

GURPS SUPERS ADVENTURES

Four Fantastic Super-Scenarios



STEVE JACKSON GAMES

GURPS[®] SUPERS ADVENTURES

Four Fantastic Super-Scenarios

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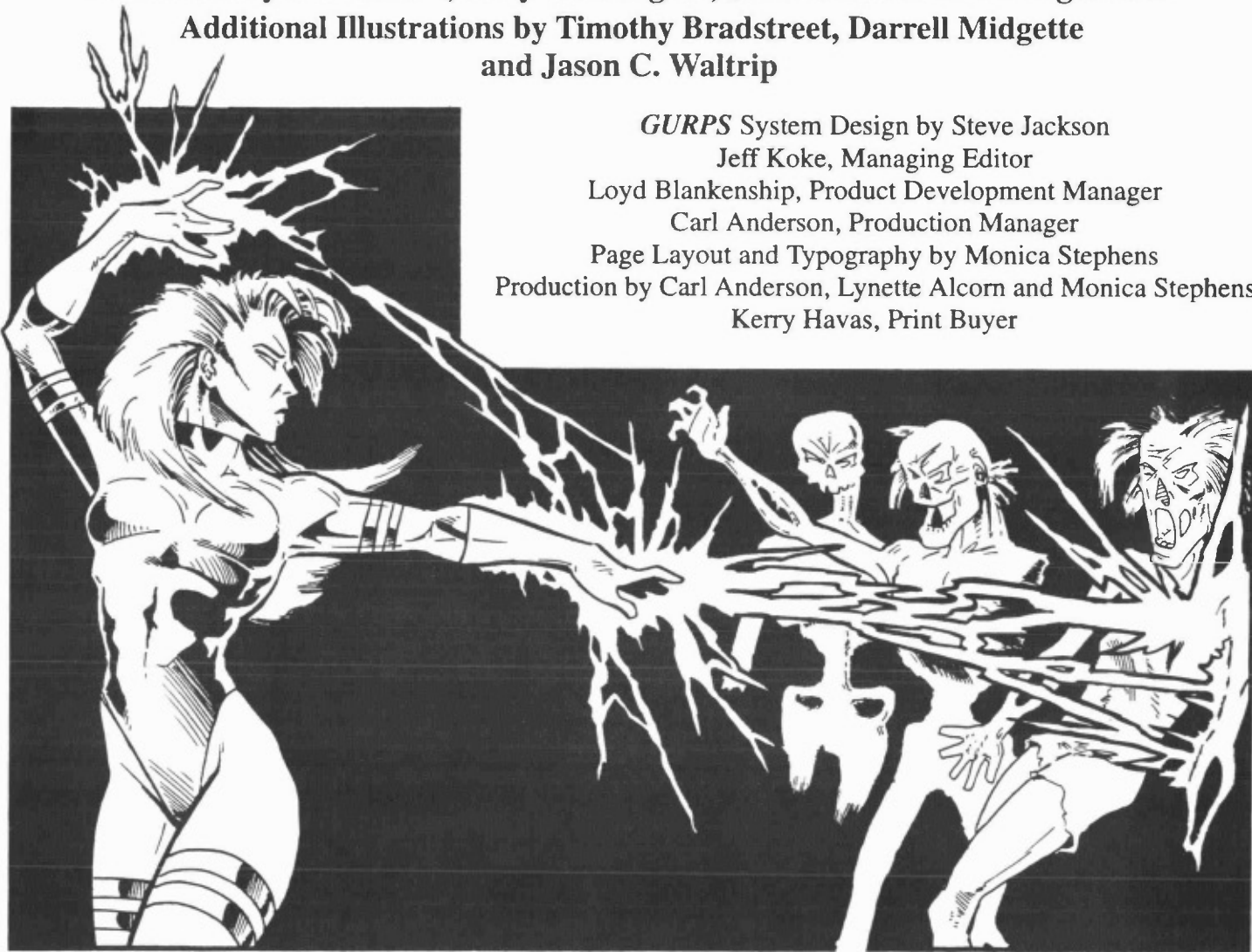
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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 3

About *GURPS* 3

1. JUPITER BLUES 4

About the Author 5

Assumptions 5

Background 6

Incorporating *GURPS Space* 6

Characters 7

Realistic vs. Cinematic 7

Briefing 8

Io 8

The Rebels 9

The Abandoned Complex 10

Jupiter Mining, Ltd. 10

Final Questions 12

Getting Started 12

Amazon's Claims 12

Research 13

Company Records 13

Gearing Up 14

Switching Sides 14

Decisions, Decisions 15

Raveners 15

The Rebel Complex 16

1. Main Gate 16

Rebel Complex Map 17

2. Business Offices 18

3. Computer Room 19

4. Guards' Barracks and Armory 20

5. Central Security Room 20

Rebel Guards 20

6. Family Housing Units 21

Typical Rebel Miner 21

7. Large Housing Units 22

Rebel Security Devices 22

8. Recreation Areas and Mess Hall 23

9. Kitchens 23

10. School and Atrium 23

Steam Tunnels 23

Steam Tunnels Map 24

11. Medical Bay 24

12. Training Gym 24

13. Orbit Corridor 24

14. Launch/Landing Pads 24

Operation Spring Cleaning 24

15. Driller Sheds 25

16. Mines 25

The Villains' Tactics 25

The Big Battle 26

Adapting to Other Genres 26

As the Battle Turns 27

Getting Out 27

Finale 28

Further Adventures 28

Character Points 28

Amazon 29

Gargoyle 30

Komodo 31

Red Mantis 32

Spitfire 33

2. MARK OF THE KRAKEN 35

PART 1: THE HORROR RELEASED

The Villains 36

About the Author 36

Player Team Composition 37

On Running a Horror Game 37

All Things Have Their Beginnings 38

Adventuring in Water 38

Climate Conditions 38

The Palestinian Government In Exile 39

Motives and Goals 39

What Colonel Mendez Knows 40

In Which We Arrive 41

Personal Research 41

Places To Go, Things To See 42

Geography 42

Archaeological Dig 42

Equipment List 42

The Island of Kupros 43

The Tactical Nuclear Weapons 44

In the Water 45

Dr. Jonathan Stanley 45

Strange Correlations 46

Radiation and Feeding the Kraken 47

Cracking the Cell 48

Out in the Open 49

Improvised Weapons 49

The Zombie Jamboree 49

Palambros 50

What Happens If the PCs Lose? 50

Abandoned WWII Submarine Base 51

Town of Palambros 51

Running This Adventure 52

Encounters with the Villains 52

Troubleshooting 52

Threats to the Archaeologists 53

Coming Soon ... The Sequel 53

The Release of the Kraken 54

The Strike Forces 54

The High Priest 55

Sea Wolf 56

Were 57

Carionette 59

Typical Zombie 60

Slimespawn 61

The Kraken 61

3. MARK OF THE KRAKEN 63

PART 2: PROJECT OCEANUS

Project Oceanus in the Campaign 64

About the Author 64

Adventuring Underwater 64

Where Is It? 65

Outline of Events (Major Scenes) 65

Sea Cruise 66

Routine Maintenance 67

Sense Rolls Underwater 67

Meet the Kraken 68

Sinking Feelings 68

Deepwater Cold 68

The Tentacled Totem 69

Project Oceanus Station Map 70

Docking Bay 70

Bad Day at Oceanus Station 71

Good-Bye Tethys 71

Hostage Add-On 71

Green Dawn Getaway 72

Trapped Crewmen 72

A Little Luck 72

Maps for the Ship 73

Captured Agent 73

Finding the Mark 74

Metapowers in the Deep 74

Project Oceanus Area Map 75

Palace Complex 75

Chase Scene 76

At the Palace 77

Running Fight 78

Combat in the Dome 78

Oceanus Station 79

Find the Green Dawn 80

Big Bad Finale (optional) 81

The Palace Complex 81

At Oceanus Station 82

In the Abyss 83

Adventure Seeds 83

Epilogue 84

The Green Dawn 85

Glacier 86

Agent Orange 87

Gaia 88

4. WEB OF THE ZYRANI 90

Getting the Characters Involved 91

About the Author 91

Antarctica 92

Captain Denise Gibson 92

Little Bird Station 93

Lightspider 93

Web of Light 94

Plasma Hound 94

Eta Cassiopeia 96

Web of Light Map 96

Speaking of Terrorists 97

Zyrane's Environment 97

Life Support Belt 97

A Zyrani Armory 98

Guests of the Loci 99

The Sky Boat 99

A Zyrani Glossary 99

Forcefield Generator 100

The Forever Cluster 101

Inspector Srizakk 101

Rhapsody of Pain 103

World Police Officer 103

Cluster Organizer Ordraz 104

Indrak Warpdancer 105

Skeptical Supers 105

Zero Cluster Guerrilla 106

Council of War 107

Zyrani Vehicles 107

Tazagul Riftfinder 108

Destroying the Doomsday Web 109

World Police Military Strength 109

The Crystal Jungle 110

Sparkling Rain 110

The Outsiders' Weapons 110

Web Guardian 111

Envious Moon 112

The Star Prophet 113

Typical Outsider Drone 113

Spiral Guard Warrior 113

Six Smoking Blades 114

Caught in the Web 115

Dr. Katherine Lawrence 115

Riftfinder's Lab 116

Web Fortress Security 117

Night of the Ghosts 118

World Police Commander Drazidor 118

The Web Fortress 119

Shakari the Patternmaster 119

Map of the Web Fortress 120

Mutant Scientist 121

Zyrani Scientist 122

Lynn Bellmon 123

Victory! 125

The Price of Failure 125

The Natives of Zyrane 126

Zyrane Planetary Record Sheet 128

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *GURPS Supers Adventures*! This book presents a set of four super-powered scenarios. They can be used as campaign starters, or dropped into any existing campaign. If you like them, we'll do more – see *More Adventures?* below.

Notes for the GM

We've tried to include a mix of plots and styles in *Supers Adventures*. *Jupiter Blues* is a very non-linear, problem-solving adventure, which places a lot of emphasis on the PCs coming up with a good plan. The two linked adventures in *Mark of the Kraken* have a more linear plot, heavy on action. *Web of the Zyrani* drops the heroes onto another planet – what happens when they arrive is up to them.

All four are easily adaptable to higher- or lower-powered characters. *Web of the Zyrani*, in particular, could easily be used for solo (one-on-one) play.

The World of the IST

All of the adventures are nominally set in the world of *GURPS International Super Teams*. This campaign background is detailed both in *GURPS Supers* and in the *GURPS I.S.T.* worldbook. While we think that it's a *great* background for superheroic roleplaying, there's no reason you can't use your own world.

For *Jupiter Blues* and *Web of the Zyrani*, both of which take place on another planet, there's very little conversion work needed. The only part that might have to be changed is the introductory sections that involve the team in the adventure. If there's no governmental equivalent to the United Nations' IST in your campaign, perhaps the PCs could be hired by a corporation (in the case of *Jupiter Blues*) or a concerned family member (in the case of *Web of the Zyrani*).

Mark of the Kraken is a bit trickier. If these are to be included in an ongoing campaign, the GM might consider *foreshadowing* the troubles for several game sessions. Mention that the news is abuzz with talk about the underwater cities that are nearing completion – perhaps involve the group in an underwater rescue mission of a crippled ship. This will lead naturally to their involvement when the Kraken appears. And the Green Dawn can become an ongoing plot element.

Of course, all these plotlines can be modified to suit the campaign. If you like – particularly if you suspect that one of the players has gotten his *own* copy of this book – feel free to change things around. Maybe the rebels really *are* the bad guys in *Web of the Zyrani*. Maybe the underwater bases in *Mark of the Kraken* are nothing more than well-hidden nuclear test sites . . . only *you* know for sure!



More Adventures?

We have several other adventure books in the works – *GURPS Cyberpunk Adventures*, *Time Travel Adventures* and *Horror Adventures* should all be out in 1992, with *Martial Arts Adventures* and others coming in 1993. If you have a favorite genre that you want to see more adventures for, write us and let us know! Our address is in the *About GURPS* sidebar – address everything “Attn: Product Development Manager.”

About GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of the *GURPS* system. Our address is SJ Games, Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! Resources now available include:

Roleplayer. This bimonthly magazine includes new rules, variants, new races, beasts, information on upcoming releases, scenario ideas and more. Ask your game retailer, or write for subscription information.

New supplements and adventures. We're always working on new material, and we'll be happy to let you know what's available. A current catalog is available for an SASE.

Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata sheets for all *GURPS* releases, including this book, are always available from SJ Games; be sure to include an SASE with your request.

Q&A. We do our best to answer any game question accompanied by an SASE.

Gamer input. We value your comments. We will consider them, not only for new products, but also when we update this book on later printings!

BBS. For those of you who have computers, SJ Games operates a BBS with discussion areas for several games, including *GURPS*. Much of the playtest feedback for new products comes from the BBS. It's up 24 hours a day at 512-447-4449, at 300, 1200 or 2400 baud. Give us a call!

Page References

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set*, Third Edition. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to a page in the *Basic Set* – e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the *Basic Set*, Third Edition. Page references beginning with M refer to *GURPS Magic*, an SU means *GURPS Supers*.



JUPITER BLUES

By Jeff Koke

Illustrated by Tim Eldred and Gary Washington

Four shapes move quietly through the dark shaft. The only illumination comes from the constant fiery shimmering covering the shapely body of a young woman. The only sound is the exaggerated hissing of the group's rebreathers.

They reach the end of the hallway and see that the shaft opens into a great space, a huge room lined with panels and chairs. In the center, dominating the giant hall, is a large modern sculpture, thick and blocky – a little out of date, but still powerful. The room is brighter than the corridor, lit from above by the huge crescent expanse of Jupiter, rising over the moon and casting its pale orange light into the domed room.

One of the shapes moves quickly to the wall, where a rectangular panel sits. The shape is vaguely human, but with too many arms and a long reptilian tail. His head is partially obscured by a glass helmet, but a pair of antennae can be seen, as well as two tiny slitted eyes. He puts a three-fingered hand to the panel and the metal covering seems to melt away, exposing a nest of wires and connectors. Although most would see the wires as gray in the dim light, his perfect vision picks out the colors easily. He begins to work fervently with the panel, pulling wires, rerouting and resoldering with only his hands for tools.

Five minutes pass. Then ten. "Come on, Komodo," hisses a deep female voice – the voice of someone used to being obeyed. "What is taking so long?"

"They really did some work on these circuits, Amazon. They must have been pretty sure they weren't going to use this place again. Just a few more minutes." His voice has the crisp edge of a synthesizer. It is completely wrong for his face. He continues to work.

Half a minute later, there is a bright spark, and the thick whine of generators coming on line. The fluorescents lining the edges of the room begin to flicker and spit, and half a dozen warning lights start flashing on the desks lining the room.

At this point the group notices a new shape, crouching in the shadow of the sculpture. It has been there the whole time, hunched over and deathly still. It is an enormous creature, with skin like obsidian and arms as thick as tree trunks. It raises its head smoothly and silently, and its eyes begin to glow faintly yellow, as if it has just come out of a trance.

Three members of the group immediately back away into the shaft, shared looks of stark terror on their faces. They recognize the alien beast, one of many who have killed, slaughtered and eaten their way through most of the outer mines. It is a ravener.

Amazon, however, merely smiles and walks calmly over to the beast. As she approaches, the creature rises to its full height – over 12 feet tall – dwarfing the well-muscled woman. "Friends," she says as the beast grabs her and lifts her effortlessly to a ledge on the sculpture. "I want you to meet our new associate. Although his race doesn't use names, we will call him Gargoyle."

The other members of the group recover quickly from their fear and join Amazon on the work of art. The room is fully lit now, and the swirling clouds of Jupiter hover overhead, providing an eerie backdrop.

"What's next, Amazon?" speaks a new voice, belonging to a red-cloaked man with bulging, multi-faceted eyes.

"Bring in the miners," she replies. "We've got a company to bring down."



About the Author

Jeff Koke is a long-time fan of *GURPS* and is currently Managing Editor for Steve Jackson Games. He attended Southwest Texas State University, where he obtained his bachelor's degree in English and published several short stories and poems in the university's literary journal. *Jupiter Blues* is his first writing project for SJ Games (though as an editor he has rewritten several manuscripts).

In addition to working and writing, Jeff plays guitar in a local rock-n-roll band called *Second Glance*. He lives in Austin, Texas, with his fiancée, Angie, and his mutant super-cat, Sheba.

Assumptions

Jupiter Blues takes place in the near future of Earth's solar system. The base Tech Level is 8, though extremely smart gadgeteers may be able to invent TL9 items (this should be carefully monitored).

Most of the combat in this scenario will be done with super powers and TL8 weapons (lasers and gauss rifles).

Incorporating GURPS Space

Although this adventure takes place on Jupiter's second moon, the *GURPS Space* sourcebook is not required to run this adventure. However, the GM should know a few basic things before starting out.

Technology: As mentioned above, the base TL is 8. All starships are powered by reaction drives, and consequently, space travel is fairly slow (a shuttle to Jupiter takes 5 years).

Communication: All communication takes place through standard radio communication or laser bursts. There is no FTL communication.

Weapons and armor: See the main text, p. 14, for a discussion of available weapons and armor. On Earth, any items up to TL8 can be found.

Computers: All the computers in the mining compound are TL8, Complexity 2 microcomputers except for the company's mainframe systems, which are Complexity 5 for the old complex and Complexity 6 for the new complex. All data is stored on optical disks.

Medicine: All known diseases are curable. Cloning is in its early stages, but not yet perfected. To have a clone, someone must be very wealthy or very powerful (or both). Even so, braintaping technology is unreliable. A successful transfer occurs only 50% of the time.

Introduction

This adventure is designed for four to six 500-point supers. It can be played with more or fewer characters, but point totals should be adjusted accordingly. The entire adventure takes place on the mineral-rich moon of Jupiter, Io. The scenario assumes that super powers are extremely rare or non-existent on Earth, and that they developed due to extreme radiation on Io. If that does not fit with the GM's campaign, he will have to make some adjustments (see sidebar, p. 7).

Background

For 45 years now, Jupiter Mining, Ltd., has been mining rare ores on Io, Jupiter's second moon. It wasn't hard to find volunteers to head into space, even for something as unglamorous as mining; the 500 available slots filled up in three weeks. The idea of adventure in space drew recruits like flies.

Everything went great for about 20 years. Miners brought their spouses along. The company constructed comfortable housing and good medical facilities, and soon, a second generation of miners was being raised in the sterile Io Mining Compound. In fact, the population grew so fast that the company eventually had to abandon the original complex and build a new one. As it turns out, the abandoned complex figures prominently into the scenario.

With the second generation, though, came a problem. The company doctors and the med-techs noticed almost immediately the high rate of mutations in the miners' children. Covert company investigations revealed that there was something peculiar about the underground radiation on Io – something that got through their best rad suits. After a long debate, the Company revealed their findings to the miners, offering a free trip back to Earth and suitable compensation for any who wanted to leave. Surprisingly, only about 50 families left; most of the mutations were useful, and some were *very* useful.

Many of the miners' children developed super or psionic abilities – flight, mind-reading, super-strength, etc. These metahumans were recruited early by the company. Corporate security was good, but could use some improvement; besides, the company was still expanding. Who knows where these “supers” would be needed in the future? Excellent training facilities were built, and the supers were allowed free reign to explore their powers. When the first generation of metahumans was 20 years old, they had gained good control and knowledge of their abilities. Then trouble hit the complex.

In one of the farthest-reaching mines, miners abruptly broke into a large underground chamber. Their investigation of the cavern was cut short by an attack of huge creatures that looked as if they were made of rock. They ripped the miners limb from limb and ate them.



The aliens were named “raveners” for their unquenchable hunger. A group of five was first encountered. They killed and mutilated 65 people before they were killed and the tunnels sealed off. Raveners can breathe the sulfur-rich atmosphere of Io and have no trouble withstanding the moon’s tremendous surface heat.

Most of the company’s resources were put into defending against the raveners, who, since their discovery, had begun random attacks on the mining community (which has grown to over 4,000). The company had limited defenses – mostly TL8 laser and gauss rifles – and these were practically useless against the beasts. (They have ordered more and better weapons from Earth, but the soonest the order can be turned around is 6 years.) Only the various super-powers of the security force saved the colony from an even greater disaster. All the supers and psis on the security force were put to the task of securing the compound against the aliens.

Now, five years after the first attack, a new threat has surfaced. A group of renegade supers, led by the self-titled “Amazon,” has stirred rebellion among a faction of the miners. Preaching stories of intentional irradiation by the company, Amazon has attracted about 400 followers – mostly miners with mutated children. Amazon herself was the mother of a hideously deformed boy who did not resemble anything human. She killed her own six-year-old son, Jonathan, in what she calls “an act of mercy.” Jonathan has become a martyr and symbol for Amazon’s cause.

The rebels have taken over and secured an abandoned stretch of mines and buildings – the Company’s former central compound. With the help of a metal-shaping super, the group has restored power to the abandoned compound.

To make matters worse, Amazon seems to have a ravener working for her. She can somehow communicate with it, and it follows her commands explicitly. The ravener attacks have not decreased and have reduced the company’s security force to a skeleton crew. They can only spare a select team of operatives to take out Amazon and her accomplices.

Characters

The adventurers are a party of operatives from Jupiter Mining’s security force. Most likely they have trained and worked on other covert missions together. All members of the force will have the skills Area Knowledge (New Complex)-IQ+1, Guns (Gauss Gun)-DX and Baton (Stun Wand)-DX. Additionally, they have Legal Enforcement Power and Duty to the company. The following advantages and skills will also prove useful for the operatives:

Advantages

Absolute Direction
Ambidexterity
Combat Reflexes
Double-Jointed
Night Vision
Toughness

Super Advantages

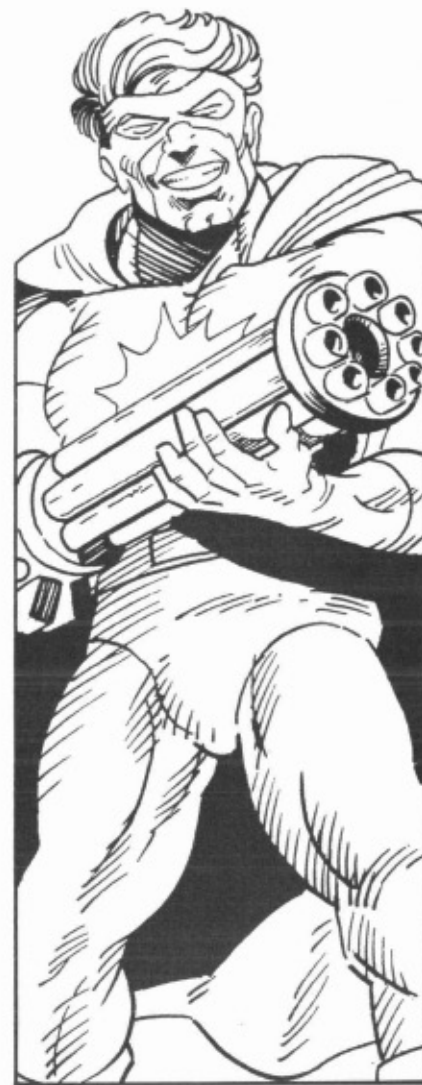
Damage Resistance
Dark Vision
Enhanced ST
Extra Hit Points
Perfect Balance

Skills

Computer
Operation/TL8
Electronics Operation
(Security Systems
and Power
Systems)/TL8
Electronics/TL8
Escape
Fast-Talk
Most Combat Skills
Research
Shadowing
Stealth

Super-Powers

Energy Blast
Absorb Attribute
Alter
Flight



Realistic vs. Cinematic

Even though 500 points is the recommended starting total, this adventure is written in a mostly realistic style. Super powers are fairly rare and those that are manifest aren’t always combat-effective (the PCs represent the *most skilled* of the security force’s operatives). It isn’t even necessary that all the PCs *be* supers. Highly-skilled special ops types will fit right in with the scenario. If the GM likes prefers realism over four-color action, the adventure can be played just as it is.

