a Mad Minstrel*

remainder of the castle is uninhabited. Searching the various rooms and chambers reveal little more than ruins, although, at the Game Master's option, other items could be found. Weapons, documents, titles, tapestries, silverware, dishes, furnishings, armour and clothing all could be found in different rooms and areas of the castle.

Once the decayed main keep is entered, the frantic sound of frenzied drumming can be heard coming up from below. As the characters descend into the earth, the drumming will grow louder and louder. At the base of the stairs is a short corridor leading to a larger room.

Kathulos' room is under the earth. The floor is of stone flags and the walls and ceiling are composed of gigantic blocks of stone. Along one wall are rows of cages. Shelves range the walls, covered with weird appliances, apparently of an alchemical nature. Three great tables squat in the centre of the room. Along the walls are deep pits, six of them in total. From these pits come the sound of the strange drumming.

Within each pit is a foaming blasphemy, a mad thing drumming. They will not leave the pits, but drum to increase Kathulos' power. If the characters

have been previously captured, they will be in the cages. One of them will be strapped to the table, about to be sacrificed for magical power. He is about to embed a permanent hypnotic suggestion into Princess Phaedra's sister, Nevesah. She is strapped to another table, drugged into inaction. Dressed in his yellow, reptilian robe, Kathulos is slowly intoning an ancient, diabolic ritual of permanency (rules for permanent spells are covered in *Scrolls of Skelos*). At least four risen dead are in attendance as servants. One holds up an ancient spell book for the sorcerer. The others await his merest command. If any player characters have been captured, a few of the risen dead will have been given their weapons. It is likely the players who have not been captured will be able to sneak up on the room. The drumming by the mad things in the pits are making a considerable amount of noise, giving Kathulos a -15 penalty to his Listen checks.

FOAMING BLASPHEMY

Medium Outsider (demon)

Climate/Terrain: Any

Organisation: Solitary

Initiative: +11

Senses: Listen +11, Spot +11

Dodge Defence: 16

Hit Points: 44 (8 HD); **DR** 5

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +6

Speed: 20 ft.

Melee: 2 claws +10 (1d3+2 plus corporeal instability)

Base Atk +8; **Grp** +10

Special Attacks: Corporeal instability, terror of the unknown (DC 14)

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., immunity to critical hits and transformation, mad thing drumming

Advancement: 9–12 HD (Medium); 13–24 HD (Large)

The horrific creatures known as foaming blasphemies have mutable, ever-changing forms. A foaming blasphemy's dimensions vary, but it always weighs about 200 pounds. Foaming blasphemies do not speak.

COMBAT

For all its fearsome appearances, whether it has claws, fangs, pincers, tentacles, or spines, a foaming blasphemy does little physical harm. Regardless of form, the creature seems unable to manage more than two attacks per round. Its continual transmutations prevent the coordination needed to do more.

Mad Thing Drumming: With a successful Perform (percussion) check (DC 23), the foaming blasphemy may grant one scholar within range a +1 morale bonus to his Magic Attack Rolls plus an additional +1 for every 5 points that the foaming blasphemy exceeds a DC 23 on its Perform check. The foaming blasphemy must have a magical link to the target scholar if it does not have line of sight to him. (Because of their position in the pits it is worth noting that all the foaming blasphemies in this adventure have magical links to Kathulos.)

Corporeal Instability: A blow from a foaming blasphemy against a living creature can cause a terrible transformation. The creature must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude



save or become a spongy, amorphous mass. Unless the victim manages to control the effect (see below), its shape melts, flows, writhes, and boils. The save DC is Constitution-based.

An affected creature is unable to hold or use any item. Clothing, armour, rings, and helmets become useless. Large items worn or carried—armour, backpacks, even shirts—hamper more than help, reducing the victim's Dexterity score by 4. Soft or misshapen feet and legs reduce speed to 10 feet or one-quarter normal, whichever is less. Searing pain courses along the nerves, so strong that the victim cannot act coherently. The victim cannot cast spells or use magic items, and it attacks blindly, unable to distinguish friend from foe (–4 penalty on attack rolls and a 50% miss chance, regardless of conditions).

Each round the victim spends in an amorphous state causes 1 point of Wisdom damage from mental shock. If the victim's Wisdom score falls to 0, it becomes a foaming blasphemy.

A victim can regain its own shape by taking a standard action to attempt a DC 15 Charisma check (this check DC does not vary for a foaming blasphemy with different Hit Dice or ability scores). A success re-establishes the creature's normal form for 1 minute. On a failure, the victim can still repeat this check each round until successful. Corporeal instability is not a disease or a curse and so is hard to remove. A *Warding* or *Greater Warding* spell removes the affliction.

Immunity to Transformation: No mortal magic can permanently affect or fix a foaming blasphemy's form.

Effects such as *Awful Rite of the Were-Beast* force the creature into a new shape, but at the start of its next turn it immediately returns to its mutable form as a free action.