If the GM wishes, however, a more cinematic style can be adopted. The PCs can be metahumans sent from Earth when the first cries for help came from the company – perhaps they’re even members of the IST forces. This way, they can come in with as much firepower as the GM thinks appropriate. Of course, he should beef up the villains a bit to compensate, but then the battles don’t have to be confined to the corridors and mines of the complex. They can extend into the sulfurous atmosphere or right out into space.

Io

Io is Jupiter's second moon. Probes sent in the late 1980s showed it to be a turbulent body, racked by constant sulfuric volcano eruptions, earthquakes and sudden surfacing of lava lakes. The surface temperature ranges from 75° to an incredible 600°. Mineral exploitation seemed hopeless.

However, a probe sent in 2012 discovered a few select spots scattered near the moon's poles that seemed to be isolated from the destructive activity. These places also maintained a fairly constant temperature: 82° year-round. Monitoring devices were placed in the crust and watched for several years. Each year they said the same thing: those select areas were never disturbed by the earthquakes and volcanoes that made the rest of the moon a hell-hole. The only problem the monitors noticed was an unusual amount of radiation – three times as much as was first recorded. The scientists weren't worried, however; all their miners would be wearing expensive radiation suits.

What they didn't realize was that most of the radiation they recorded was coming from the core of the moon, not from Jupiter's radiation belts. For some reason, the best radiation suits that are available still won't stop this underground radiation.

By 2020, Jupiter Mining, Ltd., had set up its first mining compound on one of the oases on the turbulent moon. So far, none of Io's destructiveness has managed to disrupt the relative tranquility of the location of the mining compound.

Alternately, the GM could make the "stable spots" and the strange underground radiation completely artificial, created by the combined psychic powers of the raveners queens (see pp. 18-19). If something happens to the local queen, the normal turbulence of the moon would destroy the mining compound fairly quickly. The only way to save the complex would be to convince or force a queen to move into the old queen's territory. Perhaps the raveners aren't even native to Io – this is just a colony of theirs . . . and another colony could be setting itself up on Earth!

Note: The GM should realize that there is no scientific basis for the existence of the "stable" spots on Io, or the unusual underground radiation that can't be blocked by rad-suits. These factors have been invented for dramatic purposes. If the GM is a scientific purist, he can change the location of the adventure to a different moon.

Of course, many other skills will prove useful, and players should be given as much leeway as seems appropriate in character design. However, the players should not be allowed to choose skills that would be inappropriate for someone growing up in an underground mining compound, such as Fishing, Riding (Horse), Skiing, etc. The GM will have to use his own discretion when limiting player skill choices. Of course, in a cinematic campaign, anything is possible; see the sidebar on p. 7.



Briefing

The adventure begins as the group is called into their commander's office. As the party members enter, they see a group of white-coated men leaving, carrying toolboxes and briefcases. A successful Engineering (Electronics) roll tells a PC that these men have just finished sweeping the office for listening devices. Captain Craig is not his usual jovial self; his face is drawn and he looks preoccupied.

"As you may know," he addresses the group, "the rebel situation has gotten progressively worse. Amazon's group has managed to get the old complex in working order, and she's secured it well, with the help of her elite group of metahumans – *including* a ravenner.

"Most of the force is patrolling the outer tunnels, trying to stop ravenner attacks before they breach the inner mines. We've lost over 70 guards to the beasts and at least 30 have defected to the rebels. We can only spare a small team to deal with the dissidents, and the council has authorized drastic measures.

"That's where you come in. We need a team to infiltrate the rebel complex, either by stealth or guile, get close to Amazon and take her out. It's a risky, one-shot deal, but we really have no choice."

He stops to read the reactions from the party's faces. If any of the agents seem apprehensive, he'll assure them that this is a volunteer mission; anyone who wants to can back out now. "But if you back down from this," he says, "you better either dig yourself a hole and crawl in, or head straight for your families and find some

means to protect them . . . because those rebels are planning something big, and they aren't going to stop until Amazon's dead."

Assuming that there are enough characters to continue, Captain Craig will relate the details of the situation. The information in the following sections can be relayed to the players as part of the briefing. Most likely, it will be run as a question and answer session, so the GM should read and know the following information.

The Rebels

The rebel force is approximately 400 members strong and is composed mostly of disgruntled miners and their families, with a few mutated metahumans. The abandoned complex housed and fed 1,000 families before the move, so there is no lack of space. A recent shuttle was hijacked by the dissidents. It carried enough food to feed the rebels for four years.

The rebels are rallying behind Amazon because of her charisma and her claims that the company has been intentionally irradiating the miners to produce metahumans. But the radiation, Amazon claims, is really producing mutants, and they're getting worse. Amazon's own son was presented as a prime example of this mutation. The boy was born with six tentacles, and his legs were fused into a mollusk-like foot. She murdered him, calling it mercy and using the act as a catalyst to stir the miners' anger. She told them that the company's deceit had forced her to kill her own son, to put him out of his misery.

As the rebels gain influence, more miners are considering their cause. Others merely fear them as radicals who are going to bring down the company. Amazon assures her followers that she will provide for them, promising a radiation-free environment for them to work in and prosper.

Rebel Tactics

The rebels' main tactic is to spread the word of their rebellion through graffiti, jammed company broadcasts and pamphlets. There have been a few short altercations with the security force, some even ending with several miners being arrested. However, all the rebels were broken from the complex's cells by the combined power of Amazon's metahuman elite. Most of the intelligence on the dissidents was extracted from these captured rebels.

The Rebel Leaders

There are five members in Amazon's "council," all of them metahuman. Each of them has powerful abilities, and they complement each other well. By far, the most fearsome is the ravener, though Amazon might be his match in sheer power.

Although there are several other supers among the rebels, the following five are the elite, the ones that run the show. There is a clear distinction in power between these individuals and other rebel metahumans.

Amazon

Amazon is a 6'1", well-muscled woman who fights with a razor-sharp glaive (an expensive, but functional, antique that her parents gave her for a birthday present). She can shoot powerful bolts of electrical energy, and one of her favorite tactics is to attack with her glaive and leave the weapon in the wound, shooting electricity into the victim's body a second later (bypassing any armor her opponent may have, incidentally). She is incredibly charismatic and is known for her powerful speeches in which she admonishes the company for its intent to breed a superhuman security force.



Jupiter Mining, Ltd.

Jupiter Mining is a subsidiary of the Global Resources Corporation, a huge multinational corporation. In 2012, Global Resources sent its first manned exploratory probe to the moons of Jupiter. It proved to be the most mineral-rich, and despite its turbulent volcanoes, the expenses involved in setting up a mining base there were minimal in relation to the possible profits, considering Earth's growing need for rare minerals.

Only three years later, Jupiter Mining, Ltd., was created, and their first small base constructed on the large moon. Although the tidal forces at work on the moon are tremendous, there are a few select spots that suffer from little if any of the volcanic activity and earthquakes. The company soon expanded as volunteers flocked to head off into the unknown. By 2025, 500 miners and their families were set up in Io Base 1, working and providing thousands of tons of rare ores to be shipped back to Earth – at a huge profit.

The company doctors first noticed a high rate of odd mutations in miners' children in 2043. There was an uproar as JM's scientists revealed that they had been aware of an unknown type of radiation that seemed to emanate from Io's core. It was so powerful that it penetrated the company's best radiation suits. People living in the heavily-walled complex were safe, but there was no way to protect the miners out in the shafts. As far as research has shown, the radiation causes no immediate health effects. The effects seem limited to massive, and often bizarre, mutations in the children of irradiated miners. (Of course, the rebel leader claims that the company *itself* is somehow irradiating the miners in an attempt to breed superhumans. See p. 12.)

After a brief-but-furious controversy, the company offered to settle with the affected families – granting a hefty sum and passage back to Earth for any who wanted to leave. Fortunately for the company, most of the mutations were useful and *powerful*; only a few of the families took the offer.

The company had a small security force that was kept busy with petty theft, bar brawls and the occasional stir-crazy miner flying off the handle. When the meta-powers surfaced, the security force offered to train the new "supers" and give them jobs (hoping to relocate them in more-volatile areas of the business later). Of course, with the appearance of the raveners in 2066, it turned out the the company needed the recruited metahumans on Io . . . and needed them desperately.

Now that rebels threaten the security of the complex, the company is in dire straits. If the PCs don't succeed in their mission, the raveners attacks will completely decimate the security team and the miners may perish without anyone to guard them.

Komodo

Komodo resembles a four-armed reptilian biped with a thick tail and knobby skin. He is an electronics genius and can shape metal with his three-fingered hands. He is the one primarily responsible for the rebels' defenses, which have so far kept the security force at bay. He has no obvious combat skills, but carries a Gauss rifle with him most of the time.

Spitfire

Spitfire is an embarrassment to the company, and one of the reasons it is working so hard to bring Amazon down. Her real name is Janis Martin, the daughter of Dr. Kenneth Martin – the company president. She has denounced her lineage and firmly follows Amazon.

Spitfire can fly and has a good command of fire; she can throw it in destructive blasts, and she can create huge, very hot walls of fire.

Red Mantis

Red Mantis is a wall-walking super who can leap incredible distances and shoot lasers from his eyes. He was the company security force's commander until about a year ago when he mysteriously resigned. He disappeared until recently, when he was seen with Amazon's group. He has a lot of information available to him about the company, its security force and its major operatives (including the PCs). He may recognize any high-level operatives attempting to infiltrate the rebels.

Gargoyle

Gargoyle is a member of the alien race that the miners have named raveners (see sidebar, p. 15). As far as is known, the raveners don't speak, but communicate mentally, and they seem to have some sort of intricate hive society. No one from the company has been able to study them closely.

Gargoyle is a typical raveners in the sense that he's about 12 feet tall, weighs close to four tons and is as strong as eight average men. He has the raveners' natural claws on his hands and feet, and his skin is as thick and tough as 4" of steel, though it is as flexible as leather. He seems to do what Amazon wants and ignores everyone else.

The Abandoned Complex

Captain Craig provides the party with a map of the abandoned complex (see p. 17). Unfortunately, the map is crude and not completely reliable. It was drawn from memory by one of the security guards who worked at the old compound. Apparently Amazon or one of her agents has gone in to the company computer and erased all blueprints of the abandoned complex. And it is known that the rebels have changed things – closed off some passages and/or constructed new ones.

The GM should make a hand drawing of the map on p. 17, creating whatever inconsistencies he wants. The blocked-off corridors should *not* be on the map, however. The map should be labeled loosely, but should be mostly accurate. Nevertheless, some well-placed mistakes can cause interesting problems for the operatives.

The complex consists of housing units for 1,000 families, a central security compound with sophisticated electronic surveillance equipment, a four-story business office, recreation areas, a medical bay and several mines, some of which lead into and through raveners territory.

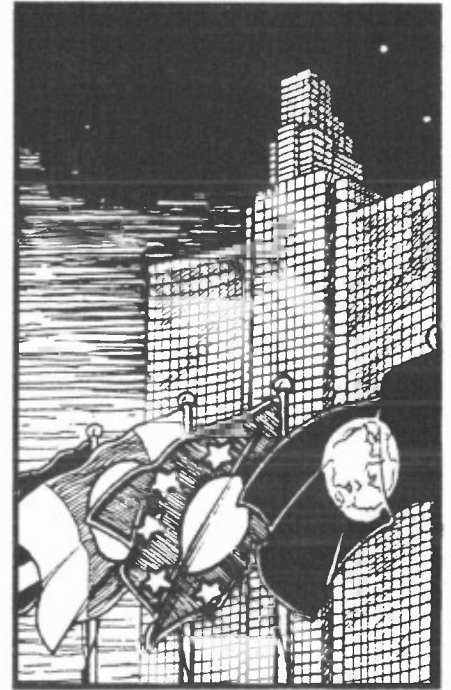
Housing Units

These are apartment units that consist of a kitchen area, a living area, a bathroom and one or two bedrooms. Each will house a family of up to four comfortably, and there are 40 bigger ones that were designed for larger families and company administrators. Since there are only 400 or so miner families living in the units, most of them are vacant. Only the occupied ones are supplied with water and power.

Central Security Compound

This area is in the exact center of the complex. It has screens that monitor all areas of the old complex, except for the insides of the housing units and the deeper levels of the mines. As far as the company knows, all the security devices have been brought on line. This includes motion detectors in the corridor leading to the security complex itself as well as the business offices (see sidebar, p. 22).

The party should note that the large central security room has a domed super plexiglass roof that will withstand only a moderate amount of damage before cracking and flooding the room with Io's toxic atmosphere. Energy battles in that room will be very risky for anyone without rebreathers.



Companies' Legal Jurisdiction in Space

Given the complexities of having Earth governments oversee legal disputes on space-based corporate operations, the governments of Earth have chosen a *laissez-faire* attitude toward companies' jurisdiction in space. In essence, companies provide their space operations with security forces, judges and legal codes that are only loosely monitored. If someone reports a serious violation of ethics (guards indiscriminately executing workers, etc.), an overseeing department of the government can investigate and levy fines if they discover infractions. This seldom occurs, however; most companies realize that the more equitable their legal system is, the more likely they are to attract employees and retain their current population.

What this boils down to is that in space, private companies run their own shows. All workers are required to file an affidavit, swearing that they accept and understand the company's legal policies, before they can move to a space-based operation.

Amazon's Claims

Amazon's entire rebel movement is based on her claim that the company has been intentionally irradiating the miners for 40 years. Jupiter Mining is doing this, she says, to breed a race of superhumans with which to populate their expanding security force, and eventually to build a mutant army to take over the Earth. Her impassioned speeches and knack for quoting suspicious-sounding facts have earned her a following of a little over 400 people.

Continued on next page . . .



Business Office

This building is the only above-ground section of the compound. It is four stories high and contains abandoned offices. Its sub-level contains the power generators for the whole compound (drawing from plentiful geothermal energy trapped in the moon's powerful core). It is likely that the generators are heavily guarded.

The only other section of this building being used is the first floor which houses the powerful mainframe computer. All data had been erased, but the computer itself can be a powerful analytical tool, especially in the hands of a programming genius like Komodo.

Recreation Areas

These areas include a pair of dining halls, two kitchens and two night clubs. It is not known how much of these areas are operational, though it is assumed that the rebels have at least one kitchen working. There is also a section of classrooms and a large training gym that was originally used to allow the metahumans to practice with their super-powers.

Medical Bay

It is almost certain that the rebels have restored the medical bay to working order, in anticipation of possible violence and for routine injuries. It consists of four examination rooms, an emergency treatment area and a couple of offices.

The Mines

Most of the mines in this section have either played out or led into ravener territory and were thus blocked off and abandoned. The security cameras (as they were set before the company abandoned the compound) only cover the entrances to the mines, reaching back about 20 yards into the mines. There is no mining being done, so the mines are empty.

The rebels still fear the raveners. There have been two ravener attacks since the rebels moved into the complex, but Amazon and her elite have been able to contain them with minimal casualties. If the operatives get into the mines, there are no guarantees that they will be safe from the raveners.

Final Questions

Captain Craig will answer any other questions the PCs may have. Some of the most likely are answered below.

- ◆ The group may choose whatever equipment the company can spare, including weapons and armor. See p. 14 for a discussion of available equipment.
- ◆ Individual miners are not to be harmed if at all possible. The company considers them to be misled, and will be willing to drop charges provided they return to work. This has been their policy since the rebellion began.
- ◆ Damage to the old complex is acceptable, though not encouraged. After this mess is over, the company plans to remove any valuable items from the abandoned compound and then destroy it completely.
- ◆ Amazon is to be taken out by whatever means possible. She may be taken alive, but only if the group is positive that she will not escape. She is a very resourceful woman, and no one knows all of her abilities.

Getting Started

After the briefing, Captain Craig shakes their hands and wishes them good luck. They can have two days to collect their gear and prepare a suitable plan, but no longer. Craig is adamant about this. If the group delays, he will take them off

the mission and reluctantly send in another team (who will fail disastrously – then Craig will call the PCs back).

Research

The party may take the company line about Amazon's claims – that they are completely fabricated – and start the mission immediately. On the other hand, they may be skeptical and want to delve into the facts. If they approach Captain Craig about their desire to research her claims, he will discourage them vehemently. They don't have the time to head off on a wild goose chase. The longer they delay, the greater the chance that the rebels will get *really* violent. If they are interested, Craig will say, they can check into it *after* Amazon is taken care of. Even if her claims are true, she's still endangering innocent people.

However, if they decide to research her story on their own, they will meet no resistance . . . at first. Soon, company paranoia will appear to validate Amazon.

Company Records

As veterans of the company security force, the adventurers have access to most company records. The records are kept on optical disks, and a Computer Operation/TL8 skill roll is required to access them. The first area the group will probably look into is the scientific research done when the radiation was first discovered. The company scientists claimed that the radiation was a natural product of Io's vicious internal turmoil. However, there are some suspicious items of interest. A successful Research roll will reveal the following facts, starting with the first and progressing. There are lots of records, and most of them contain useless information; each roll represents two hours of digging.

◆ There wasn't much *actual* research done. Most of the conclusions are speculative, based on 50-year-old data from exploratory spacecraft launched from Earth and rad counters placed in the mines. The researchers claimed that trying to find the source of the radiation would involve unacceptable, life-threatening risks.



Amazon's Claims (Continued)

As the scenario is written, Amazon's claims are totally false. In fact, she has stolen certain company reports and arranged the "accidental" deaths of two of the company's researchers.

The agents should not, however, be able to deduce the truth about her claims through research – there just isn't enough evidence. On one hand, she might be exposing a deadly company secret; on the other hand, she might just be a deranged psycho who murdered her own son to gain power. This doubt should linger in the heroes' minds throughout the mission.

If the GM doesn't mind a little tweaking, he can even choose to make the claims true. Perhaps the company *is* trying to create a race of metahumans for the ultimate security force – and it's working! The reports that Amazon stole were faked and the scientists were killed by the company because they were about to go forward and blow the whole thing out of the water.

If the GM does make the claims true, he should reveal this *after* Amazon has been defeated, leaving the characters with a moral dilemma. Do they take up the cause of the woman they just defeated? Or do they keep quiet and try to live with their guilt, all the while being congratulated by the corrupt company hierarchy?

Switching Sides

Perhaps the agents' research will convince them that Amazon is telling the truth. They may decide to join the rebels. Needless to say, this creates quite a twist in the adventure. But the scenario is still salvageable.

The agents should be allowed to defect to the rebels without complication. They will be placed on one month's probation, during which time they have limited access (their quarters, the training gym and the mess hall), and they must report to the head guard once a day. A few days into the probation, one of the PCs overhears a suspicious conversation in a corridor between Amazon and Red Mantis. Apparently Amazon is planning some kind of mass extermination of the miners in the new complex, to take it over herself (see *Operation Spring Cleaning*, p. 24). What's more, she drops some *very* suspicious hints that she hasn't been telling the truth to her followers. This should put the defectors right back into the adventure, even giving them a little advantage.

If that still doesn't cause the defectors to switch back, the GM could have Amazon discover "evidence" that the characters are infiltrators. She *knows* that they were once high-ranking operatives for the company security force. She will get very angry and throw them out of the compound. They now are in a bit of a quandary. They can't go back to the new complex (unless they never *said* they were defecting), and they can't get into the rebel complex. They might be forced to venture through ravener territory and sneak back to the rebel complex . . .

◆ The scientific reports are numbered sequentially. And according to the progression, three reports are missing. When questioned, the records clerk claims that that sometimes happened with records that old. They're probably just reports that were amended and the older versions erased. The PCs will not be able to confirm this, however, and hardcopy backups of the records are only kept for ten years.

◆ Two of the leaders of the research died five years ago in a mysterious lab fire that also destroyed their notes and any record of what they were working on at the time. Several disks full of research were never found.

Six hours after the researchers begin, the computer will suddenly freeze up. The records clerk will smile sheepishly and apologize, claiming that they've been having some trouble with system crashes lately. If they can come back after the weekend, the system should be back on line (of course, the group has to start their mission before then). The research should be a sideline of the adventure. If the players spend too much time and energy trying to solve the mystery of Amazon's claims, the GM should gently prod them into beginning their mission.

Gearing Up

Being members of a powerful company's security force has its advantages. The party can choose from a large selection of personal equipment. Basically, the group can outfit themselves with anything from the list of modern equipment on p. B213 (except things that are obviously inappropriate, like alcohol, bicycles, prop-driven planes, etc.). Additionally, they can choose any TL7-8 armor and TL8 weapons (the company doesn't have any TL7 weapons, except handguns; see pp. B208-210). The company also has vacc suits, rebreathers and other items that would be needed for someone caught unprotected on the surface of Io.

If the players ask whether the company has a piece of equipment not mentioned above, the GM should decide whether it would be likely that a large mining company in space would have such an item, as well as whether the adventure would be unbalanced by providing the party with the equipment. For example, it's

likely that the company would have infrared binoculars or plastic explosives, and so the GM should allow the group to take some (and, incidentally, allow their *enemies* to have them as well). However, it's extremely unlikely that the company would stock tear gas, flamethrowers or LAWs, which might shift the balance of the adventure too much in the party's favor.

Everything But the Kitchen Sink

Given virtually unlimited access to equipment, the party may be tempted to grab everything they can get their hands on. The GM should be careful to assess Encumbrance penalties and levy appropriate penalties to skills like Stealth that require subtlety and quiet.



Decisions, Decisions

After researching and gearing up, the party must eventually reach a decision about how to accomplish the mission. If the research convinced the PCs that Amazon is telling the truth, they may want to join the rebels in their crusade. In that case, see the sidebar on p. 14 about joining the rebels.

Infiltration

The group may want to infiltrate the rebels, pretending to be defectors from the security squad. The PCs will be picked up at the gate to the complex by five rebel guards and asked to hand over all weapons and any surveillance or espionage equipment. The GM can construct 200-point NPCs to play the guards or use the template in the sidebar, p. 20 – no match for the PCs, but their goal is not to fight them. Besides, the security cameras and motion detectors would report any disturbance, in which case 20 more equivalent guards will appear within 5 minutes.

Otherwise, the guards will escort them to a small guard room near the gate (room 1 on the map on p. 17), and question them about their background. Amazon is somewhat paranoid about being infiltrated and will have any metahumans who want to join her cause checked out thoroughly.

The PCs' background will not immediately be cause for suspicion; several metahumans are part of the rebel force, and almost all of them are former members of the security department. (The guards who pick up the party might even be former acquaintances – though none were as high-level as the PCs.) Also, the company will back up the group's story. Reports of the PCs' defection will circulate on company news broadcasts, and falsified charges will be filed with the security division and logged in the company database.

After the guards have checked out their story (about one hour), Amazon will question them via video monitor. On the screen, the adventurers can see her in a dimly-lit room with an ominous, dark shadow filling the background . . . and moving subtly, like some huge creature. The PCs can't see for certain what it is, but chances are, they will assume it's Gargoyle.

Amazon will ask whoever is in charge to repeat his story to her and ask probing questions (for example, "Why didn't your family come with you?"). She will use her Detect Lies skill (at 17) to try to catch the PC in a falsehood. The GM should roll a Quick Contest of skills between the leader's Acting or Fast-Talk skill and Amazon's Detect Lies skill; she's at a -3 because she is watching and listening over a video monitor. If the agent wins, the group will be allowed to join the rebels, put on a one-month probation period during which they have very limited access to the grounds, and must report to the head guard once a day. (This shouldn't come into play too much – the party is supposed to use the utmost haste in accomplishing the mission.)