KATHULOS

Kathulos dresses in snaky yellow robes. His hands are hideously clawed and skeletal, as is the rest of his body. His corruption has made him almost skeletal in thinness, and his mummification has completed that desiccating process. His yellow eyes are like pools of livid fire and his skin is parchment thin. He tends to tuck his hands into his wide, yellow sleeves if he is not manipulating something with those hands. He is an accomplished alchemist and loves to spend his time concocting new drugs and potions. He has the mad dream of bringing about a new regime, a kingdom that is both new and inhumanly old, nothing less than the resurrection of Atlantis. He loves to experiment on humanity and talks of science, not magic. To him, magic is science. He talks about a legend that one of the Old Race would rise up from the sea and re-establish the Atlantean empire. He believes himself to that legendary figure. His sarcophagus was moved by the tides out of the underwater temples of Atlantis and he was washed to shore south of Kush. He slew the man who raised him out of the ocean and he began to create his cult. He travelled to Khitai and Vendhya, and eventually settled in Nemedia, where he was welcomed by the Acheronians. The amount of knowledge he has brought down through the centuries is as a mountain against the grain of sand of Hyborian man's knowledge. If he did not feel himself destined to bring about the recreation and resurrection of Atlantis, he would content himself to live in his laboratories, carrying out vile experiments. He is obsessed with the return of Atlantean kings,

remembering the old days of the ancient empire when kings sought his counsel. He feels he must toil for the good of his race, sowing the seeds of glory against the full coming of future imperial days when the seas give up all their living dead. He believes the ancient kings and grim wizards of Atlantis sleep in lacquered cases beneath the oceans, dead as men reckon death, but truly only sleeping.

PRINCESS NEVESAH

Princess Nevesah is the eleven year old daughter of King Tarascus of Nemedia. She is being groomed to be the wife of a diplomat of state. She is normally headstrong, but she is very devoted to her sister. She is known to be an honest child, but has recently been caught by some extremely bad individuals, and is now addicted to some extremely dark drugs.

RESOLUTION

If the characters succeed in defeating (either by killing or driving off) Kathulos, they will have earned the friendship of the King of Nemedia. Characters might be given knighthoods or small fiefs if they are Hyborian. If the complete amulet is given to Princess Phaedra, the permanent hypnotic suggestion to kill her father (if the characters cannot ward it away) will not take effect so long as she wears the amulet. Otherwise, you may have another adventure on your hands...

Give the characters an appropriate amount of experience points for your campaign. You may also want to give the characters a Fate Point as an additional reward. Characters should definitely earn an appropriate amount of reputation for their great deeds for the Kingdom of Nemedia.

'THE MASTER' KATHULOS OF ATLANTIS

Medium Undead [augmented humanoid]
(20th level mummified Atlantean scholar)

Initiative: +16

Senses: Listen +12, Spot +12

Languages: Acheronian, Nemedian, Demonic, several others

Corruption: 18 (corrupt)

Insanities: Delusion (he is legendary, spoken of by prophets and prophecies); Delusion (Acheronians are descended from Atlantean slaves); Delusion (all that men know today, he knows)

Dodge Defence: 22

Parry Defence: 18

Hit Points: 75 (10 HD); DR 8

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +12, Will +20

Speed: 30 ft.

Melee: Slam +16/+11/+4 (1d8+1, AP –)

Ranged: Doses of black lotus smoke or globes of
Acheronian demon-fire +19/+14/+9

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +2

Special Attacks: Spells, dominate

Magic Atk: +20

Spell Knowledge:

Cosmic Sorcery – *the time is right, the stars are right*

Divination – *astrological prediction, not this day, visions, dream of wisdom, sorcerous news, psychometry, mind reading, visions of torment and delight, greater sorcerous news*

Hypnotism – *entrance, domination, hypnotic suggestion, mass hypnotic suggestion, voice of power, greater voice of power*

Nature Magic – *summon beast, sorcerous garden, children of the night*

Necromancy – *raise corpse, death touch, black plague, greater black plague, draw forth the heart, agonising doom*

Prestidigitation – *conjuring, telekinesis*

Summoning – *demonic pact, summon demon, form demon, greater demonic pact*

Power Points: 12 (60 maximum)

A tall, gaunt figure stood before me, a figure arrayed grotesquely in a silk brocaded gown which fell to the floor. From the sleeves of this gown protruded hands which filled me with crawling horror – long, predatory hands, with thin bony fingers and curved talons – withered skin of a parchment brownish-yellow, like the hands of a man long dead.

The hands – but, oh God, the face! A skull to which no vestige of flesh seemed to remain but on which taut brownish-yellow skin grew fast, etching out every detail of that terrible death's head. The forehead was high and in a way magnificent, but the head was curiously narrow through the temples, and from under penthouse brows great eyes glimmered like pools of yellow fire. The nose was high-bridged and very thin; the mouth was a mere colorless gash between thin, cruel lips. A long, bony neck supported this frightful vision and completed the effect of a reptilian demon from some mediaeval hell.

– 'Skull-Face', Robert E. Howard

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 18, Con –, Int 22, Wis 22, Cha 31

Special Qualities: Background (independent), knowledge is power, increased maximum power points (quintuple), fast healing 2, cold immunity, Heart of Ahriman vulnerability, fire vulnerability

Feats: Iron Will, Alertness, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Ritual Sacrifice, Tortured Sacrifice, Steely Gaze, Knowledgeable, Magic Power Attack, Improved Evil Eye, Opportunistic Sacrifice, Bleed Dry, Permanent Sorcery, Menacing Aura

Skills: Bluff +33, Concentration +13, Craft (alchemy) +29, Craft (herbalism) +29, Decipher Script +29, Gather Information +33, Hide +8, Intimidate +33, Knowledge (arcana) +31, Knowledge (nature) +31, Knowledge (geography) +31, Knowledge (history) +31, Knowledge (religion) +31, Listen +12, Move Silently +8, Perform (ritual) +33, Search +10, Sense Motive +29, Sleight-of-hand +14, Spot +12

Possessions: 6 doses of black lotus smoke, 9 globes of Acheronian demon-fire, 1 vial of upas ambrosia, 2 doses of upas ambrosia antidote

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