If Amazon wins, however, she will tell her guards to escort the operatives to the edge of the compound, without any equipment, forcing them to choose another method of accomplishing the mission.

Storming the Compound

Another option is for the PCs to power their way in to the rebel complex. This is only appropriate for a large group with lots of firepower. Even so, the rebels' defenses, coupled with Amazon's elite, will make it nearly impossible to mount a direct assault.

The rebel guard is made up of 30 200-point metahumans with varying powers. The GM should use the template in the sidebar (p. 20) to base the guards on. Keep in mind, though, that they will all have widely-ranging attributes and abilities. If



Raveners

The raveners race is a hive society, with one queen and many drones. The only caste the PCs will encounter are drones, described here. The queen is so different that she uses a completely different racial template; see *The Queen*, below.

Ravener drones range from 10-15" tall, and weigh from 6,500-8,500 lbs. Their skin is gray and has the toughness of 4" of steel, but the flexibility of leather. Their average lifespan is 1,000-1,200 Earth years.

Note: This race is constructed using the rules from *GURPS Aliens*. However, since this is a *Supers* adventure, and many GMs may not have *Aliens*, point costs and racial abilities have been taken from *GURPS Supers* whenever possible. This is done to maintain as much balance as possible with the PCs in this scenario.

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Raveners (Continued)

Advantages and Disadvantages

Raveners have ST+50 (190 points), DX+3 (30 points) and HT+5 (60 points). They have 20 Extra Hit Points (100 points), 20 points of Damage Resistance (60 points) and Temperature Tolerance (10 points). They also have the advantages Doesn't Sleep (20 points), Dark Vision (25 points) and Talons (swing/cutting and thrust/impaling damage; 40 points). They also have the racial skill Telesend, level 5, at IQ (19 points) and Prospecting at IQ-1 (1 point).

Raveners have the racial disadvantages Slave Mentality (see below; -40 points), Mute (-25 points), Illiteracy (-10 points) and Odious Racial Habit (Eats sentients; -15 points). Racial cost to be a raven is 465 points.

Society

Ravener society is based on a typical hive pattern. One queen (described below) controls about 500 drones. The drones *are* intelligent, however. They can follow complex commands, and are capable of independently arriving at the best solution to a given problem. They cannot, however, disobey the queen's orders.

The communication is psionic, through the queen's ultra-powerful Telesend and Telereceive skills. As long as the drones are in range, the queen receives their sensory input – sight, sound, smell and touch – and directs them to do her will. To direct them, the queen sends a mental image – not a command, exactly, but more of a picture of what the queen wants the drone to do. Once the image has been received, the ravener has no choice but to obey.

If the drones leave the range of the queen, they will continue their last task until it is completed and then attempt to reestablish contact by coming back into range. If they receive mental signals while out of the queen's range, they will *assume* that the signals come from a queen, and obey them. This is how Amazon managed to control the ravener she calls Gargoyle.

Continued on page 18 . . .

the guards see the party as a distinct threat, they will avoid conflict in the tightly-spaced mines, instead luring the group into the training gym (room 12 – see map, p. 17) or as a last resort, the central security room (room 5).

If a battle ensues that seems to be going against the rebel guards, Amazon and her elite (see p. 9) will step in and join the fray. See *The Big Battle* on p. 26 for tips on how to play this out.

Any direct attack on the compound that fails will be cause for the execution of the attackers. Amazon will not hesitate to carry out this threat (unless the GM wants to have her imprison them and give them a chance to escape).

Sneaking In

What may prove most effective would be infiltration through stealth – sneaking in through one of the connecting outer mines (see p. 25) or across the surface of Io and into one of the launch pad entrances (see p. 24). Though this carries a high risk of discovery, it has the advantage of being unexpected and harder to defend against. The rebels' security devices do not extend more than 20 yards into the mines, and if the agents can figure out a way to either disable them (electronics jamming or cutting power; see p. 22) or avoid them (invisibility, disguise, etc.) they may be able to pass unnoticed into the complex itself.

Sneaking in from the surface is more difficult, given the harsh Ionian atmosphere and the high temperatures. The 4-mile overland trek requires that the group wear heavy vacc suits to guard against the poisonous atmosphere, unless they have super advantages that protect against these elements. The company has no idea of the extent of protection around the old compound's launch pads. They do know, however, that one team on a land rover was killed by an energy blast from the area of the launch pad, indicating that the rebels had lots of warning of an intrusion.

If they make it inside the compound, the party is on its own. If they are discovered, Amazon will attempt to kill them.

Of course, the players may come up with several strategies that differ from the ones above. The GM should weigh them carefully, and perhaps allow the PCs IQ or Strategy rolls to determine the plausibility of whatever plans the party comes up with.

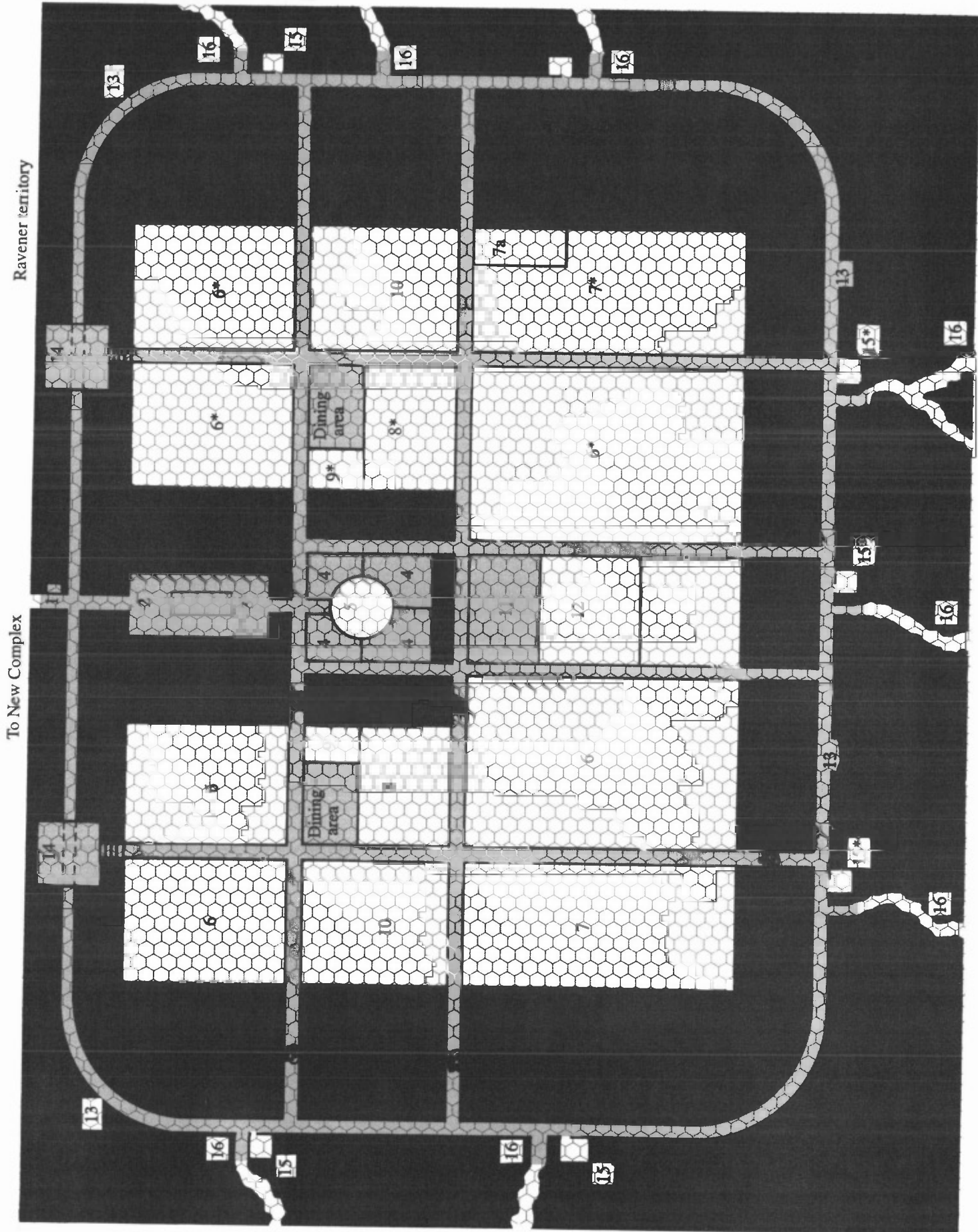
The Rebel Complex

On the following pages is a room-by-room description of the abandoned compound that has been taken over by the rebels. The security devices constantly monitor all entrances into the compound and secure areas like the computer room, the power generator, the security complex and the elite's quarters. Secure areas are shown as shaded areas on the map on p. 17.

1. Main Gate

The main gate sits at the end of a 3-mile-long corridor that connects the old and new complexes. The corridor has several blockages and small gates that the agents must cross, but that provide no real challenge. The main gate is a large steel door that completely blocks the corridor when closed (which it usually is). The door is DR 30, and has 300 hit points. Security cameras and motion detectors monitor the corridor leading up to the door for 20 yards. Anything out of the ordinary reported by the security devices will alert the rebel guards, who will open the door and send five guards in from the small guardhouse 5 yards down the corridor. The guards are 200-point metahumans built from the template given on p. 20. PCs will notice when the door opens that it makes very little sound.

Rebel Complex Map



Ravener (Continued)

Ravener are mineral-based creatures that eat the plentiful ores of Io's underground. In groups of three to five, they carve tunnels and search for ore to feed their queen. Whatever the queen refuses then goes to the drones. The only predator of the ravener is a type of indigenous rockworm (which has never been encountered by humans). Rockworms are about 6' long and cylindrical in shape. They swarm over ravener and use an acid to eat away at their stone-like bodies. When humans broke into ravener territory, the drones they encountered confused them with rockworms, and killed them viciously. Since there are no other life forms on Io, the queen regards anything that is not a ravener to be a rockworm, and ravener drones are pre-programmed to kill anything resembling a rockworm.

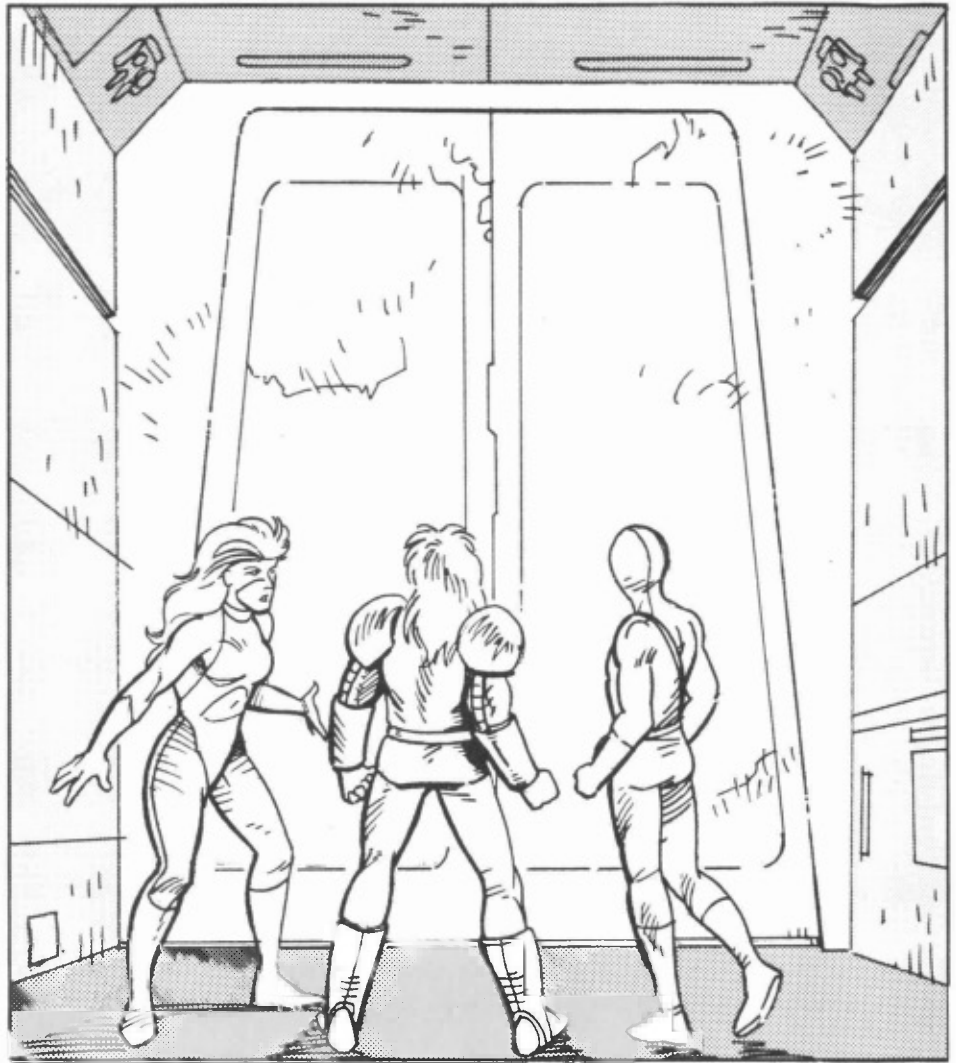
The Queen

The queen is totally different from the drones. No point total has been given since the queen does not figure prominently in the adventure, and would not make a good player-character.

The ravener queen has a type of Mind-share mentality. She constantly receives psychic communication from her drones. This power comes from her, not from the drones (though the drones do have a weak telepathy power, enabling them to give a warning "shout" when they need the queen's attention). She "feels" the drones as a type of sensory network around her and can process up to 50 separate drone inputs at one time.

The queen sometimes sends her drones outside of her psychic range to search for new minerals and send messages to other queens, so she does not notice immediately if one is missing. When she does notice, she assumes that it has been killed by rockworms or picked up by another queen and does not worry about it. The queen in turn can expect to pick up a few stray drones from other queens as they venture into her territory. Drones are not programmed to respond to any specific queen, but if two messages are sent to a drone from different queens, the conflict is resolved by a contest of Telesend skills (taking into account any range difference).

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If someone manages to approach the door unnoticed, the door can be opened from the outside by manipulating a ten-key code panel. If the keys are tampered with, the GM should roll 3d. On a natural 3, the PC managed to accidentally key in the correct password (characters with Luck should get three rolls). On anything else, the rebel guards are notified of tampering and come to investigate.

The panel can be opened without tripping any security devices with a successful Electronics Operation (Security Devices)/TL8 skill roll. An additional roll at -4 is required to rewire the connectors and cause the door to open. If either of these rolls fails, the guards are alerted to the party's presence.

Beyond the huge door, the corridor extends 20 yards to hit the Orbit Corridor (#13, p. 17). Five yards down the hall is a doorway on the left that opens into the small guard room.

Inside the guard room is a desk with four monitors tuned to the cameras monitoring the entrance, and one monitor that is used for communication with other areas of the complex. Two guards normally sit at this desk. The other three guards have a couch and two other chairs to sit on. There is a small stereo and several books to keep them occupied. There is a 2 in 6 chance that one of the guards will be sleeping on the couch, going up to 3 in 6 after 10 pm.

2. Business Offices

All doors into this building are double glass doors, unlocked. The ground floor is one large open room with cement support pillars every 20 yards. The room is divided into small offices separated by 6-foot-tall panels. In the center is the

computer room (see #3, below). There are elevator banks in the northeast and southwest corners, and stairwells in all four corners. The elevators have been turned off, but a successful Electronics Operations (Transportation)/TL8 roll will turn them on. This does not immediately alert the rebels that someone is in the elevators; roll 3d each hour after an elevator is turned on, at a cumulative -1 each time. On a 6 or less, someone in the central security room checks the power use log and notices the discrepancy. If this happens, 10 guards will be dispatched immediately to the offices, and the guards in the computer room and the basement will be notified.

Upper Floors

The upper three floors are filled with empty offices; there is nothing of any use to explorers. However, on the south side of the building, there are several offices with windows that overlook the domed security room. A successful Vision roll at -4 will allow someone to determine if Amazon or any of her elite are in the room. Binoculars add +5 to this roll. The upper floors are monitored by motion detectors, but they only operate on main power, not auxiliary power.

Basement and Power Generator

The basement is the same size as the ground floor. The room is the size of a football field and is dominated by three large power plants. There are three guards down here, and security cameras (but no motion detectors) monitor the whole room. Should any unauthorized person come down the stairwells, he will be noticed by the central room guards on a roll of 1 on 1d, rolled each 15 seconds. There are two steam tunnel entrances in this room (see sidebar, p. 23).

If the plants are turned off (requiring an Electronics Operation [Power Systems]/TL8 roll), power will go out in the whole complex for 30 seconds, after which time, the auxiliary plant will kick in. The auxiliary plant is located in the basement of the security complex. While the power is out, the complex is cast into complete darkness, except for the central security rooms and some of the offices on the south wall of the office building. Darkness penalties apply.

3. Computer Room

This room's walls, floor and ceiling are made of steel to protect the computer and the magnetic media in case of a fire in the office building. There are two rebel guards in here at all times, and there is a 1 in 6 chance that Komodo (see p. 31) will be here at any given time. Two security cameras monitor this room, alerting the central room to intruders on a 16 or less.

If the party manages to access the computer (after somehow dispatching the guards and avoiding the security cameras). A successful Computer Operations/TL8 roll will allow access to the rebels' data files, giving the following pertinent data:

- ◆ The rebel group has stockpiled a huge number of mining charges – enough explosives to blow up the entire complex.
- ◆ Most of the miners who have joined the cause have not been doing any mining since they joined, but almost all of them have logged extensive hours in the training gym, working on military operations.
- ◆ There is some type of large operation coming up in two weeks, code-named Spring Cleaning. There is no indication as to what this is, but it involves the explosives in some way.

What these cryptic bits of information refer to is Amazon's plan to move the rebels by force into the new complex (using her metahuman guards and newly-trained miners) and destroy the old complex with explosives that she has wired

Raveners (Continued)

If two queens are within psychic range, they will contact each other. The queen with the most drones will ask the other to move out of her range. If the other does not comply, the two will war, sending waves of drones to attack the opponent queen directly. The war continues until one queen retreats out of the other's psychic range or is dead. The queen nearest to the mining compound has never seen humans since their outpost is out of her psychic range.

Queens usually breed twice during their 1,000-year lifespans. The first time is about 5 years after birth, when the new queen reaches maturity. To maintain genetic diversity, the ready-to-breed queen broadcasts a very strong message – “I want to breed, now!” – that penetrates several nearby warrens, drawing drones away from those queens. The summoned drones then fight among themselves, and the queen breeds with the winner. This breeding produces between 300-500 drones. A queen will never breed with her own drones unless there are no outside alternatives. During the queen's “heat,” she is very irrational, sometimes killing and eating her own drones.

The second time a queen normally breeds is at the end of her lifespan – she dies in the process. The breeding process is the same as described above, except that it produces two to four juvenile queens and about 250 drones. The new queens compete psionically for the drones; the winner keeps the old territory. Sometimes the strongest loser will get away with a few drones and try to found a new colony.

There are currently about 5,000 queen-families throughout the Ionian underground.



throughout the steam tunnels. For more on Operation Spring Cleaning, see the sidebar on p. 24.

Rebel Guards

There are 30 metahuman guards in the rebel forces. It is hard to give a template because they all have varied ability and superpowers. The example given below is very generic.

If the GM wishes, he can make up 5-10 guards at around 200 points. Most likely, the PCs won't encounter more than this at any one time.

Guard Template

Male or female; Age 20-25; 5' 7"-6' 5", 150-300 lbs.

ST 10+2d, DX 10+1d, IQ 9+1d, HT 12/12+2d

Speed/Move: figured from stats

Dodge/Parry: figured from stats

Advantages: (pick any three) Absolute Direction, Acute Vision, Ambidexterity, Combat Reflexes, Danger Sense, High Pain Threshold, Immunity to Disease, Night Vision, Strong Will, Toughness.

Disadvantages: Sense of Duty (to the rebels), Duty (to Amazon), plus one of the following – Bad Temper, Berserk, Bloodlust, Bully, Fanaticism (Amazon's cause), Gigantism, Impulsiveness, Intolerance (non-rebels), Paranoia, Sadism.

Super Advantages: (pick any two), Absorption, Bouncing, Clinging, Damage Resistance, Dark Vision, Enhanced ST, Extra Hit Points, Flight, Hard to Kill, Increased Density, Radar Sense, Regeneration, Vacuum Support.

Super Disadvantages: (50% chance of having one of the following) Dependency, Vulnerability (GM's choice), Weakness.

Super-Powers: Most of the powers in the power list starting on p. SU55 are acceptable; pick one combat-oriented power at level 5+1d and one non-combat power at 8+1d.

Skills: Two random (but appropriate) skills, plus Area Knowledge (rebel complex)-IQ+1, Area Knowledge (new complex)-IQ, Broadsword (baton)-DX, Computer Operation/TL8-IQ, Electronics Operation/TL8 (security systems)-IQ+1, Fast-Draw (pistol)-DX, First Aid-IQ-1, Guns (laser rifle)-DX+1, Guns (pistol)-DX+1, Interrogation-IQ-1, Vacc Suit/TL8-IQ.

All of the rebel guards are loyal to Amazon and her cause. They are treated well and the barracks are well-kept and comfortable. If confronted by an intruder, they will try to reach an alarm button (placed at several locations around the complex, never more than 100 yards away). After the intruder alarm has been set off, they will attack the intruder. Guards who hear the alarm will try to get to the scene of the disturbance as soon as possible.

4. Guards' Barracks and Armory

The only entrance to these areas is through the central security room. These four sections house the rebels' 30 metahuman guards as well as 10 miners who have been trained as guards (see sidebar, p. 21). Each room sleeps 10 guards, and 3 will be in each room, asleep, at all times. These quarters are not monitored by security devices. 20 Gauss needler rifles, 10 laser rifles, 5 military laser rifles, and 10 Beretta 9mm pistols can be found in the armory, located in the northeast corner of the security area.

5. Central Security Room

This 20-yard by 20-yard room is the core of the complex. The walls are lined with monitors, computers and control panels. Every camera and motion detector is wired to here, and there is a monitor on at all times for each secure area in the compound (see map on p. 17; secure areas are shaded).

The ceiling to this room is 30 feet from the floor and covered with a clear plexiglass dome that shows the starry sky, usually dominated by Jupiter. In the exact center of the room is a huge modern sculpture consisting of huge blocks of metal set in an odd cubist pattern, almost resembling something organic, but not



quite. Though it is out of date, anyone with any level of Artist skill will recognize it as well-made and powerful.

There are ten guards and at least two members of Amazon's elite here at all times, sometimes more. Gargoyle is almost always here, because he doesn't sleep. If he isn't here, he will be patrolling the Orbit Corridor. If Komodo isn't here, there is a 50% chance that he's in the computer room (#3, above). Otherwise, he's in his quarters. All others not present will be in their quarters. To figure out who is present at any given time roll 2d:

- 2 Gargoyle, Spitfire
- 3 Spitfire, Red Mantis
- 4 Red Mantis, Gargoyle
- 5 Spitfire, Amazon
- 6 Amazon, Gargoyle, Red Mantis
- 7 Spitfire, Gargoyle, Komodo
- 8 Amazon, Komodo
- 9 Amazon, Gargoyle
- 10 Spitfire, Gargoyle, Red Mantis
- 11 Amazon, Gargoyle, Spitfire, Red Mantis
- 12 All five

If any unauthorized person enters, any of the elite who are present will attack immediately while one of the ten guards in the room sets off an alarm, alerting everyone in the complex. The remaining elite will come from their quarters in 30 seconds. If there is a battle taking place, the guards will attack the intruders with two laser rifles, four Gauss needle rifles, and four Beretta 9mm pistols (or super powers, at the GM's discretion). As long as the battle lasts, two new guards will arrive every ten seconds.

The plexiglass dome is 2 feet thick and reinforced with steel mesh. It has DR 20 and 500 Hit Points. Any ranged attack shot at an angle of 45° or greater (for example, at someone standing on the sculpture) will hit the dome if it misses its target (except lasers which just pass through the dome). Any energy attack (except lasers) with the Ricochet enhancement with a max damage greater than 20 will not bounce off the dome, but will hit the dome and stop (if the damage roll is less than 20, the dome's DR still stops it).

Auxiliary Power Generator

In the north part of the security room, there is a section of the floor that can be pulled up (combined ST of 20 or greater), revealing a spiral staircase heading into darkness. Below the security room is a room of equal size holding the complex's auxiliary power generator. Should the main power be cut, the auxiliary generator will come on line in 30 seconds. The generator has enough fuel to run for 18 hours. There is one steam tunnel entrance in this room (see sidebar, p. 23).

An Electronics Operation (Power Systems)/TL8 roll will shut this generator down, plunging the complex into total darkness, and making all security systems useless (provided, of course, that the main power has also been cut). Life support is also lost; if power is not restored within 4 hours, the people in the complex will begin to asphyxiate (see p. B91).

6. Family Housing Units

There are 900 two-bedroom units in this complex. Each is 800 square feet and includes a small kitchen and one bathroom. On the map (p. 17), the sections marked with an asterisk (*) are currently in use by the rebels, and are the only ones with power and water; the rest are dark and lifeless.



Typical Rebel Miner

Male or Female; Age 20-45.
ST 11, DX 11, IQ 10, HT 11
Speed 5.5, Move 5
Dodge: 5
No Armor or Encumbrance

Advantages: Patron (Amazon) plus any two of the following: Absolute Direction, Acute Vision, Combat Reflexes, Common Sense, High Pain Threshold, Night Vision, Rapid Healing, Strong Will, Toughness.

Disadvantages: Sense of Duty (Amazon's cause) plus one of the following: Alcoholism, Bad Temper, Dependents, Fat, Fanaticism (replaces Sense of Duty), Gullibility, Impulsiveness, Overconfidence, Paranoia, Stubbornness.

Skills: Area Knowledge (Old Complex)-11, Area Knowledge (New Complex)-10, Computer Operation/TL8-10, Driving (Driller)-13, Freight Handling-13, Guns (Pistol)-12, Guns (Laser Rifle)-12, Professional Skill: Mining-14, Prospecting-12, Vacc Suit/TL8-11, plus others at the GM's discretion.

Equipment: Beretta 9mm, 2d+2 crushing.

Most of the rebel miners fall into two categories: first-generation miners who have parented mutated children, or second-generation miners who believe Amazon's claims and want the company to come clean. The miners are skilled at their profession and have recently been receiving intense training in gun use and marksmanship. Most of them realize that the takeover of the company will eventually turn violent.

Several of the miners have participated in excursions into the new complex, where they drop off pamphlets and spray-paint graffiti on the corridor walls. A few have been caught by the company's security force, but they have all been freed by Amazon and her elite. Most hold Amazon and her group in very high regard and would do nearly anything for them. They are all afraid of Gargoyle, and only Amazon's constant reassurance that he is completely under her control keeps them from fleeing back to the new complex.

Rebel Security Devices

The rebel force has two main types of security device: closed-circuit cameras and motion detectors. Since the PCs are operatives from the company security force, they have access to this information and should be allowed a chance to prepare.

Cameras

The cameras are remote-controlled closed-circuit cameras that send their signals to individual monitors in the central security room. Any monitor, however, can be tuned to any specific camera. The cameras are identified by section and number. For instance, the 50 cameras in the orbit corridor (see p. 24) are labeled OC-1 through OC-50.

If a camera lead is cut or the camera blocked or destroyed, the monitor for that camera goes blank. If that occurs, or anything out of the ordinary passes within range of the cameras, the guards in the security room will notice on a 1 on 1d, rolled every 15 seconds. Once they notice, they will dispatch five guards to that location immediately.

An electrical surge (like that generated by the Surge power; see p. SU64) can cause all the cameras in a whole section to short out. If this happens, the guards will immediately notice the problem, but will not be able to repair it for 2d hours.

Motion Detectors

There are a few sections of the complex that are guarded by motion detectors – mainly areas where there should not be any movement at any time, like the corridor leading up to the main gate and the mine entrances. These devices will set off an alarm if anything moving at a half-yard per second or faster is within their range. This includes the movement of a body part, hand-sized or larger.

A PC can deliberately try to move very slowly through the area monitored by the detectors. A successful DX-2 roll *every hex* must be made to do this. It takes a character 4 seconds to cross 1 yard moving at this speed.

The motion detectors can be surged with the same effects as the cameras above.



Not all of the units in the rebel sections are in use, however. If random doors are checked, on a 6 on 1d, the unit is empty.

If the party is pretending to be defectors (or really defected), each member will be assigned a unit.

7. Large Housing Units

There are 40 three- and four-bedroom units, 1,400 square feet each. Amazon's elite have each taken one of these units, all adjacent to each other (except Gargoyle who seems to have no need for comfort, or *sleep*). If party members are searching for one of the enemy's rooms, roll 1d for each door they check, subtracting 1 each time (1d on the first roll, 1d-1 on the second, etc.). On a 1, they have found one of the elite's quarters. Roll 2d to see whose room it is:

2-4	Komodo
5-7	Red Mantis
8-10	Spitfire
11-12	Amazon

Remember that all doors are locked, and security cameras monitor the corridors in this section (but not the insides of the rooms). To figure out if a certain villain is in his quarters, see the table on p. 21 under the description of the security room. All the elite except Gargoyle and Komodo who *aren't* in the security room will be in their quarters. Komodo (if not in the security room) will be in his quarters 50% of the time.

7a. Amazon's Room

The only one of the elite who has anything interesting in her room is Amazon. If a PC manages to avoid the security cameras and get into her quarters while she's in the security center, he may search her quarters.

Hers is one of the three-bedroom units and is decorated sumptuously. She obviously has a taste for art, as well-executed paintings adorn the walls. Behind

one of these paintings is a wall safe. The combination is some numerical combination of the letters in her son's name, and can be randomly guessed with a critical success on an IQ roll (only one roll is allowed for guessing, except for PCs with any of the Luck advantages). If a character *specifies* that he's trying something with the son's name, he should get a straight IQ roll to figure it out.

The door of the safe can be blasted off or cut through. It has DR 10 and 40 Hit Points. Any loud explosion will be heard by villains in adjacent rooms. Inside the safe is \$50,000 in cash, a photo album with pictures of Amazon and her son, and an optical computer disk. Amazon has a computer equipped with an optical disk drive, and a Computer Operation/TL8 roll will allow someone to read the contents of the disk.

If the agents researched Amazon's claims (see p. 13), they will notice immediately that the disk contains the missing reports about the radiation. Also on the disk are complete dossiers on the two scientists who mysteriously died. Examining the reports will show conclusively that the radiation is a natural product of the moon's turbulent core.

If the group did not do any research, they will only see that Amazon seems to have stolen some official reports concerning the radiation, an action which alone casts considerable doubt on her credibility. There is nothing else of interest in Amazon's quarters.

The disk also contains Amazon's scientific notes on communicating with raveners as well as observations about their social structure, goals and physiology. After reading this information, anyone in the party with the Telesend skill can try to send an image to Gargoyle. Success means Gargoyle will follow the perceived suggestion to the best of his ability. A failure means nothing. Critical failure means Gargoyle misunderstood the image and does the exact opposite. See p. 16 for more on raven communication.

8. Recreation Areas and Mess Hall

Each of these two sections consists of one large dining area (seats 500), a night club, an arcade, a clothing store and a grocery/general goods store. All the stores and bars are closed down and empty and only one of the mess halls is used by the rebels (marked on the map with an asterisk [*]; see p. 17). The other has no power or water.

There are no on-duty guards in the dining room, but during meal times, there will be 150-200 miners present, as well as 5-10 guards eating. Other times during the day, 20-30 miners will be in here, drinking coffee and talking, 5-10 at night. This area is monitored by security cameras.

9. Kitchens

There are two kitchens adjacent to the dining areas. Only one is in use by the rebels (marked with an asterisk [*] on the map; see p. 17). The rebels' kitchen is piled high with boxes of canned vegetables, soy products and dehydrated meat. The large walk-in freezer is also crammed full of meat. During meal times, there will be five cooks in here. At other times, it will have one cook on a roll of 1 on 1d. Otherwise, the kitchen will be empty.

In the northeast corner of each kitchen, in the floor, is an entrance to the steam tunnels (see sidebar, p. 23).

10. School and Atrium

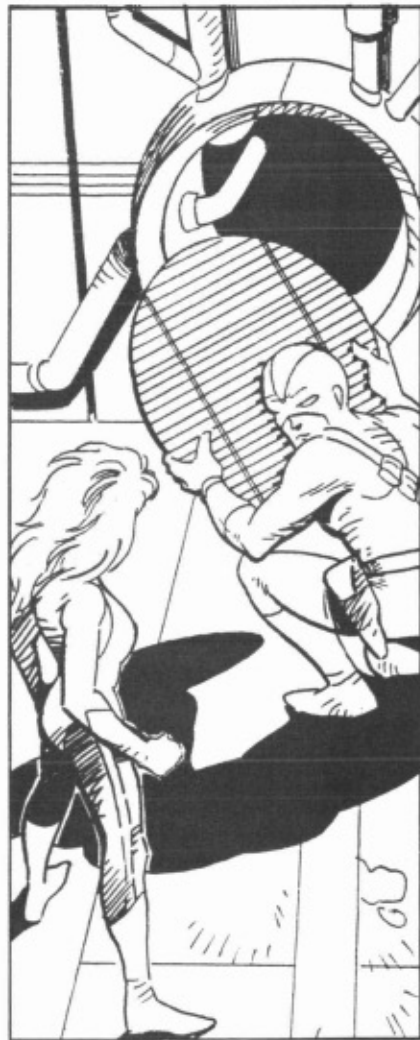
These areas consist of several empty classrooms and administration offices. There is nothing of value or interest here.

Steam Tunnels

Beneath the mining complex is a network of tunnels used as ventilation, heating and air purification shafts, as well as conduits for plumbing and electrical wiring. The tunnels leading from the rooms are 5' × 5'. There are more, smaller shafts 2' × 1', which can only be used by very small individuals. These lead off from the larger tunnels and penetrate every area of the compound, so no detailed description is given.

Each room with a large "steam tunnel" has that fact designated in the room description. See also the diagram on the next page, showing the main juncture with the tunnels leading to the individual areas. The steam tunnels are not monitored by any security devices (though the areas that they lead to might be).

Throughout all of the tunnels are loose strands of wire connecting small black boxes, each with a tiny blinking red light. A close examination by anyone with Demolition skill will reveal them to be powerful mining explosives. A successful roll at Demolition-1 will tell the agent that there are enough explosives to destroy the entire rebel complex.



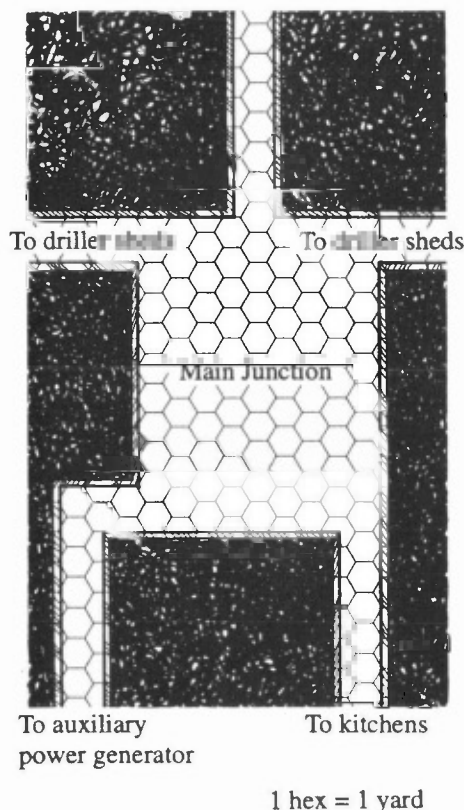
Operation Spring Cleaning

Operation Spring Cleaning is the code-name Amazon has given to her plan to take over the new mining complex and destroy the old. Throughout her tenure as special operations lieutenant, she embezzled several hundred explosive mining charges and hid them in old, unused mines. When the rebels took over the abandoned complex, she set them up in the steam tunnels, ready to detonate them with a remote control device that she keeps with her at all times. She also has plans to detonate the explosives if she seems to be on the verge of becoming captured or killed. She will teleport away to her waiting shuttle and detonate the bombs after takeoff.

She plans to use her super-elite, her metahuman guard force and the other 350 miners to stage a coup in the new complex. She'll head first for the administration building and try to kill the heads of the company. She will not hesitate, however, to kill miners and other workers if they try to keep her from her goal. If Amazon is not taken out (either the agents delay too long or fail disastrously) this will happen two weeks after the agents' briefing, and the agents will be caught up in a new, totally different adventure.

The Steam Tunnels

From business office basement



11. Medical Bay

Four examination rooms, an emergency treatment area and two offices make up the old complex's medical bay. There are no security cameras in this area, but a security guard patrols the area every 15 minutes. If the adventurers search the area, they can find debilitating drugs like chloroform on a successful IQ-5 or Physician+2 roll. The drugs are kept in a locked cabinet in the emergency treatment area. There is always one doctor here at all times, and a patient on a 1 on 1d.

12. Training Gym

This is the area of the old complex that was originally used by the first mutated metahumans to hone their undeveloped powers. Currently, the rebels are using it as a practice area for their superhuman guards and a training area for the rebel miners who want to fight for a better company.

The gym area consists of two rectangular rooms filled with various training devices – weight machines, target alleys, practice dummies, etc. The gym to the south (see map, p. 17) has super-reinforced walls to withstand repeated blasts of energy. The walls have DR 150 and 1,000 hit points.

Because of the large open area and the relatively minimal amount of possible damage, this is one area that the rebels, if forced into a fight, would try to lead their opponents.

13. Orbit Corridor

This 10-yard-wide hallway completely encircles the complex and is the starting point for all the mines. The corridor is well-lit by fluorescent lights on the ceiling and is monitored by security cameras at all times. Only guards and Amazon's elite are allowed in the corridor without permission, and the central security room knows which guards are supposed to be on patrol there. If Gargoyle is not in the security room (see p. 20), he will be patrolling this area. Agents who have managed to outwit the cameras could run into Gargoyle on a 1 on 1d.

If Gargoyle is encountered, he will attack the PCs immediately. He will also send a telepathic message to Amazon to alert her of the intrusion. Roll against Gargoyle's Telesend skill of 10. If successful, the alert gets through. On a regular failure, Amazon was not notified, and suspects nothing. On a critical failure, however, the message was *too loud*. Amazon will be stunned for 2d minutes! Others around her will notice something is wrong, but she won't be able to communicate what it is.

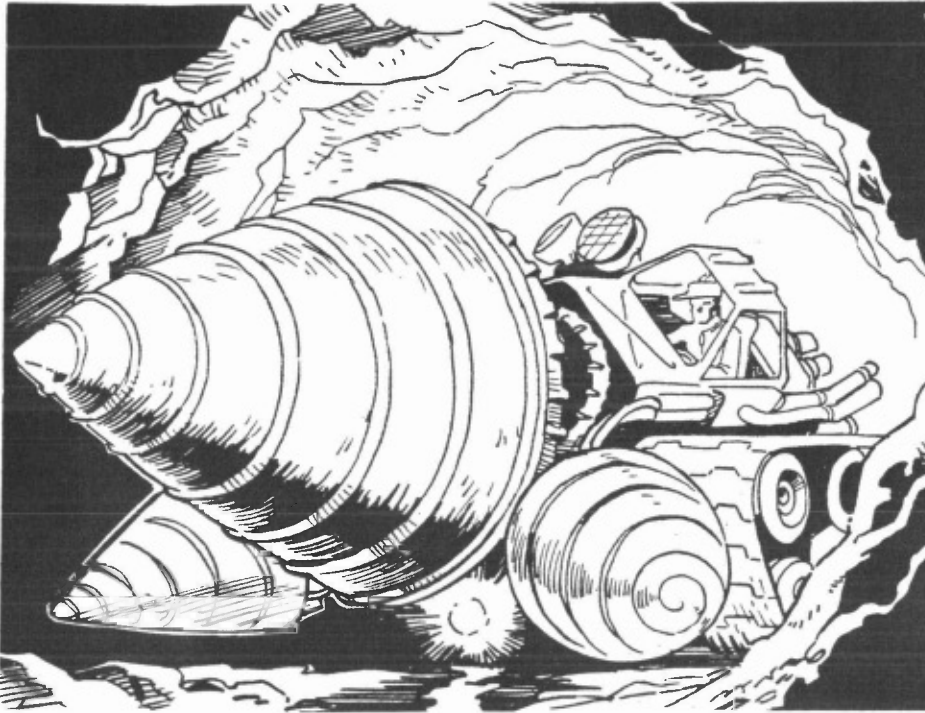
14. Launch/Landing Pads

The abandoned complex has two shuttle launch and landing pads that were used to service the various supply and shipping shuttles that accommodated the mining operation. The eastern pad holds the supply shuttle that Amazon's crew hijacked. Most of the supplies have been removed to the rebels' kitchen (#9, above), but enough remains to feed one person for four years. The launch pads are open to Io's poisonous atmosphere, and anyone who requires oxygen to breathe must wear a rebreather or pressure suit. Both pads and the surrounding half-mile area are monitored by security cameras and motion detectors. Any activity at all sets off an alarm in the central security room.

The shuttle is not locked. Inside are the food supplies mentioned above, plus a small selection of female clothing. There is one cryonic freeze tube that is prepared for occupation, but on standby. All in all it looks like an escape shuttle (which it is; see p. 27).

15. Driller Sheds

These 10-yard-square rooms housed the company's mining drillers and other mining equipment (including explosives). When the company moved to the new compound, they took most of the equipment with them, leaving only three broken drillers. The rebels have since repaired the drillers and have used them to extend certain mines. The three machines are stored in the sheds marked with asterisks (*) on the map on p. 17. Each of the storage rooms has an entrance to the steam tunnels (see sidebar, p. 23).



16. Mines

The mine shafts range from 5-10 yards wide. All the mines extending from the rebel complex have played out and are not in use. Most of the mines are dead-ends; they have no power and are in complete darkness. The two mines in the northeast corner of the complex extend into ravener territory . . . and mines from the new complex also reach into the same area. It is possible for a group to journey from the new complex mines – through ravener territory – to the outer mines of the rebel complex. This is a 6-mile journey.

If the PCs attempt this, the GM should roll 2d every ten minutes. In the first mile of the journey, a group of 1-3 raveners will attack on a roll of 2 or 3 (use Gargoyle's stats, p. 30). In the second mile, the chance of attack rises to 2-5 on 2d. In the third to fourth mile, a 2-8 on 2d (every ten minutes!) will bring an attack. In the fifth mile, the chance drops back down to 2-5, and drops again down to 2 or 3 on 2d for the last mile. Any battle taking place in the last mile will alert the guards of the rebel complex, bringing ten guards immediately.

Raveners have the Dark Vision advantage, and the mines are not lit. The area of ravener territory that the PCs must journey through is a 500-foot long rough-hewn cavern. Whoever is leading the party must make an IQ roll when navigating the cavern. A failed roll means the PC takes a wrong turn and leads the group into the ravener home warrens, where the group will be attacked by 5-10 raveners. Absolute Direction adds 5 to this roll.

The Villains' Tactics

Amazon's elite has been functioning as a group (with the exception of Gargoyle) for nearly a year. Though they have never fought together in a real battle, they have spent quite a bit of time planning and organizing their tactics. Their individual powers and abilities will be used to their maximum potential.

First and foremost, the villains will try to lure their foes into a large open area, like the training gym, the business offices or the security room. They prefer a room with a high ceiling, which both the gym and the security room have.

Their first move in the event of a confrontation is for Spitfire to generate a wall of fire. The wall will be 10 yards wide by 6 yards high. This is designed to hold the attackers at bay for 1 or 2 seconds while Amazon and her group spread out, with Gargoyle in the center, Amazon and Red Mantis back about 5 yards and on either side, and Spitfire flying above them about 10 feet. Komodo will stay as far back as possible, close to an exit, and aim his Gauss rifle at the first foe to step through, over or around the flames.

Amazon and Red Mantis will shoot their individual energy attacks at anyone who passes around or through the wall of fire, hoping to knock him back and get another shot, while Spitfire will concentrate on anyone coming over the top. Gargoyle will try to engage an enemy in close combat, ripping and stabbing with his deadly claws.

Both Spitfire and Red Mantis will avoid hand-to-hand combat, Red Mantis using his Super Jump to bound away and Spitfire flying off at super speed. Amazon will happily attack with her glaive. If she scores a successful hit with the weapon and gets through the enemy's armor, she will leave it in the wound. On the next round, she will use her lightning power to send a blast of electricity into the open wound, bypassing any DR the opponent may have.

If the villains take out half or more of the attackers, Amazon will offer them a chance to surrender (see *As the Battle Turns*, p. 27). If the attackers seem to be winning, Komodo will be the first to flee. Spitfire and Red Mantis will try to escape next. If things go this badly, Amazon will teleport away (if she can; see p. 27). Gargoyle, however, will fight to the bitter end.

All mines leading into ravener territory have been walled off. The company will open a hole for the PCs to get through, but they must find some other way to get through the walled-off section coming into the rebel complex.

Adapting to Other Genres

Wild Cards: Disease Agents

Of course, the most obvious adaptation of this adventure is into George R.R. Martin's gritty world of the Wild Card virus. In this case, the adventure can remain almost exactly as it is, with one small adjustment. Instead of the mutations being caused by radiation, they are caused by an outbreak of the Takisian xenovirus. (How the virus got to Io is up to the GM – there are lots of possibilities.)

Amazon claims that it was no accident that there are aces and jokers filling up the security force. The company planned it that way; they released the virus on purpose. In this case, the GM should tone down the power levels of both the villains and the PCs.

Special Ops: Army Agitators

A group of renegade Army officers has taken over an abandoned base outside of Ft. Drummond in Texas. They have recruited at least 60 soldiers from the nearby base. They are refusing to negotiate and are threatening to set off a tactical nuke if they are attacked. The leader, Armand DeLaCroix, claims that the Army has been pumping the soldiers full of experimental drugs – steroids, hallucinogens, etc. – to turn them into killing machines. It's working, all right, but the soldiers are slowly going crazy, having waking nightmares and fighting among themselves.

The PCs are sent in to assassinate DeLaCroix and gather up whatever information he may know about these hypothetical drugs. All information gathered must, of course, be turned over to the commanding officer who will "put it where it belongs."

Psionics: Guinea Pigs

This is similar to the above scenario, except that the rebels are psionic mutants who have taken over an abandoned lab. They are the results of an experiment gone wrong and have developed powers far beyond what was expected.

The leader, Avery Jenkins, has reportedly shown evidence of being able to throw rocks through walls and fly . . . all powered by his mind! Can a group of young parapsychologists get into the lab and restrain the deranged man before he loses control completely?

Continued on next page . . .

The Big Battle

Provided the agents don't switch sides, they will eventually engage Amazon and her elite in some type of super-battle. If Amazon has had time to prepare for the battle, she will have her superhuman elite ready, with as many guards as she can summon to help. In this case, the party will be at a severe disadvantage.



Most likely, however, the group will try to catch Amazon alone or in a small group, hoping to defeat her quickly. Amazon has a remote alarm switch on her at all times; the alarm is one that all rebels recognize as indicating dangerous intruders are in the complex. She will set it off on her first free turn, taking one second. The switch also has a locator that can pinpoint her position anywhere in the compound. Five guards will arrive at the scene within ten seconds, with two more joining every ten seconds after. Depending on the location of the other elite, they will arrive as quickly as they can. Assume that it takes 1 second for every 5 yards of distance between them and Amazon (except for Gargoyle and Spitfire, who travel twice as fast). This takes into account reaction time and opening doors and turning corners. If there is a straight unobstructed passage to Amazon, use the appropriate super's Move score (see the *Characters* section). For example, if all the elite are 100 yards away – but not in a straight line – when Amazon is attacked, Spitfire and Gargoyle would arrive in 10 seconds, while Komodo and Red Mantis would take 20 seconds to get there.

Another possible start for the big battle is for the intruders to be caught snooping around the compound. The few guards who investigate will probably be short work for the agents, but soon the elite will show up. Depending on where they are discovered, the party should have a few seconds to prepare. Amazon and her group will prefer a large open space away from innocent miners, like the business offices or the training gym. The villains' alternate choice is the security room, though Amazon is wary of the surveillance equipment being damaged. Conversely, the PCs should head for an enclosed area, where Spitfire and Gargoyle will be at a disadvantage.

As the Battle Turns

If Amazon sees that the party is losing, she will offer them a chance to surrender. She will say that she'll let them live if they will participate in a recorded message, to be broadcast to the company miners in the new compound. She wants the PCs to explain during the recording how they have switched sides after listening to the reason of Amazon's claims.

Of course, she will try to convince them that she *is* telling the truth, explaining that there are missing reports and that some scientists have mysteriously died – obviously the company is trying to cover something up. She makes her standard speech to them about the mutation and mercy killing of her son. PCs who were unsure about her claims may switch sides at this point. No dice roll is necessary; this is completely up to the players . . . if they believe Amazon.

Any agents who refuse to participate in the taping are unceremoniously killed as an example to the rest. Of course, an operative may *pretend* to go along with her until he sees an opening to resume the battle. If this happens, Amazon will not offer mercy a second time.

Should Amazon sense that *her* side is losing (GM's decision), she will use her autoteleport ability to escape to the shuttle she has waiting on the landing pad (see p. 24). She can have the shuttle launched in 30 seconds, and will begin traveling toward the Earth at 200 mph, leaving her comrades behind. After 5 minutes, Amazon will detonate by remote control the explosives lining the steam tunnels of the abandoned complex (see p. 23). Anyone in the abandoned complex takes 20d crushing damage, and survivors are instantly exposed to Io's atmosphere.

Agents who have already been inside the shuttle can attempt to teleport there (those who have the ability), and continue the battle within. Characters with Hyperflight, or comparable abilities, can chase down the shuttle and try to stop Amazon. The GM should be prepared to deal with these situations as they arise.

Getting Out

After Amazon is killed or captured, the agents must still escape from the rebel complex. The rebel miners and guards will not be too happy to discover that their leader has been deposed. Any guard who discovers the PCs, or any member of Amazon's elite, will have set off the intruder alarm at the first sign of serious danger, and it will still be going off. An agent with the Electronics Operation/TL8 (Security Systems) skill can turn off the intruder alarm from the central security room with a successful roll. Otherwise the alarm will continue indefinitely.

After the alarm has sounded for ten minutes, miners in groups of 30 will begin to patrol the corridors in search of the intruders. If they encounter the party, they will attack with 9mm Berettas and mining pickaxes (10 guns and 20 pickaxes). Treat the pickaxes as picks, p. B206. The party should remember that they were instructed not to harm the miners, and should receive character point penalties if they do so indiscriminately.

Adapting to Other Genres (Continued)

Fantasy: *Monster Maker*

The ruins at Scathemore are alive once again. A group of townspeople have moved out there, claiming that it is no longer safe to live in the village. The wizard-king Vordaan, they say, is turning the townspeople into monsters. The leader of the dissidents is a Minotaur named Amoth who claims that he used to be a normal, friendly blacksmith until Vordaan cast his curse upon him. Vordaan says he is lying, trying to take the village for himself. He wants Amoth dead.

Can the PCs, as part of Vordaan's force of castle guards, deduce the truth of the situation? And can they infiltrate the ruins full of angry villagers, and defeat Amoth and his beastly companions, a manticore and a small dragon?



Character Points

Award the players 3 character points each for completing the mission successfully – that is, killing or capturing Amazon and returning the rebel miners to the new complex.

Additionally grant a bonus of 1 character point for exceptional roleplaying and for completing any of the following.

Convincing any of Amazon's elite to return.

Finding Amazon's notes on ravener communication and passing them on to the company.

Defusing or removing the explosives in the steam tunnels.

A character point penalty should be allotted if the PCs kill any of the rebel miners indiscriminately.



If the operatives have recovered the optical disk from Amazon's room, they can attempt to sway the miners by offering proof that Amazon was lying. The GM should roll a reaction roll at an initial -7 penalty, then add a bonus to the roll equal to whatever the speaker made his Bard or Fast-Talk skill roll by. If the reaction is Good or better, the miners will allow the group to demonstrate their proof.

For example, suppose the leader of the agents tries to convince a mob of angry miners and rolls a 10 on his Fast-Talk skill roll. His skill is 15, so he beat his skill by 5. The GM then rolls a reaction roll for the miners at -7 for the inherent hostility and +5 for the successful Fast Talk, which balances out to a -2 penalty. The GM rolls a 16 on 3d, which comes to 14 with the -2 penalty, indicating a Good reaction. The miners will grudgingly accompany the agents to the nearest computer to take a look at the evidence.

Given a chance to see the contents of Amazon's optical disk, the miners will join the PCs and help them reach the tunnel leading to the new complex, asking the agents if they can return with them.

Any of Amazon's elite who are still alive will try fervently to track down the party and kill them. Of them, only Spitfire and Komodo can be swayed by possible evidence against Amazon. Use the same mechanic as with the miners.

Finale

Provided the agents were successful in their mission, Captain Craig will debrief the agents. If they have recovered the optical disk from Amazon's room, the company's security force will begin an operation that will slowly, but eventually convince the rebels that Amazon was deranged and her claims were nonsense. All the surviving miners will eventually return home.

The company will also use Amazon's notes on ravener communication, and eventually contact the nearest queen (see p. 19). They will relate their peaceful intent and promise not to encroach any further on ravener territory. The queen promises that if this condition is met, there will be no further ravener attacks. The PCs are given medals of accomplishment and promoted within the security force.

If Amazon managed to escape in the shuttle, the company contacts Earth and warns them to watch for her arrival. With their sophisticated tracking systems, there should be no way for Amazon to approach the Earth undetected, unless she has someone working on the inside . . .

Further Adventures

Forgotten, But Not Gone

All is going well at the mining operation since Amazon was defeated. But all of a sudden, high-ranking officers in the company begin to die hideous deaths in their homes. All of them from deep slashing blade wounds with charred flesh around the edges . . . distinctive of Amazon's gruesome style.

Is someone trying to copy the villainess' technique to prove a point? Or did the agents not do as good a job removing the rebel leader as they thought?

Ravener Revenge

After two years of peace – no ravener attacks whatsoever – 20 miners are slaughtered by raveners. The company's resident psionic expert attempts to contact the ravener queen to find out what happened. Instead of responding, she sends a mental scream that is so strong that it fries his brain, killing him instantly. What has happened to erode the trust that the company and the raveners had developed? And what can the security team do about it? It may be time for a foray into the heart of ravener territory.

Characters

The following pages contain complete character descriptions for Amazon and her four elite companions. For a complete description of the racial advantages for Gargoyle, see the sidebar on p. 16. All technical skills listed are at TL8.



Amazon

Age: 27, 6' 1", 185 lbs., black skin, white hair, brown eyes.

ST: 30 (175 points) **IQ:** 15 (60 points) **Speed:** 7.25

DX: 17 (100 points) **HT:** 12/22 (20 points) **Move:** 7

Damage: Thrust 3d; Swing 5d+2; Fine glaive 6d+2 cutting

Dodge: 7 **Parry:** 10 (Glaive)

Point Total: 560

Advantages

Beautiful Appearance (15 points)

Charisma +5 (25 points)

Combat Reflexes (15 points)

High Pain Threshold (10 points)

Disadvantages

Enemy (Large Group, appearing on a 12 or less; -60 points)

Fanaticism (To her cause; -15 points)

Megalomania (-10 points)

Paranoid (-10 points)

Reputation (-3 to non-rebel miners, all the time; -5 points)

Psionics

Telepathy Power 5 (25 points)

Telesend-15 (4 points)

Telereceive-14 (2 points)

Mental Blow-14 (2 points)

Teleport Power 5 (25 points)

Autoteleport-16 (6 points)

Super Advantages

Extra Hit Points +10 (30 points)

Damage Resistance +2 (6 points)

Super-Powers

Lightning Bolt-20(6) (64 points)

Surge-12(5) (21 points)

Quirks

Likes to give speeches (-1 point)

Thinks of her son as a martyr (-1 point)

Smiles during combat (-1 point).

Skills

Acrobatics-14 (½ point), Acting-13 (½ point), Area Knowledge (New Complex)-15 (1 point), Area Knowledge (Old Complex)-16 (2 points), Beam Weapons-18 (½ point), Broadsword-15 (½ point), Computer Operation-15 (2 points), Computer Programming-13 (1 point), Detect Lies-17 (8 points), Diplomacy-13 (1 point), Electronics Operation (Security Systems)-15 (2 points), Fast-Talk-14 (1 point), First Aid-15 (1 point), Guns (Pistol)-18 (½ point), Hypnotism-13 (1 point), Leadership-15 (2 points), Mathematics-13 (1 point), Physics-13 (1 point), Piloting (Shuttle)-17 (2 points), Prospecting-13 (½ point), Psychology-14 (2 point), Research-14 (1 point), Savoir-Faire-15 (1



point), Sex Appeal-12 (2 points), Stealth-16 (1 point), Strategy-13 (1 point), Tactics-13 (1 point), Two-Handed Axe/Mace-20 (16 points), Vacc Suit-16 (4 points).

Story

Amazon was born Eva Ducheaux to loving parents. She was one of the first metahumans detected on Io; she was exceedingly strong and could emit very powerful bursts of electrical energy. During her childhood, she caused quite a bit of havoc around the home, shorting out the family computer and – during her adolescence – causing annoying, complex-wide blackouts.

She was never happy with her powers, regarding them as a curse rather than a blessing. Her odd appearance (stark white hair, and tall) caused her to never quite be accepted by the normal kids at school, so she took to spending most of her free time alone. It was during this lonely time that she developed her delusions of grandeur and began plotting against the company. It wasn't natural radiation that was causing the mutations, she decided, it was a deliberate plot by the company to make mutants like her. Someday, she thought, she would strike back at the company for ruining her life.

Like most of the metahumans, Eva joined the security force at age 18. Once she started using the company's training gym, she developed a new respect for her powers. Because of her size and physical prowess, she took the nickname "Amazon."

She knew that the key to overthrowing the company lay with two things: power and knowledge. She was already honing her powers, so she dove into study, learning all she could about computers, security systems and company administration. She also studied tactics and strategy, for she knew that ultimately, the struggle for the mining compound would be a violent one.

Amazon also decided that her reclusive nature would be a detriment to organizing any kind of resistance to the company's inhuman oppression (as she had grown to regard it). She began organizing social groups and working her way into the security force's leadership. After a short time, she was promoted to special operations lieutenant. It was then that she met her future husband, Mark.

Mark was just the kind of person who could sweep Amazon off her feet – strong but sensitive, passionate about his convictions, with a tiny-but-noticeable underlying resentment of his own metahuman mutation. Mark was born with two extra limbs, serpentine tentacles. He could also spit a nerve-numbing poison with deadly accuracy. After a passionate three-month courtship, the couple was married.

As special operations captain, Mark taught Amazon everything he knew about combat and covert operations. She became a whiz and soaked up everything he had to teach her. When the two sparred in the training gym, the complex shuddered with the force of their mock-combat. Their passion for each other was very deep.

Amazon became pregnant a year after their marriage, when she was 22. During the term, she became increasingly worried about the condition of the baby. Sonograms showed that the child was indeed mutated, but the doctors could not predict to what extent. When the child was born with six tentacles and a mollusk-like foot instead of legs, Amazon was outraged. She fell into a deep depression that lasted for months while Mark took care of the boy and named him Jonathan. During this time, she plotted more, finalizing her plans to bring down the company.

It was also during this period that the raveners were discov-

ered. Amazon decided that for her plan to be successful, she must learn to communicate with them. With raveners on her side, she knew she could not fail.

Three years of turbulent times went by. Mark could not forgive Amazon for abandoning him and their son, and Amazon could not make him understand her total resentment for the company. After three years, she decided that she had to tell him of her plans or she would lose him for sure. Maybe the brilliance of her ideas and the depth of her pain would let him see her side of things. Unfortunately, he took it as a sign that she had gone over the deep end. If he had actually taken her seriously, he might have reported her, but he just thought it was a fiction she had cooked up to get him to listen. They were divorced a month later.

Despite Mark's protest that Amazon was an unfit mother, the company awarded Amazon custody of her son. She immediately set to work trying to communicate with raveners. When she discovered that it was possible to make one follow psychic orders (see sidebar, p. 16), she set her plan in action.

She began setting up protests in the cafeterias and meeting halls, delivering fiery, passionate speeches. She also collected a small group of devoted metahuman followers: Komodo, who she met while researching at the company school; Spitfire, the company president's arrogant and impulsive daughter; and Red Mantis, the security force's leader.

After she had developed a small but devoted following, she killed her son Jonathan. She called it a mercy killing; the sickly boy was slowly dying anyway, and every day he had to spend in that deformed body was a living hell. A few of her followers backed out after this drastic action, but the ones who remained were even more fanatical – they believed that Amazon must be telling the truth or she would never kill her own son.

Mark vowed he would kill Amazon for the murder of their boy. He went after her and this time the battle was real and *deadly*. But Amazon proved to be his match and killed him instead. After this, she seemed to disappear.

She went underground, hiding out in sympathetic homes, and directing the rebel operations from there. When she had her elite metahumans recruited and had established control over Gargoyle, she moved the rebels into the abandoned complex and continued her plans to bring down the company.

Gargoyle

Age 680, 12' 1", 7,650 lbs., Ravener drone, no hair, glowing yellow eyes.

ST: 75 (200 points) **IQ:** 10 (0 points) **Speed:** 7.5
DX: 15 (60 points) **HT:** 15/35 (60 points) **Move:** 7
Damage: *Thrust* 8d+2; *Swing* 10d+2; *Claws* 8d+2 impaling, 10d+2 cutting.
Dodge: 7

Point Total: 550

Advantages

Ambidexterity (10 points)
High Pain Threshold (10 points)

Disadvantages

Illiteracy (-10 points)
Mute (-25 points)
Odious Racial Habit (Eats Sentients; -15 points)
Slave Mentality (-40 points)

Psionics

Telesend-10(5) (19 points)

Jupiter Blues





Racial and Super Advantages

Damage Resistance +20 (60 points)
 Dark Vision (25 points)
 Doesn't Sleep (10 points)
 Extra Hit Points +20 (100 points)
 Temperature Tolerance (10 points)
 Talons (40 points)

Skills

Brawling-19 (16 points), Climbing-16 (4 points), Jumping-15 (1 points), Prospecting-9 (1 point), Throwing-16 (8 points), Tracking-12 (6 points).

Story

Gargoyle was born 680 Earth years ago, part of a litter of 423 drones. He doesn't have a name because his race doesn't have any need for names. He is just a very complex body part that is psychically connected to the queen. He is a drone and nothing more. He has no more sense of self than a human arm does.

He was sent prospecting for ore by the queen and left her psychic range, wandering into the new mining compound. He encountered a small group of human guards and attacked them (part of his genetic programming). Suddenly, he received a mental image to stop. He did, assuming that it was his queen who sent the command. It was, in fact, Amazon who sent the order. The two other raveners in his group went on and killed the guards.

Gargoyle was then sent an image of him attacking the other raveners. He did, and since the others had no adequate orders to defend themselves, they were easily defeated. Amazon, immeasurably happy with her success, called Gargoyle to her and brought him under her control.

Komodo

Age 20, 4' 7", 145 lbs., male reptilian human, no hair, reptilian eyes.

ST: 11 (10 points) **IQ:** 17 (100 points) **Speed:** 6.25
DX: 15 (60 points) **HT:** 10 (0 points) **Move:** 6
Damage: Thrust 1d-1; Swing 1d+1
Dodge: 6

Point Total: 480

Advantages

Acute Vision +4 (8 points)
 Danger Sense (15 points)
 Eidetic Memory (Level 2; 60 points)
 Lightning Calculator (5 points)
 Mathematical Ability (10 points)

Disadvantages

Sense of Duty (To Amazon; -10 points)
 Ugly Appearance (-10 points)

Super Advantages

Clinging (25 points)
 Dark Vision (25 points)
 Polarized Eyes (5 points)
 Sensitive Touch (10 points)
 Two Extra Arms (20 points)

Super-Powers

Disintegrate-20(8) (Only vs. metal -30%; 65 points)
 Mold Earth-20(10) (Only vs. metal -30%, Metal retains shape +20%; 64 points)



Quirks

- Doesn't like his normal voice; uses a synthesizer (-1 point)
- Gets defensive when criticized (-1 point)
- Talks to computers (-1 points)
- Thinks of himself as a genius (-1 point)

Skills

Accounting-21 (½ point), Area Knowledge (New Complex)-19 (1 point), Area Knowledge (Old Complex)-18 (½ point), Computer Operation-23 (½ point), Computer Programming-22 (1 point), Demolition-17 (½ point), Electronics Operation (Power Systems)-20 (2 points), Electronics Operation (Security Systems)-20 (2 points), Electronics-19 (1 point), Engineer (Electronics)-18 (2 points), Guns (Gauss Rifle)-16 (½ point), Guns (pistol)-17 (1 point), Intelligence Analysis-17 (2 points), Mathematics-24 (2 points), Nuclear Physics-15 (½ point), Physics-16 (½ point), Research-19 (2 points), Teaching-17 (½ point), Vacc Suit-18 (1 point).

Story

Komodo's real name is Francis Greerson. He was born two months early, and none of the company doctors thought that he would survive. His parents were heartbroken at his mutation. He had two extra arms, a long tail and thick, knobby reptilian skin. His eyes were slitted like a reptile's.

However, he did survive, and his mind developed at an uncanny rate. He learned to talk at 7 months, and was using whole sentences after a year. The company psychologist measured his IQ at 160 at two years old, and also determined that he had a photographic memory.

As soon as he could walk, he went into school. He flew through the grades, graduating from high school at 8, and he took a tutorial under the company's leading physicist, soaking up knowledge and learning even more from research and outside study. By 16, he was the company school's leading mathematics and computer programming instructor.

But he wasn't entirely happy. His extreme mutation made him an outsider, and his tremendous intellect set him even farther

apart from his peers. It was the kids at school who dubbed him Komodo, because of his lizard-like appearance. He never had childhood friends because they couldn't stand to be around a "deformed" boy, and the ones who could soon bored Komodo with their stupidity. The adults who socialized with him did so because he was an oddity, an experiment. They were amazed at his developing intellect, and he often felt like a sideshow exhibit.

He became friends with Amazon about a year before she started the rebellion. She took to spending a lot of time at the school library, doing research on the company's radiation studies. Komodo often ran into her while conducting his own private studies. She showed no discomfort at his condition; in fact, she praised him for his unique abilities, encouraging him to come to the training gym and develop his physical talents. He grew to like her for her straightforwardness and for the fact that her intelligence nearly matched his. He found himself teaching her all he knew about programming and mathematics. He marveled at how quickly she learned.

When she told him of her doubts about the radiation, he looked into it himself. Though he never discovered any *real* evidence to back her up, his underlying resentment of his own condition made the idea of taking over the company attractive. Even if they didn't create the radiation, they were responsible for it in a way, and they should have found *some* way to stop it. He has tremendous faith in Amazon's ability to accomplish her goals.

After the rebels moved to the old complex, Komodo took the job of restoring the complex to working order. He also supervised the laying out of the explosives in the steam tunnels (see p. 23). He knows the electronic layout of the compound perfectly. He spends his spare time working on the old mainframe, running simulations and radiation studies. He has found some anomalous data that seem to disprove Amazon's claims, but he has kept it to himself, partly because he likes Amazon so much and partly because he does not want to embarrass himself and end up looking stupid. He could, however, be convinced to return to the new complex if Amazon were killed and his life were in danger.

Komodo has no hand-to-hand combat skills or powers, but he carries a 9mm Beretta and a Gauss rifle any time he is outside his bedroom.

Red Mantis

Age 26, 6', 175 lbs., male, red hair, multi-faceted eyes.

ST: 14 (45 points) IQ: 12 (20 points) Speed: 7.5

DX: 18 (125 points) HT: 12 (20 points) Move: 7,
10 while jumping

Damage: Thrust 1d, Swing 2d

Dodge: 7 Parry: 12 (Karate), 8 (Knife)

Point Total: 530

Super Advantages

Bouncing x3 (36 points)

Clinging (25 points)

Perfect Balance (15 points)

Super Jump x4 (Maximum standing jump: 22 yards, maximum running jump: 44 yards with 17 yards takeoff, Maximum high jump: 17 feet; 40 points)

Telescopic Vision x5 (32x normal vision; 20 points)

Super-Power

Laser-20(6) (Armor Piercing/2 +100%; Special effect: shoots from eyes +0%; 88 points)

Quirks

Secretly infatuated with Amazon (-1 point)

Takes his time with decisions (-1 point)

Skills

Acrobatics-17 (2 points), Administration-12 (2 points), Armoury-12 (2 points), Beam Weapons-20 (1 point), Body

Advantages

Acute Vision +5 (10 points)

Combat Reflexes (15 points)

High Pain Threshold (10 points)

Night Vision (10 points)

Peripheral Vision (15 points)

Disadvantages

Greed (-15 points)

Sense of Duty (To Amazon; -10 points)

Ugly Appearance (-10 points)

Sense-18 (4 points), Broadsword (Baton)-17 (1 point), Computer Operation-14 (4 points), Criminology-13 (2 points), Demolition-12 (2 points), Electronics Operation (Security Systems)-11 (1 point), Escape-17 (2 points), Fast-Draw (Baton)-19 (1 point), First Aid-12 (1 point), Free Fall-18 (2 points), Gesture-12 (1 point), Guns (Laser Rifle)-19 (½ point), Guns (Pistol)-19 (½ point), Judo-18 (4 points), Jumping-20 (4 points), Karate-18 (4 points), Knife-17 (½ point), Leadership-14 (6 points), Piloting (Shuttle)-12 (2 points), Research-12 (2 points), Shadowing-12 (2 points), Speed-Load-17 (½ point), Stealth-18 (2 points), Strategy-13 (6 points), Tactics-12 (4 points), Teaching-12 (2 points), Traps-11 (1 point), Vacc Suit-11 (2 points).

Story

Red Mantis was, until about a year ago, the head of the company's security force. His real name is George Drake, and his parents are highly-placed administrators in the company bureaucracy. George had always been ambitious, and went through school quickly and with honors. He was hoping to join the company's management hierarchy.

Unfortunately, he found out that the company had an unspoken rule about letting metahumans into management. They didn't know enough about their abilities and wanted them under control. At 18, like most other superhumans, he joined the security force. He put his frustration into his training and honed his super-powers to perfection. His buddies in the force named him Red Mantis because of his multi-faceted eyes, his insect-like jumping ability and the fact that he "ate" anyone who got in his way.

His leadership qualities were also strong, and he was soon working his way up in the security force echelon. As he climbed the ladder, he developed a new organizational structure for the security force, and implemented it at whatever level he was able. The new structure proved to be far more effective, and the company quickly adopted it. After four years, the head of the security team was recruited to head the force on a space station orbiting Saturn. Since Io Base 1's security was rapidly filling with metahumans, the company decided it would be appropriate to have one running the force. Red Mantis was offered the job, and he gladly accepted.

Once in power, Red Mantis restructured the force even further, dividing it up into special operation teams, utilizing each metahuman's specific powers to the greatest ability. Guards who could see in the dark were set patrolling the pitch-black outer mines. Those with exceptional hearing were set up in the outer corridors to listen for ravener activity, etc.

Red Mantis was approached three years later by the second-in-command of his special operations department, a fiery young lightning thrower nicknamed Amazon. She started out with small, safe conversation, flattering him about his exceptional organizational abilities and his combat prowess. He found her utterly attractive, partly because she was a beautiful woman and partly because she seemed completely comfortable with his bizarre

looks. Most other women found his appearance repulsive and could not help but show it. Amazon, on the other hand, completely ignored his odd appearance, and even complemented him on his distinctive qualities. He soon became completely infatuated with her.

He found himself revealing all of his secrets, including his deep-seated resentment toward the company for barring him from the corporate ladder. They had shoved him into security, where he had risen as high as he could go. He had a great desire for power and money, and it seemed that he had reached his peak here. After a year, Amazon sensed that it was time to reveal her plans to him. She told him of her research into the radiation, easily convincing him that the company was intentionally irradiating the miners. He was outraged and agreed to join her in whatever schemes she was putting into action.

His first move was to resign from the command. He did so without reason and disappeared a week later. During the next nine months, he hid out with Amazon and her rebels, helping her organize them into a cohesive, effective group. After the move to the old complex, Red Mantis took over the administrative details of working the rebels into an competent force, capable of taking over the company. He spends most of his time in the security room, from which he oversees the training and administration of the guards and miners.



Spitfire

Age 19, 5' 8", 125 lbs., fiery blonde hair, flickering red eyes.

ST: 12 (20 points) IQ: 10 (0 points) Speed: 7

DX: 16 (80 points) HT: 12 (20 points) Move: 7,

56 Flying

Damage: Thrust 1d-1, Swing 1d+2

Dodge: 7 (Apply targeting modifiers to hit while flying)

Point Total: 490

Advantages

Very Beautiful Appearance (25 points)

Combat Reflexes (15 points)

High Pain Threshold (10 points)

Musical Ability +5 (5 points)

Night Vision (10 points)

Wealth: Comfortable (10 points)



Disadvantages

- Compulsive Behavior: Practical Joker (-5 points)
- Impulsiveness (-10 points)
- Sense of Duty (To Amazon; -10 points)
- Stubbornness (-5 points)

Super Advantages

- Absorption vs. Heat/Fire (Fuels Flame Jet, Level 4; 32 points)
- Body of Fire (Level 4; 20 points)
- Flight (40 points)
- Super Flight (Level 2; 40 points)

Super-Powers

- Control Fire-12(6) (34 points)
- Flame Jet-18(6) (Increases to Level 10 when powered by Absorption battery; 52 points)
- Wall of Fire-15(10) (54 points)

Quirks

- A little bit scared of Gargoyle (-1 point)
- Calls Amazon "Ammy" though she hates it (-1 point)
- Denies evidence of her practical jokes (-1 point)
- Eyes flare when she's angry (-1 point)

Skills

- Acrobatics-15 (2 points), Area Knowledge (New Complex)-11 (2 points), Area Knowledge (Old Complex)-10 (1 point), Astronomy-10 (4 points), Beam Weapons-16 (½ point), Body Sense-15 (2 points), Carousing-13 (4 points), Climbing-15 (1 point), Computer Operation-11 (2 points), First Aid-10 (1 point), Free Fall-15 (1 point), Guns (Pistol)-16 (½ point), Literature-11 (6 points), Musical Instrument (Electric Guitar)-15 (4 points), Research-11 (4 points), Savoir-Faire-11 (2 points), Sex Appeal-13 (4 points), Stealth-17 (4 points), Theology-10 (4 points), Vacc Suit-10 (2 points), Writing-12 (6 points).

Story

Janis Martin has been called Spitfire since she was a baby, because that's exactly what she did: spit fire. She was born to Dr. Kenneth and Helen Martin, and is one of the greatest reasons that such extensive research was done on the radiation that caused the mutations. After all, Kenneth Martin was the president of Jupiter Mining, Ltd., and was very concerned about the health of his child.

As it turned out, Janis learned to control her flame powers quickly and also discovered that she could fly . . . *very* fast. She was an only child and was, frankly, spoiled rotten. She grew up with that rich kid's arrogance that extends toward everyone, including her own family. She knew she would never have to work and so she spent her time in school studying literature and music. When not writing stories or songs, she trained with the security guards in the training gym and made friends with quite a few of them, including Amazon, who took a special interest in her.

Spitfire matured quickly, and when she was 14, she picked up the guitar, and spent a year learning to play. She learned very quickly and soon was as adept as her instructor; he could teach her no more. When she turned 15, she began playing solo in the two clubs in the complex and was heartily accepted. It was during this time that she learned of the rebel movement.

She became interested for two reasons. She knew Amazon, and had always had a great respect for her. If Amazon believed in something, chances were it was true. Second, it was a great way to irritate her parents, which was something she loved to do. Recently, her parents had begun to crack down on her curfew, realizing that they had done a pretty rotten job of parenting and trying to make up for it in the last few years of Spitfire's childhood. One night they had a tremendous argument, and Spitfire came very close to using her powers against her father. Instead she said she was leaving and went to join the rebels.

Amazon accepted her gleefully, and brought her into her elite. For about six months, Spitfire trained in the gym and perfected her combat abilities. She likes Amazon quite a bit, and her spirited nature has led her to play little practical jokes on Red Mantis, Komodo and sometimes Amazon. She avoids Gargoyle, and is a little scared that he's someday going to "wake up" and start killing everyone around him.

Recently, she has begun to reevaluate her decision to join the rebels. She realizes that she did it mostly as revenge against her parents, but she did not know how serious the movement was, or how dangerous the rebels could be. She has a dim awareness that her parents will probably be first on the hit list when the rebels invade the new complex. She doesn't know what she would do if they were endangered, but she is probably the most easily-swayed of the elite. If Amazon were killed, Spitfire could be convinced to surrender and come back to the new complex with the agents.

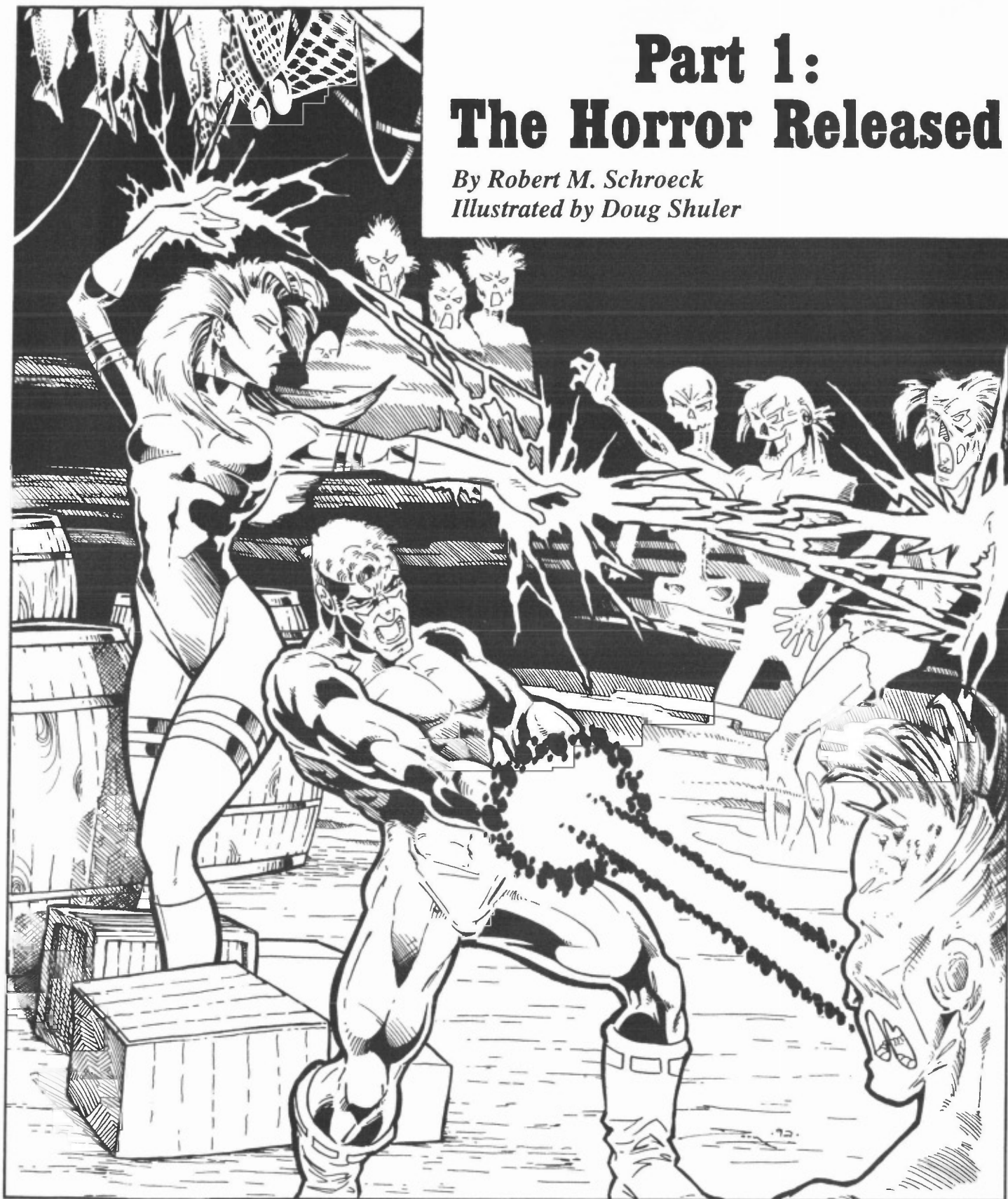


MARK OF THE KRAKEN

Part 1: The Horror Released

By Robert M. Schroeck

Illustrated by Doug Shuler



Introduction

A disaster is in the making.

One week ago, a cache of 12 tactical nuclear weapons was stolen from a PLO base in Syria. A few hours ago, one went off in the Aegean Sea near Kupros, a small Greek island. A hand-picked team of supers is assigned to go the island, find out where the bombs are and recover them, and capture those who stole and are using the bombs.

No one knows that a group of four metahumans are using the bombs to crack open the prison of an ancient, extradimensional Thing. If enough of the bombs are set off, the Kraken will be freed, and woe to the world!

About the Author

Robert M. Schroeck is the author of *International Super Teams* and the co-author (with his wife, Peggy) of *GURPS Camelot* and *GURPS Robin Hood*. His current project is another *Supers* supplement – *Super Rebels* – detailing a world where the bad guys took over. Bob and Peggy live in New Brunswick, NJ, and despite his proximity to the sea, he swears he has nothing to do with the theft of the tactical nuclear weapons and has never performed even one unholy ritual.

The Villains

Behind this mysterious plot are four persons who have been altered by the power of an Ancient Thing From Beyond Time and Space. This creature – the legendary Kraken – lies imprisoned beneath the ruins of a Minoan city under the Aegean sea near Kupros. It has recruited these four human servants and imparted to them superhuman powers so that they may discover a way to free it. Brief descriptions of them follow; for more specific information, see the complete write-ups of these characters on pp. 55-62. Their goals are outlined in the sidebar on p. 39.

The High Priest

Formerly a high-ranking member of the PLO, the High Priest is the leader of the small band. He is the brains of the operation, and his knowledge of PLO secrets allowed them to steal the tacnukes. Although he knows a small repertoire of magical spells, his most impressive abilities – both offensive and defensive – were granted by the Kraken and bear little resemblance to human magic.

Sea Wolf

The muscle of the operation, Sea Wolf is amphibious and spends most of his time underwater. He is charged with the responsibility of actually planting the bombs on the site of the Kraken's imprisonment, and keeps half of the tactical nukes in a submerged cave just outside the harbor.

Were

A shapeshifter capable of changing into a limited number of animal forms, Were is the scout and spy among the servants of the Kraken. His task – largely symbolic now, and he knows it – is to patrol the island for anything or anyone out of the ordinary. That is to say, anyone living.



Carrionette

A perverse and dangerously random individual, Carrionette possesses a deadly touch and the ability to animate and control dead bodies. She has converted the entire native population of Kupros into zombie slaves and cannon-fodder for the servants of the Kraken, and is looking for more!

All of the above are insane to one degree or another, and fanatically follow the mandates of their master. They cannot be trusted to react entirely rationally in any situation, especially combat. It is only the force of the High Priest's personality and leadership, and their shared delusions and fanaticism, which has kept them welded into a single functioning unit.

Player Team Composition

The exact makeup of the team assembled – or scrambled – for this mission is important. For maximum effectiveness, the team should possess at least one character who can function in an aquatic environment, either through super-abilities or through skill with SCUBA equipment. This will not be a problem in a one-shot game, but if the GM intends to incorporate this adventure into an ongoing campaign, it may cause difficulties. Realistically, IST Command would assign at least one watergoing super to the team because the satellite and seismological data indicates some aquatic activity may be necessary.

However, the clever GM who has no amphibious super or SCUBA expert in his players' pre-existing team may want to justify this lack by citing a combination of the haste with which the team was summoned, and simple bureaucratic mix-up. Part of the adventure's challenge then becomes using the IST-issue SCUBA gear at whatever default levels are available to the team.

On another front, the GM should be aware that too many characters with the Unfazeable advantage would ruin much of the flavor of this adventure. While one such character may make for an entertaining counterpoint to the others, more than that would turn the entire mission into a cakewalk as half the party ignores Fright Check after Fright Check.

Conventions

Some of the text in this adventure is to be read word-for-word to the players; this text is printed in *italic*. This is done partly for the benefit of the gamemaster, and partly to aid those characters with Eidetic Memory.

Also, throughout this adventure, reference may be made both in and out of the narrative material to the *six* members of the player characters' team. Since the actual number of characters involved in the adventure may not be six (although that is the recommended number), the GM should be careful to make appropriate changes in the text read to the players.

On Running A Horror Game

If the GM has never run a *Horror* game before, he should not worry. The process of working unspeakable terror into an otherwise "mundane" *Supers* game is actually quite easy.

Firstly, the players should *not* be warned ahead of time. This would negate some of the shock value that the genre cross-over should bring. Let them believe that this is an ordinary anti-terrorist mission.

Don't throw everything at them at once. Horror is best played through the slow accumulation of details that inevitably point towards the unthinkable and the unspeakable. In particular, the various encounters given in the text below should be tempered to keep the characters – and the players – in the dark for as long as possible. Were's initial appearances should be presented as "a seagull which persistently follows you as you make your way across the meadows," or "you

About This Adventure

This adventure is a hybrid *GURPS Supers/Horror* adventure which will pit the best and brightest of Earth's metahumans against the worst and darkest that some unnamed dimension or space has ever produced. The GM should be careful not to reveal the nature of the adventure to his players, to make the impact of the *Horror* aspects all the greater when they finally appear.



Fright Checks

The GM should make sure that he is completely familiar with the rules for Fright Checks, found on pp. B93-94. If the GM also owns *GURPS Horror* (which is not a requirement for this adventure), he should consult the additional material on Fright Checks on pp. 23-24 of that volume.

Fright Checks will be required for a number of events and encounters that will occur during this adventure. However, since many of these will be repeated encounters with zombies, there is a possibility that the characters will become inured to the horrifying sight of the walking undead. The GM should feel free to give a bonus of +1 to +5 on the Fright Checks of any character who has simply seen too many zombies to be afraid of them any longer (defined as making 3 or more successful Fright Checks in a row) – but that bonus would apply *only* to zombies and (unless the GM rules otherwise) *only* to this mission.

Other modifiers to Fright Checks (excerpted from *GURPS Horror*):

- Encounter in the dark*: -1 or more.
- Face-to-face encounter with a supernatural creature*: From -1 (rat swarms) to -10 (Things Man Was Not Meant To Know)
- Viewer is warned beforehand*: +1
- Viewer has seen monster type before*: +1
- Viewer is surprised and/or unprepared*: -1 to -2
- Proximity*: Apparently-safe distance (100 yards): +1. Great distance: +3. Close enough to hit you when first seen: -2.

Modifiers specific to this adventure:

- Face-to-face encounter with a zombie: -2
- Face-to-face encounter with a Slimespawn: -3
- Face-to-face encounter with the Kraken: -6

Adventuring in Water

Some of this mission may require one or more members of the PC team to venture underwater. The GM should remember to apply the *Combat In and Under Water* rules found on p. B91 if necessary. Amphibious characters do not have to make the Swimming roll to avoid Fatigue cost.

Underwater effects on metapowers are detailed beginning on p. 74. In the temperate, coastal waters around Kupros, the supers need not worry about pressure or cold, except as noted below.



Climate Conditions

This adventure takes place during spring in the Mediterranean. Weather on Kupros will be clear and sunny, but temperatures will be on the cold side. Low temperatures will range from 30 to 38 F. sometime around an hour before sunrise to 54 to 65 F. about an hour after noon.

Water temperatures will also reflect this range, and will average 40 to 45 F. Unless a watergoing character has a wet suit or Temperature Tolerance, this will cause rapid hypothermia! Use the freezing rules on p. B130, but make HT rolls every *minute*! Normal superhero garb will turn into *wet clothes* underwater unless specially designed for use in water, providing a -5 *penalty* to the HT roll. Winter clothing of any kind provides no benefit when soaked. A wet suit counts as being dressed for really cold weather (but only in water!).

Although the adventure is designed to take place within in the span of 24 hours, circumstances – or the GM! – may alter this. Therefore, the following times for sunrise and sunset are provided: the sun rises at about 5:45 AM on the day on which the adventure starts, and will set at about 6:29 PM. For each day following, make sunrise 1½ minutes earlier and sunset 1 minute later.

If the GM alters the date of the adventure, he should make sure to adjust the times of scheduled events appropriately. A summertime placement should not affect these, but winter will require the schedule be moved back to allow some degree of daylight for the characters to use before the adventure's climax.

come across a housecat stalking through the forest; it regards you with a preternaturally intelligent stare before deigning to follow you in your progress.” The first zombie encounter might be with a lone, newly-made undead, easily mistaken for a human in shock until medical aid is attempted . . .

Add details and little happenings that will keep the players just slightly off-balance. For example, the cat that has been pacing the team for some time slips away into the woods. Shortly afterward, a laggard team member is inexplicably attacked by a wolf. Later, as he describes the attack to his companions (or as his body is examined by the survivors), the cat strolls back out of the underbrush, *licking* its chops, and sits down to groom itself and listen to the discussion with almost an amused expression on its feline face . . .

However, the GM should be careful not to overdo the presentation of disquieting details. Too many such details, or presenting them in a heavy-handed manner, will let the players know that something is up. Like a powerful spice, they are best used in the tiniest doses, with a very light touch.

Also, to the very end, make sure that the PCs think that the hints about the existence of the Kraken are meaningless or mythical. Using Dr. Stanley (see p. 45) as an “undisputable” expert in this regard will help. A player character who is skeptical about the more dramatic supernatural phenomena would be especially useful – and fun!

Finally, once the Fright Checks start coming, make sure that the fear and uncertainty that the supers should be feeling is properly roleplayed. In particular, make sure that any new quirks or disadvantages gained because of Fright Check failure are roleplayed – immediately and to the hilt!

To summarize: Build up the horror slowly. Add disquieting details, but do so sparingly. Keep the players in the dark as much as possible. Foster a little paranoia.

Now, on to the adventure!

All Things Have Their Beginnings . . .

The GM should read the following to the players.

The time is varied, depending on your home embassy. Some of you have been scrambled out of bed by a priority one alert coming through UNET; others just have their duty time interrupted. All of you are ordered to make ready for emergency teleportation and redeployment. Within half an hour, you are teleported to IST Athens, where you find yourselves together – six of you. Without any ceremony, you are led to a briefing room and seated. A man wearing the insignia of a colonel in the IST steps up to the podium.

“Good morning. I’m Colonel Mendez, of IST European Command. For those of you who are jet-lagged, it’s about 2:50 AM local time. I’m sorry about the short notice alert, but we have a slight emergency on our hands.

“One week ago, a cache of 12 tactical nuclear weapons – ‘Barrût’ class bombs, 1 kiloton each – was stolen from a secret PLO weapons facility in Syria. The facility has since been closed. Anecdotal evidence suggested the involvement of metahumans. The Israeli government and the Palestinian Government In Exile came separately to IST Command and requested aid in recovering the devices.

“Up until last night, we had little idea where the bombs were, although our investigations were beginning to bear some fruit. We had been operating under the assumption that the devices were to be sold on the black market. Then, this happened.”

The briefing room is darkened, and the display screen on the wall behind Mendez lights up. It splits into several parts: One, a satellite view of what is clearly the Aegean Sea near Greece; two, a narrow strip showing a running



seismograph tape; three, a computer display reading "Spectral Analysis" and "Seismic Analysis." In the corner is a clock displaying today's date and "12:01 AM Athens Time."

The clock starts moving; on the satellite film, a bright pinpoint of light flares in the middle of the sea, and the view zooms in on it. Simultaneously, the seismograph displays a violent disruption. The computer display reads: "Spectral Analysis: Consistent with underwater nuclear detonation" and "Seismic Analysis: Richter 6.2. Epicenter triangulation: Isle of Kupros, Aegean Sea, on or near sea bed."

The screen freeze-frames on this last set of images. Colonel Mendez speaks again.

"It appears that our thieves are actually using the bombs rather than selling them. This changes the priority of the case drastically. Command's computers selected the six of you as the best possible team we could assemble on half an hour's notice. We are going to drop you on the Isle of Kupros, and we want you to find the remaining bombs and capture the thieves, if at all possible. For ecological and political reasons, you are to do all in your power to prevent the further detonation of any of the devices. If necessary, destroy or disable them. This is vital – minimize any and all ecological risk posed by the devices.

"This is the Isle of Kupros." The display screen clears and the map is displayed. "There is only one settlement on the island: the town of Palambros on the north side, adjacent to the harbor. There is an extinct volcano which dominates the southwestern part of the island. Here the terrain is a wooded plateau. Here, it is hilly and meadowed."

The Palestinian Government In Exile (PGIE)

As described on p. 74 of *GURPS International Super Teams*, the Palestinian Government In Exile (PGIE) is a diplomatic organization which is funded and controlled by the Palestine Liberation Organization, although it has made extensive efforts since its founding in 1971 to distance itself from its parent group. Since 1983, it has possessed observer status at the U.N.

In the matter at hand, the PGIE is acting as the voice of the PLO, and has demanded the return of the nuclear devices stolen by the Servants of the Kraken. They have made several veiled threats about what might happen should the tacnukes not be returned.



Motives and Goals

The metahuman servants of the Kraken have a strict set of motives that control all their behavior.

1. Free the Kraken. If this means ignoring the strangers on the island, do so – this is the #1 priority.
2. Do not rush into anything – observe your enemy and learn before attacking.
3. If anyone tries to interfere with what is being done, kill them.
4. Don't let anyone off the island until the Kraken is freed. If necessary, kill them.
5. After the Kraken is freed, serve him and reap the benefits.

What Colonel Mendez Knows

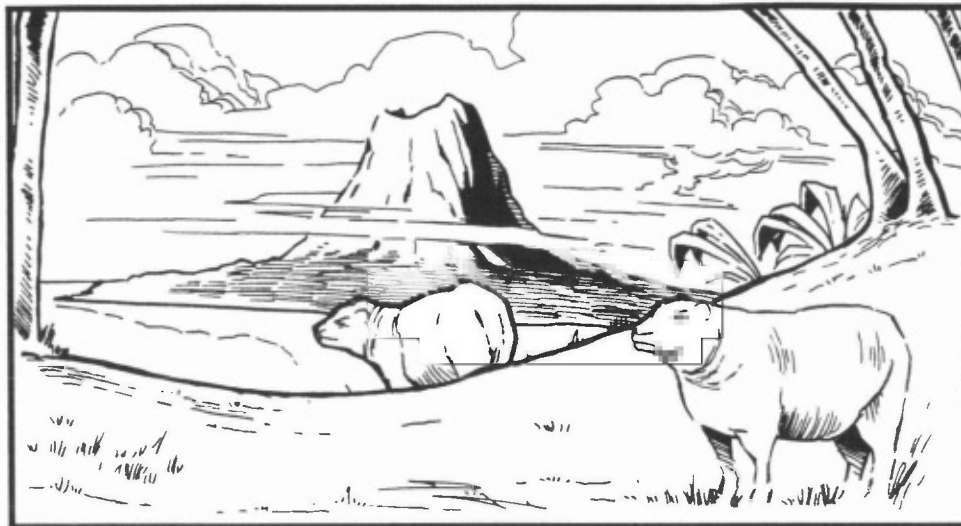
The following is information that may be asked for during the question-and-answer period of Col. Mendez' briefing.

Political Situation. Currently stable but potentially explosive. Both Israel and the PGIE/PLO want the tactical nuclear bombs recovered, and tensions are growing: each side believes the other secretly possesses the bombs and is planning to use them – the theft being a perfect cover for any “plausible deniability” required by either side. The detonation of bombs in Grecian waters poses threats, also, as the Greeks are likely to take a confrontatory stance with PGIE if the bombs are not recovered.

Military Situation. Mendez will admit that this IST deployment is a last-minute attempt to forestall a possible military conflict on Kupros. He will relate that intelligence reports that the Massed (Israeli Secret Service), the PLO and the Greek Army have all begun preparations to drop forces on Kupros in an attempt to seize the bombs. Through U.N. efforts, their deployment has been delayed, and the first of these strike teams will arrive at noon tomorrow. In order to prevent a major international incident, the team must resolve the situation before noon.

Ecological Considerations. While Kupros and its coastal waters are not particularly ecologically sensitive – no endangered species or irreplaceable resources – the U.N. is, of course, very concerned about radioactive contamination and ecological damage to such a pleasant, fruitful area.

Kupros and Its People. Kupros has been strangely quiet, despite the explosion. Its government house has been in contact and acknowledged the seismic effects, but seemed relatively unconcerned.



The GM should display the players' map of Kupros at this time, and point out the indicated regions.

“The total known population of Kupros is approximately 250 persons and some 5,000 sheep. Its primary industries, if you can call them that, are wool production and fishing. There is some tourism, as there is a well-preserved Minoan city to be found underwater at the mouth of the harbor. There are frequent archeological digs both in the harbor and on the island itself. Government records indicate that there is currently an open dig permit for a Dr. Jonathan Stanley of Cambridge University, London; he and a crew of about 20 are excavating a small site on the plateau.”

“Two other things about Kupros. During World War II, it was the site of a Nazi submarine base. More recently, we have found records of an unusual number of missing persons somehow connected to the island – either visitors and tourists or natives.”

“Each of you will receive a copy of this map, plus other equipment.” An equipment list appears on the display screen. “You will be deposited on the south shore of the island in approximately half an hour. Your first task must be to establish the com unit relay station in a secure location in direct line-of-sight to the sea. This will allow you to communicate with each other even outside your com units' normal 2-mile broadcast radius. The relay station itself can be used to contact Command at the end of the mission.”

“One last point. Because of certain . . . considerations, you have a time limit on this mission. You must, and I repeat must secure the nuclear devices before noon local time tomorrow – otherwise the military will have to step in, and things will get ugly. Any questions?”

Mendez will then answer every question that he can. (See the sidebar *What Col. Mendez Knows*.) However, in the middle of the second question, interrupt the answer and read the following:

There is a beeping noise from the podium, and Mendez interrupts himself to look down at a screen which suddenly turns on and illuminates his face. After a few moments, he looks back up at you and says, “As of 3 AM local time, satellite and seismic surveillance have picked up another explosion, in what appears to be the same location as the first.”

Mendez presses a button on the podium, and the screen displays a set of views identical to the first, except the time reads 3:00 AM.

After allowing a few seconds for this to sink in, Mendez finishes answering the second question. The GM should allow no more than 15 minutes, real time, for further questioning. At the end of that period, Mendez will declare that the briefing is over. He then instructs the supers to equip themselves and prepare for teleportation.



In Which We Arrive . . .

The team is assembled and ready by 3:45 AM Athens time, and has gathered in the embassy's Combat Simulation Chamber. The teleporters waiting there transport them to a U.N. ship lying just a mile off the southern shore of Kupros, within sight of land. From there, the PCs are teleported right to the beach, after which the ship withdraws several miles away to avoid exposure to further nuclear events.

Behind them, to the north, the volcano slopes upward, and the terrain is slightly rocky. A few minutes' searching (Vision rolls at -5 for the darkness, Geology at -1, or any other appropriate skill at -1) reveals a small hollow several dozen yards up the slope, just ten or 12 feet deep and about two feet tall, into which the relay station and other gear can be placed.

It is now 3:55 AM. The team may now attack the problem as they see fit.

However . . . at 4:00 AM and 5:00 AM, more bombs explode. After 5:00 AM, the worried servants of the Kraken will accelerate the schedule, and begin exploding bombs every 30 minutes. This will result in the last tacnuke being used at 8:00 AM. At that point, see the sidebar *Cracking the Cell* on p. 48.

While the moon is up this night, and the sky is clear, it is a thin crescent moon, and sheds only a little light. For most of this time, the supers will be hampered by the partial darkness (except, of course, for those with appropriate powers), until sunrise at 5:45 AM.

Personal Research

If any member of the team wants to do some personal research, the Athens embassy mainframe is available. There will be very little time for this . . . but for every 2 points of success on a roll against Research-2 or Computer Hacking-1 (depending on the method of investigation), they will uncover one of the following tidbits of information:

Satellite measurements of radiation release from the bombs are so low that sensor malfunction is suspected.

Even given the few phones on the island, telephone traffic from Kupros has been declining in the last six months, slowly at first, and then a sudden, precipitous drop in the last three weeks. However, phone company diagnostics indicate that the lines are all intact and working perfectly.

Wool and fish shipments from the island have dwindled recently, and contracts have not been renewed.

Recent geological expeditions have reported the possibility of renewed activity in the long-dormant volcanic cone that dominates the island.

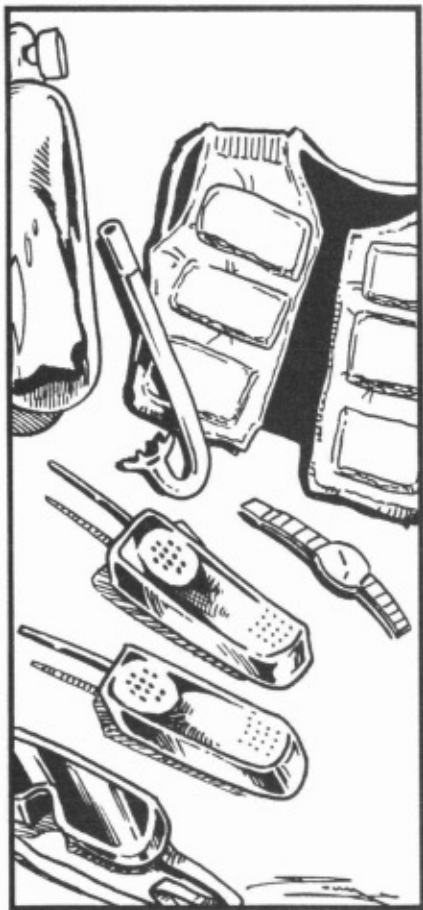
Geological evidence reveals that the near-circular harbor of Kupros was once a volcano which exploded some 3,000 years ago.



Equipment List

This list is only a guideline; the GM will want to modify it to fit the specific team being sent on this mission. For example, SCUBA gear will be unnecessary if there is an aquatic super on the team, and the number of Hardcorps vests may vary by the number of bricks found on the team.

1. Second Chance Hardcorps Kevlar Vests, 6
2. Ceramic/steel inserts for Hardcorps vests, 6 sets
3. Com units (standard issue), 6
4. Com unit relay station, 1
5. Psi shields (standard issue), 6
6. Miniature Geiger counters, waterproof, 6
7. Dosimeters, waterproof, 6
8. Rations, concentrated, 6 persons for 2 days each
9. SCUBA gear and wet suits, 2 sets (includes 4 hours' worth of air per set)
10. Camouflage fatigues, 6 sets
11. Maps of Kupros, waterproofed, 6
12. Miniature flashlights, 6
13. Pacifier Helmets, 6
14. Chronometers, synchronized, 6
15. Miniature tool kits, 3
16. Instructions



Places To Go, Things To See . . .

Two maps of Kupros are provided for use with this adventure (see opposite page). One of these is the players' map, which notes only the major geological features, Palambros and a few other details. The GM should make a photocopy of this map for each player.

The second map is the GM's key, showing all the secret locations (or, in some cases, *true* locations) of all the features detailed below.

Geography

The basic shape of Kupros is a crescent with a thickened center portion. Like many of its fellow islands in the Aegean, it is a volcanic island; igneous rock formations frequently crop up out of its fertile black soil. Its most distinguishing feature is the volcanic cone that towers over the rest of the island. Despite its prominence, though, the volcano is relatively small – only some 1,500 feet high. Its slopes are gentle and the summit is easily scaled; at the top is the caldera, which has filled with water over the centuries since its last eruption. Lush growth inside testifies to its peaceful nature, but with sufficient light, sharp eyes will notice wisps of steam and a number of skeletal trees and bushes on the northern side of the crater.

The current harbor is actually the site of an another volcano, twin to the existing one, which exploded some 3,000 years ago, completely disintegrating and leaving a huge crater behind. This crater collapsed on its seaward side, and became the harbor.

As outlined by Col. Mendez in his briefing, a number of different terrain types span the island. Both tips of the “crescent” are rocky promontories of volcanic stone towering some 100 feet over the entrance of the harbor. The western spur slopes down to a broad, wooded plateau that wraps around the western side of the volcano. The eastern portion of the island is hilly and meadowed.

For more specific details on the terrain, see the section *Out In The Open* on p. 49.

Archaeological Dig

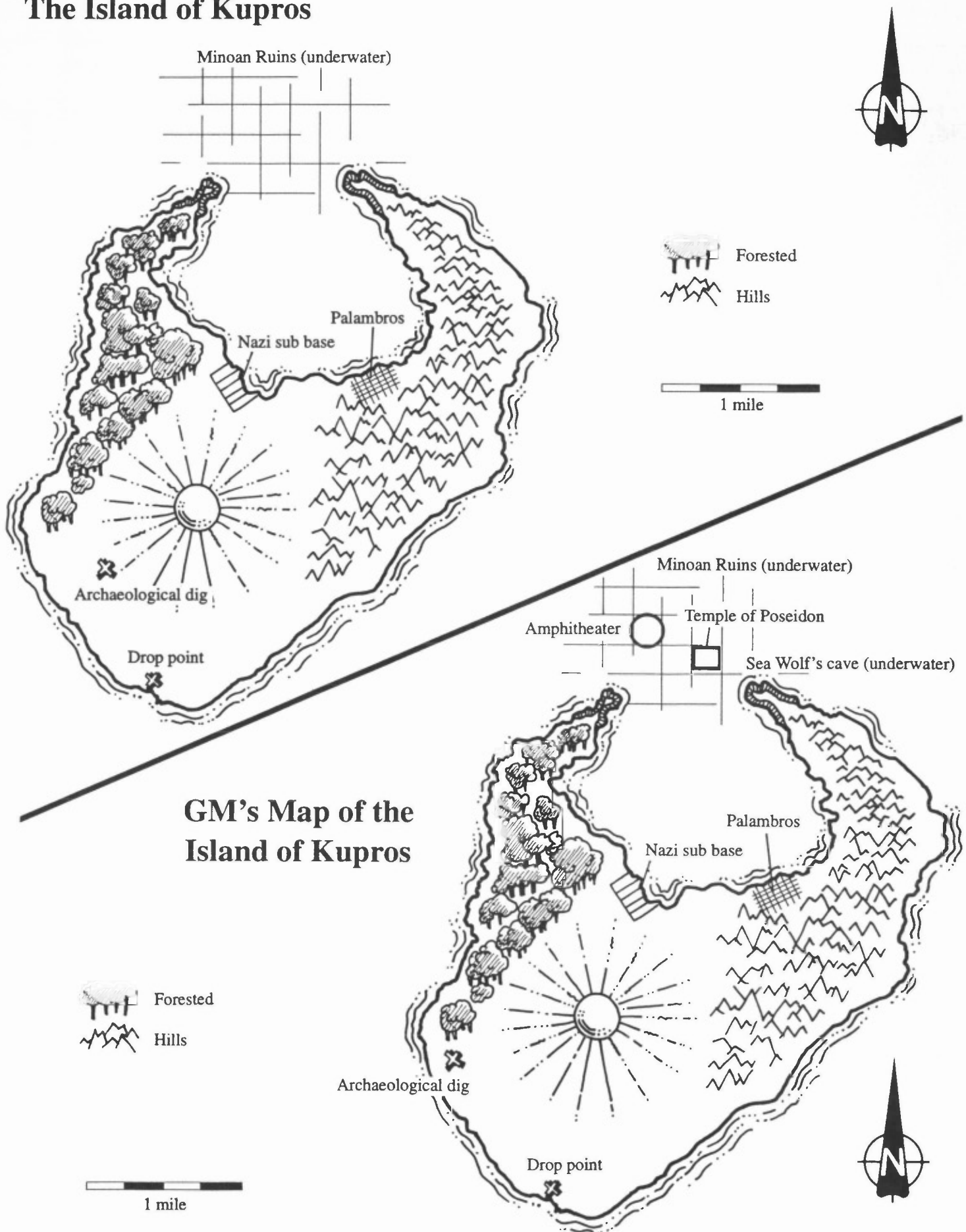
Located in a small dell, a hollow just below the southern end of the forested zone, is the archeological dig. Its site is very secure; it cannot be seen unless you are almost on top of it. It is *not* in the location indicated on the players' maps! If they are searching for the dig, or simply proceeding in that general direction from their drop point, they miss it entirely or will encounter it earlier than expected, which may prove confusing!

The servants of the Kraken are actually unaware that the dig is out here. Dr. Stanley and his expedition (see below) arrived while the villains were in Syria acquiring the tacnukes, and have not been back to Palambros since their arrival. The dig itself is hidden and far from any known homes; Were has not been near enough to notice it, Carrionette did not come looking for anyone out this way, and the zombie patrols have not quite made it around the volcano yet. Likewise, Dr. Stanley and his students are quite unaware of what has been going on the island, and have even missed the first few nuclear explosions!

Layout

The dig is not impressive to the untrained eye: about a dozen two-person tents clustered together at the western end of a long, broad hole, plus several larger tents along with them. The smaller tents are shelter for the professor and his students. The larger tents include the kitchen, the professor's “office,” supply, storage for tools and a tent solely to house any artifacts they discover. Another tent houses a

The Island of Kupros



**GM's Map of the
Island of Kupros**

The Tactical Nuclear Weapons

Thanks to the High Priest's history with the PLO, the servants of the Kraken have stolen a dozen tactical nuclear weapons from a PLO weapons dump in Syria. Originally intended for sale to other terrorist groups, the twelve bombs were all of the same model: *Barrât* ("the Flea"), the smallest and weakest of the PLO's tacnukes.

The PLO's line of nuclear armaments is detailed on p. 76 of *GURPS International Super Teams*, but for those GMs who do not have access to that volume, the *Barrât* bomb is described below. For more detailed information on the mechanics of nuclear explosions, see *GURPS High-Tech*, p. 23, but please note that the damage given is only for ground zero. Flash/heat damage varies inversely by distance, dropping off dramatically: $\frac{1}{4}$ damage at 2 yards, $\frac{1}{9}$ damage at 3 yards, and so on. Concussion damage is quartered every 32 yards from ground zero.

"The Flea" is a 1-kiloton bomb weighing 35 pounds and comes in a large, lockable suitcase ($\frac{1}{2}$ cubic yard). It is equipped with a timer with a 24-hour range. When detonated, it will devastate an area of approximately 1,100 hexes radius. Its energy is divided between the flash, which does $8d \times 1,000,000$ points of damage, followed by the concussion wave, which inflicts an additional $12d \times 1,000,000$ damage.

The bombs' timers can be disabled – neutralizing the bomb – with a Demolitions or Electronics roll at -3. If no tools are available, roll at an additional -3. On a critical failure, the bomb is armed and the timer starts counting down from 60 seconds!

When one of the tacnukes is detonated while the Kraken is consuming their energies, observers will see a bright flash of light (roll vs. HT to see if blinded, unless the super possesses Polarized Eyes, is obviously shielded or previously stated to be turned away; flashblindness fades in 5 minutes unless the victim has regeneration).

If they are near the harbor, they will see a Bikini Atoll-like ball of vapor expand as the noise wave roars by; but then the ball will suddenly contract and be sucked under the sea surface.

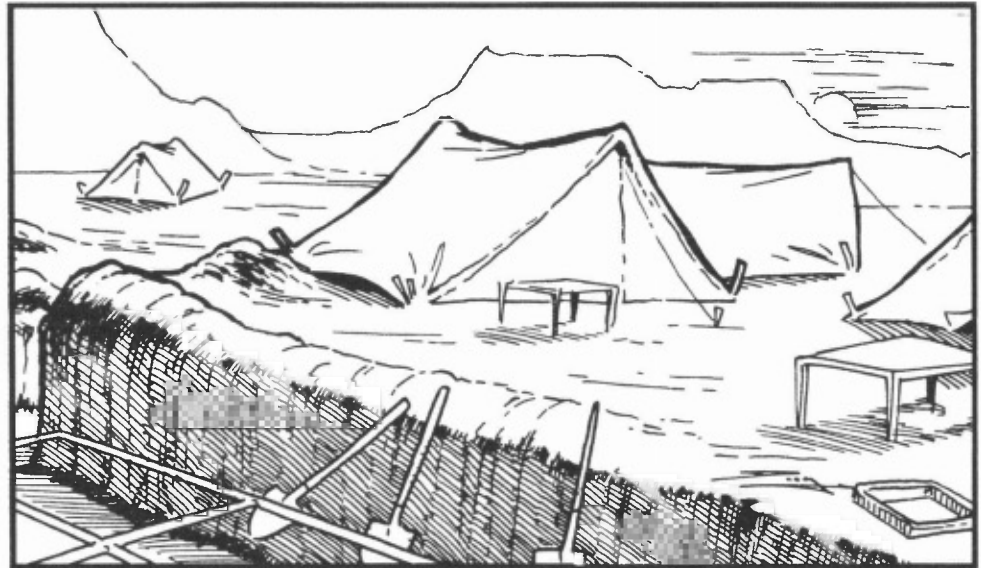
Once the Kraken has eaten its fill, explosions will proceed normally, with their full destructive and contaminating effect.

gasoline-powered generator, which runs constantly during the day, and during nighttime excavations. Heavy cables snake out in all directions from this tent, only a very few of them hoisted overhead on supporting poles.

The hole is, of course, the dig itself. It is rectangular in shape, with the long axis running east-west. A fence of stakes and ropes runs around its entire perimeter except for a 4-foot-wide opening on the western end, where a dirt ramp slopes down into the dig proper. At ten-foot intervals around the dig are wooden poles, with mercury-vapor lamps mounted upon them so as to illuminate the excavation when turned on.

There are any number of different levels to the floor of the dig; the inside of the excavation looks like a crazy-quilt staircase. Even non-archaeologists, though, can spot the stone walls and pillars, crumbled though they may be, scattered through the varying levels. At the edge of the excavation, there are wooden boxes (similar to a child's sandbox, complete with sand) in which shattered urns and *amphorae* are being painstakingly reassembled, one piece at a time, by student volunteers.

If encountered during daylight or evening excavation, the entire camp will be bustling with activity as baskets of dirt are carried out of the pit, photographs of new finds are taken, documented discoveries are carefully taken up to ground level, and students rush everywhere. Within the dig proper, activity is more sedate and careful, with occasional cries of surprise as a significant find is made.



Staff

The dig is the personal project of and overseen by Dr. Jonathan Stanley, from the British Institute (see description in sidebar, p. 15). He is a slightly balmy old professor of the old school – in jodhpurs, bush jacket, pith helmet, glasses, and the works – who has some interesting theories about the post-Minoan settlements on Kupros. Upon reaching the island and examining the terrain, he decided that the current location was a more promising site than the one which he had originally selected. Despite the potential trouble this could get him in with the Greek government, he and his students are excavating this spot instead of the one for which he applied!

He is accompanied by two graduate students in their late 20s (Monica Cambert and Herbert Smalley, both British), who help him oversee the 20 or so college students who volunteered for the dig. They and the students (who are evenly mixed British and American) are all 1- to 25-point characters. If matters so require, some may have useful combat skills, such as Brawling, Judo or Karate, within a range of 10 to 14.

There will be great curiosity as to the purpose behind the PCs' visit to the dig, but it will take a great deal of effort (and Fast-Talk or Diplomacy rolls) to convince the Doctor that he is in danger. Of course, the students will be easier to convince, and the supers may find a panic on their hands!



What Can Be Learned Here

During any conversation regarding the island and its history, Dr. Stanley will mention that before the modern era, no settlements were ever made on the north side of the island, despite the eminent suitability of the harbor for fishing and trade.

If asked about the Minoan ruins, he will mention that the remains of the city in the harbor are older than any other Minoan structures still extant, by no less than 500 years. Furthermore, he will add, the reason that it sank is still unknown. He has never visited them himself ("I'm much too old to learn how to scuba-dive!" he will laugh), but has seen extensive photographs of the ruins. He knows that the amphitheater and the temple of Poseidon are still intact, but does not know any details about either, save that the amphitheater is buried in tons of sand.

If any inquiries are made about the excavation, Dr. Stanley will have a piece of engraved stone – just found if met during the day, dug up the previous afternoon if met at night. Its fragmentary text claims that *hecontothieres* – "hundred-armed" monsters of Greek myth – are imprisoned on or near the island. He is very excited about this discovery; if queried he will say that it validates certain theories of his, but will refuse to elaborate on what they are. Querying his graduate assistants or the college students will also prove fruitless.

If asked about missing persons, he will mention "Carrie-Anne something," who vanished on one of his digs two years ago. He will apologize for not remembering her full name, but so many details slip his mind . . . He will recall that an extensive search was made for her, but that she was never found.

In the Water

Much of this adventure may take place actually in the harbor of Kupros. Because temperature and exertion can significantly affect the life expectancy of a

Dr. Jonathan Stanley

50-ish, 5'8", 170 lbs., unruly white hair, brown eyes, mustache.

ST 10, DX 10, IQ 15, HT 12.

Basic Speed 5.5; Move 5.

Dodge: 5.

Advantages: Common Sense, Language Talent +4, Status 1, Strong Will +2, Toughness +1.

Disadvantages: Absent-Mindedness, Age, Bad Sight, Code of Honor: British Gentleman, Sense of Duty to students.

Quirks: Sometimes forgets to eat and sleep when excited over a new find; Mutters to himself in Hittite; Wears stereotypical "Englishman on Safari" clothing when out on digs; Believes that there is a city buried under volcanic ash on Kupros.

Skills: Administration-15; Anthropology-14; Archaeology-19; Area Knowledge (England)-17; Area Knowledge (Greece)-16; Bard-15; Carousing-12; Driving-12; History (Ancient Greek)-19; History (Minoan)-17; Occultism-15; Research-16; Savoir-Faire-17; Theology (Ancient Greek)-18; Writing-16.

Languages: Assyrian-17; English-19; Greek (Ancient)-18; Greek (Modern)-18; Hittite-17.

Dr. Stanley is a typical British gentleman "in the wild," from his pith helmet to his boots. An authority of great eminence in the field of Ancient Greek and Minoan civilization, he and his students are here on Kupros to excavate in the hopes of proving one of his pet theories – that there is an ancient city, buried Pompeii-style under volcanic ash, somewhere along the south shore of the island.

Even if awakened in the middle of the night, he will be friendly and talkative, and willing to put on a kettle of hot water for tea for his visitors. He is a cheerful and charming old man, ready with a story or a joke to put cautious visitors at ease. His knowledge of Greece and its environs is all but encyclopedic, and he is willing – and probably able – to answer any question put to him on the subject.

Stanley's Information

If the characters are on the ball, they won't need to go to Stanley for help. If they seem to be stuck, though, Dr. Stanley can be the perfect source of information about the Kraken and the Slimespaw. In general, the GM should let Stanley help out as much as he feels necessary – from cryptic hints based on ancient manuscripts to outright leading the expedition if needed.

character in or under water, the GM should pay special attention to the sidebars *Climate Conditions* and *Adventuring in Water*, p. 38, and the sidebar on *Metapowers in the Deep* on p. 74.

Strange Correlations

There are some very odd things – mathematically speaking – about Minoan ruins at the mouth of Kupros' harbor, but they will only be noticed by a Lightning Calculator or someone with Compulsive Number-Crunching and a calculator.

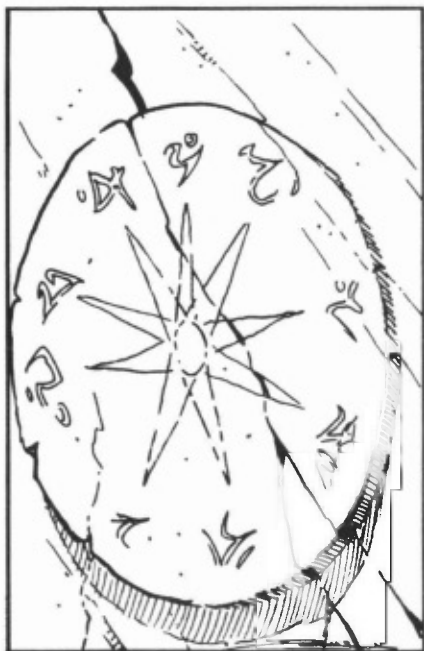
The ratio of the radius of the amphitheater floor to the distance from the center of the amphitheater to the furthest border of the city is the same as the ratio of the earth's radius to the radius of the moon's orbit.

The ratio of the radius of the amphitheater floor to the distance from the center of the amphitheater to the temple of Poseidon is the same as the ratio between the radius of the orbits of Earth and Neptune.

The number of streets and alleys in the city is a 3-digit prime number.

The ratio of the radius of the amphitheater floor to the floor's circumference is exactly 3. In other words, the perfectly circular floor of the amphitheater has a value of $\pi = 3$!

The GM should feel free to add more strange correspondences to this list, if there's anyone in the party who can detect and appreciate them. Relationships to Easter Island, the Pyramids of Egypt or the Yucatan, or to astronomical quantities are perfect. Of all these, though, only the value of π for the amphitheater floor is a useful clue to anything . . .



Fish and Other Sea Life

There will be no fish for a minimum radius of two miles around the northern end of the island – at least not living ones. The shockwaves from the first two bombs killed them all, and further bombs will ensure the lifeless zone. However, *south* of the island, in the “blast shadow” of Kupros itself, aquatic life has survived fringe effects of the concussion wave. A super with the ability to speak with fish will be able to interrogate the sea life there about the bombs, but will learn little. Fish will refuse to enter the “dead zone” immediately, and will continue to refuse until at least 24 hours after the last bomb has gone off. More intelligent sea life, like dolphins, will have fled the vicinity completely, and will be unavailable for comment.

If the Control Fish super-skill is used to force fish into the “dead zone,” consider this a situation the fish believe will cause injury, and roll a Quick Contest for control as per the power description.

Please note, also, that if the Kraken is freed, all fish except gastropods, octopi and squid will refuse to enter the harbor or any other waters where it is located.

Sea Wolf's Cave

A cache of the remaining bombs can be found outside the harbor, in a cave on the outer shore of the eastern spur, some 60 feet below the surface level. This cave is actually Sea Wolf's preferred dwelling, and is furnished with various scavenged goods – including several dozen priceless Minoan relics: vases, urns, statues and the like.

The bombs are in a niche at the rear of the cave, concealed by several water-logged crates and boxes. The total number of bombs found naturally depends on how many have been used so far. The initial cache here was six, and each bomb exploded up until the PCs find the cave has come from Sea Wolf's cache. If six explosions have taken place, then the remaining half-dozen tacnukes have been transferred here and none are left in the Palambros government house (see p. 50).

When this cave is approached or investigated, the GM should roll 3d. On a 10 or less, Sea Wolf is currently in it. If he is not present and the cave is explored for any amount of time, the GM should roll again every minute of game time spent in the cave. On a 10 or less, Sea Wolf returns! The aquatic super is highly territorial, and will attack any outsiders in his home. In fact, he will go Berserk, as per the disadvantage.

If player characters ransack Sea Wolf's cave and avoid encountering him in the process, they will have gained a devoted enemy. Once he discovers the loss, Sea Wolf will attempt to track down the thieves, kill them and recover the stolen goods. It doesn't matter if the stolen goods were the bombs or a piece of broken pottery – he will react in the same irrational manner. If Sea Wolf survives the adventure and is not captured, he can, at the GM's option, become a full-fledged Enemy, adding to the disadvantage count of the vandalizing character(s).

If Sea Wolf must restock the bombs, either because the original cache was used up or because it was stolen, it will take him only 20 minutes to move the remaining bombs to his cave from the Palambros government house. (He will gather them all together in a fishing net for transport.)

In the Ruins

At the mouth of the harbor is the source of Kupros' moderate tourist income – an unnamed city of Minoan construction, relatively intact yet submerged deep

beneath the waves. The exact cause of its destruction is unknown, but it does predate the explosion of the northern volcano by no less than 1,500 years.

Located some 200 feet below the surface, the city is large – it covers more than eight times the land area that modern Palambros (admittedly a small town) does. Most of the buildings are crumbling, although whether from age and erosion, or because of the tacnukes, cannot easily be determined by the player characters. Any character with *both* Archaeology and any skill that includes knowledge of the after-effects of a nuclear blast – Armoury: Atomic Weapons, Nuclear Physics, Professional Skill: Civil Defense, Survival: Post-Holocaust, or the like – should roll against both skills at -1; success on both rolls allows the character to determine that erosion has done more damage here than nuclear explosions. However, the ancient stones have been almost entirely scoured of sea life by the recent blasts.

Despite the condition of the buildings, the streets of the city are mostly clear. Being of ancient construction, they are a hodge-podge of irregular angles and narrow alleyways: a good maze in which to evade pursuers – or in which to get oneself lost! Visitors without Absolute Direction or Eidetic Memory must make an IQ-2 roll to remember where they are in the city, IQ-4 if they are busy pursuing someone or being pursued. Of course, one can always swim up above the city rooftops to reorient himself, but in a pursuit or combat situation, this may expose the lost person to enemy fire!

Much of the city is mildly radioactive. See the sidebar *Radiation and Feeding the Kraken*.

At almost any time that the ruins are explored, Sea Wolf will be there. Roll 1d for every 5 minutes of game time spent in the ruins; on a 1, the PC(s) and Sea Wolf must roll their best (appropriate) sense roll to see if either detects the other. Sea Wolf is armed with his speargun and 3 spears, and usually wears a backpack that contains a tacnuke (the next to be used). He will be fiercely territorial, and will attempt to kill invaders because of the threat they pose. However, because of his duties, he will not leave the ruins to pursue. (Exception: if the characters had earlier ransacked his home, he will not feel bound to stay in the city unless he must set a bomb in the next few minutes). Sea Wolf will, no matter what transpires, warn his coreligionists as soon as he has the time.

Structures

There are two substantially intact structures in the ruins – an ancient temple and an amphitheater.

The Amphitheater. A great, bowl-like structure – not unfamiliar in form to the PCs – the amphitheater is located in the exact center of the sunken city. Unlike the buildings around it, it is in perfect condition, untouched by time or nuclear explosions. It is the center of all activity on the island at this time, as its great circular floor is actually the door and protective seal of the Kraken's magical imprisonment.



Radiation and Feeding the Kraken

Besides using the actual blast as a hammer to smash open its magically-sealed prison, the servants of the Kraken are actually feeding their lord and master with the radiation. In its centuries of imprisonment, the Kraken has grown weaker and weaker, and has made its need for replenishment known to its faithful followers. So far it has been consuming almost all the energies released by the bombs and re-energizing itself.

The practical upshot of this is that radiation levels in the water will be ridiculously low – at their worst, no more than 4 times the normal background radiation level. This level, the highest concentration, will be found at the site of the ruins, specifically at the amphitheater (see p. 47). Characters may doubt the results of their Geiger counters; if they do, they must make an appropriate Electronics Operation or Electronics skill roll at -3 in order to confirm that their equipment is in proper working order.

That is, however, until after the sixth bomb is detonated. Starting with the seventh bomb, the ambient radiation level will double with each explosion as the Kraken eats his fill. After the ninth bomb, the radiation level, while still abnormally low, will be high enough that only supers with Invulnerability to Radiation will wish to venture into the area for more than a few minutes.

For detailed treatment of radiation and radiation poisoning, see p. 76-77 of *GURPS Space*.

Cracking the Cell

If all 12 bombs are set off, the Kraken will be freed from its imprisonment. The base chance for the Kraken breaking out before then is a 0 or less on 3d (not very likely). For each bomb set off, add one to this number (e.g., a 5 or less after 5 bombs, an 8 or less after 8 bombs, and so on). The GM should roll once per hour – *any* critical failure stops rolling until another bomb is detonated.

The release of the Kraken will be preceded by an unnatural silence falling over the entire island. If the sun is up, all animal sounds will cease suddenly. Even the sound of the sea will be stilled; characters with Parabolic Hearing or Acute Hearing bonuses will be unable to hear anything but sounds made by themselves and persons near them.

One minute after the silence begins, a black cloud will blow in from the south and cover the sun or moon, depending on the time. A low rumble will begin to shake the island, until the ground is moving so violently that DX rolls are required for characters to keep their footing. This apparent earthquake will culminate in an explosion almost as loud as the nuclear bombs themselves, as the Kraken bursts from its cell. Observers near the harbor will see the water at its mouth bubble and boil, with wispy streamers of vapor rising off it for a few seconds before the monster explodes to the surface, all its dozens of tentacles raised to the sky. It will then proceed towards the shore, where it will meet with its loyal servants. If it appears before dawn, an eerie blue-green illumination with no apparent source will wash over the entire harbor area, bringing it to the average brightness of twilight.

Anybody witnessing the emergence of the Kraken must make a fright check at -6 immediately.

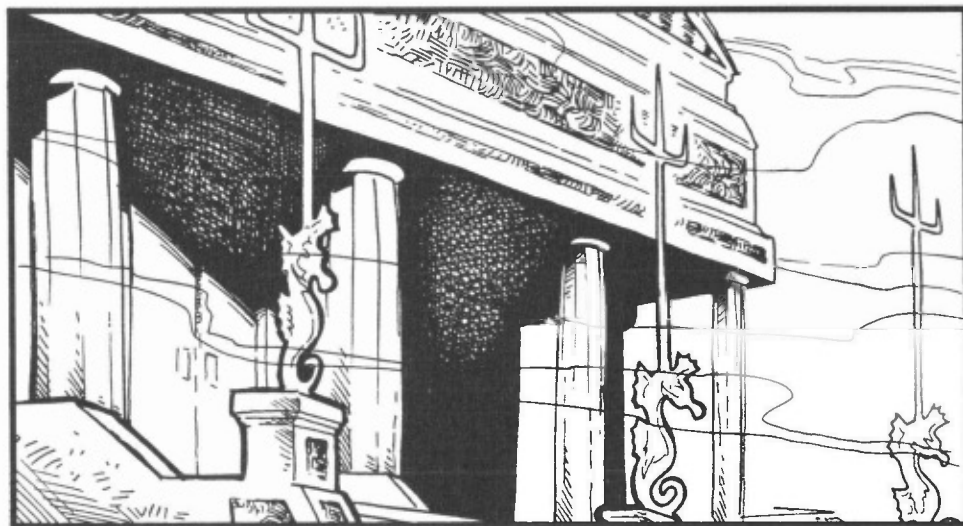
If any of the supers are present at the harbor, the Kraken will be automatically aware of them, especially if they have encountered any of the villains. If the PCs have been in combat with any of them, the Kraken will pause only to acknowledge its faithful servants before attacking those who have tried to stand in their way. If the team and the villains are in combat at the time the creature emerges, it will immediately enter combat on the side of the villains.

Circumstantial evidence – deep sand drifts surrounding the walls of the building, patches of sand still on the rows of benches – suggests that until recently the amphitheater may have been partially or completely buried in the sea bottom. Now, though, the stone floor of the amphitheater is revealed to any who would look. It is immediately obvious to any viewer that the floor is one single, solid piece of rock. Inscribed upon that floor and inlaid in gold and silver is a great nine-pointed star, with strange sigils engraved along the periphery. A roll against Occultism-2 will reveal that it is a ward of some sort; a critical success will add that it is a ward against something *very* large and *very* powerful.

As a side effect of its ward's power, the entire amphitheater has been rendered Invulnerable to all physical attacks. While already loose stone can be lifted and moved freely, no additional pieces can be broken off of the structure. If the Kraken is freed, the spell of the ward is shattered, and this physical protection will vanish; the entire amphitheater will be destroyed by the Kraken's escape.

The center of the inscribed star is ground zero for the tactical nuclear bombs set by Sea Wolf. Naturally enough, then, the amphitheater is also the point of highest radiation in the area (far lower than should be expected, however). See sidebar, p. 47. Since the start of the explosions, the ward has begun to degrade; a network of very fine cracks has begun to form in the floor. A Vision roll at a penalty of -3 will reveal this unless someone makes a specific inspection of the floor, in which the cracks will be automatically seen. If PCs return to the amphitheater after subsequent explosions, the cracks will be larger and farther-ranging.

The floor of the amphitheater measures 100 feet across, and 300 feet in circumference. (This is *not* a typographical error! Space is subtly warped in the vicinity of the warding symbol, and as a result, the local value of π is exactly 3. For other oddness, see the sidebar *Strange Correlations* on p. 46.)



The Temple of Poseidon. This designation is more for convenience than accuracy; the temple is actually dedicated to the Minoan equivalent of Poseidon. An Occultism-2 roll will reveal this information if it has not already been learned from Dr. Stanley. It is the only intact building in its section of the city, and is clearly visible from anywhere except the floor of the amphitheater, a tall, square, proud structure surrounded by devastation.

Externally it is perfectly preserved and untouched by thousands of years of sea life. Inside, it is equally clean and new-appearing. A great altar dominates the western end of the building, heavily carved with the images of fish and dolphins and water in motion. The temple's walls are lined with mosaics, including a sequence which shows the god battling with – and defeating – a great octopus-like

monster, then thrusting it into a hole and closing it up with a “lid.” The “lid” shown in the mosaic has a pattern that vaguely resembles the nine-pointed star on the floor of the amphitheater.

Like the amphitheater, the temple is invulnerable to all physical damage. The source of its mysterious invulnerability is not the ward at the amphitheater, though, and it will survive the release of the Kraken.

Out in the Open

Kupros is not a highly settled island, nor is it blessed with a network of paved roads. Outside of the town of Palambros, most roads are simple dirt tracks (*bad roads* as defined on p. B188), and their numbers are relatively few. *No* roads at all stretch around to the southern face of the volcano, forcing the team to hike (or fly) to the rest of the island.

Following the classifications given on p. B188, the primary terrains of Kupros break down as follows:

Beaches: *Very Bad* terrain.

Forested plateau: *Average* terrain.

Meadowed hills: *Average* terrain.

Volcanic slopes: *Bad* terrain.

Almost all of the island’s profitable sheep herds are kept on the meadowed hills of the eastern portion of the island. There they are normally under the watchful eye of their shepherds. However, characters entering that part of the island will quickly discover that the sheep are roaming free, without supervision, and some have actually gone as feral as sheep can get. Another tell-tale sign to raise suspicion is that it is springtime and the ewes are giving birth – and there is no one there to watch over the flocks during this sometimes difficult time (anyone with a farming background or appropriate skills should get an IQ or skill roll to pick up on this fact). Plus, there is evidence that a predator of some sort (a Tracking-2 or Naturalist roll will reveal it to be a wolf) has been preying on the sheep. (This is Were, amusing and feeding himself.)

Encounters in the Open

While still located behind the volcano, the party is not likely to be detected, especially when moving at night. However, once they are beyond the cone, any time the party moves in the open without special precautions, they may be spotted by Were: roll a quick contest between the best IQ in the party (or the appropriate skill – Camouflage, Stealth, etc. – being used) vs. the best sensory roll of Were’s current form.

Were will generally remain with the party to gather more information unless they appear to be an immediate threat to the Kraken’s pending freedom. If the terrain is clear enough, he will follow them in seagull form; otherwise, he will take the form of a cat and “befriend” the PCs. If one of the supers has the Weirdness Magnet disadvantage, Were will attach himself specifically to that person without really knowing why he’s doing so.

If a member of the party lags behind or otherwise becomes separated from the others and is not obviously formidable, Were may choose to attack them, switching forms to lion or wolf to accomplish this. Were will not stay to be defeated, but will run as soon as combat turns against him.

Otherwise, Were will report back to home base to inform the High Priest of the PCs’ presence.

Likewise, once beyond the volcano, there is a 1 in 6 chance every hour that the party will encounter 2d-1 zombies on a regular patrol of the island. Most of the zombies in these patrols will be equipped with improvised weapons as per the sidebar on p. 49.

Improvised Weapons

The following list, based on the “Psycho Killer Weapons” sidebar found on p. 75 of *GURPS Horror*, provides a reasonable assortment of improvised weapons for use by Carrionette’s zombies. If a specific combat skill is applicable (Broadsword for a board with a nail, for example) use that skill or its default; otherwise, the zombie may attack at DX level, unless the weapon is unusually clumsy. Any two-handed weapon, or anything requiring a DX penalty, takes a second to ready between attacks. All others may be used every turn.

Board with Nail – Swing-2, impaling damage. 2-handed weapon.

Boat Hook – Swing-1, impaling damage.

Chair – Swing+2, crushing damage. 2-handed weapon. DX-2.

Machete – Swing, cutting damage only.

Pitchfork – Thrust-1, impaling damage for each of four tines (make separate to-hit rolls for each). 2-handed weapon.

Shepherd’s Crook – As a staff. 2-handed weapon.

Tire Iron – Swing, crushing damage.

Tree Branch – Swing-2, crushing damage. 2-handed weapon. DX-2.

2×4 – Swing-1, crushing damage. 2-handed weapon.

The Zombie Jamboree

For a general description of the zombies and game-related statistics, see p. 60. There are 250 zombies overall on Kupros. 75 members of the late population are roaming the town of Palambros, while another 100 are patrolling the rest of the island. Both sets make up a simpleminded security system looking for anyone who escaped the villains. (Other than the PCs, there are none left by this time.) Their orders are simple: if they come across anyone living, the zombies will attempt to knock him out and drag him back to the government house in Palambros.

Another 50 zombies are gathering food, even going as far as slaughtering sheep and bringing the imperfectly-dressed meat to the villains. Another 25 are gathering what little wealth exists on the island and depositing it at their feet. A few serve as messengers, carrying written notes between the High Priest and Sea Wolf or Were (when he is out on patrol himself).

Six male zombies are assigned to serve Carrionette’s more intimate needs, and never leave her quarters in the government house.

What Happens If the PCs Lose?

If the Kraken – despite the valiant efforts of the PCs – conquers the opposition, its success is not guaranteed, nor is the failure of the team. It will take the Kraken and its servants weeks or even months to fulfill all its evil plans. Unconscious survivors can be rescued by other IST forces, even as the other military task forces make their landings on Kupros.

The direction the campaign takes from this point is up to the GM. If the PCs' superiors believe their story – especially if satellite surveillance verifies it – the campaign can change to an organized IST mission to locate the Kraken and its minions before its plans can come to fruition, perhaps culminating in a great combat between all the forces the IST can muster – jets, powered infantry, battalions of supers – versus legions of Slimespawn, magically-created metahumans and the Kraken itself.

If IST Command refuses to believe the story that the survivors tell, they may find themselves hospitalized for their delusions, or even court-martialed and discharged. Or they simply could be returned to duty with black marks permanently enshrined in their records. Still, the thought of the Kraken out there haunts them, and together they band together in an unofficial effort to locate and thwart the extradimensional evil. Pursuing their goals may get them in trouble with their superiors, local law enforcement or many other authorities, and they may never be able to prove the truth of their assertions. But the fate of the world drives them toward that final confrontation . . .



Mark of the Kraken

Palambros

The only settlement on Kupros larger than a farm, Palambros is a relatively small town of typical rural Greek construction: whitewashed 1-and 2-story buildings, clustered around zigzagging streets. In the center is a broad town square which serves as a marketplace, and which opens on the harbor. Down by the waterside, the white sand beaches which grace much of Kupros' shoreline are superseded by a mortared stone quay, at which more than a dozen traditional Grecian fishing boats are moored. Shops and homes fill the town's streets. (See map on the next page.)

However, even a casual glance, given sufficient light, will reveal that the town is in poor repair – more than can be explained by simple poverty. The town looks like it's in the beginning stages of complete abandonment: windblown trash, broken windows in those buildings with glass casements, doors and shutters banging noisily in any breeze which comes along. Close examination of the boats at the quay will reveal (with a successful Boating roll) that they have been untouched for at least a week, if not longer.

Every once in a while, dried bloodstains will be found on the ground or on a wall, but there will be no signs of a dead body. There will, though, be plenty of signs of undead bodies – the town is crawling with zombies. Groups of 2d-1 zombies will shamble by every few minutes. As with the patrols wandering the open land, they are equipped with a random assortment of improvised weapons.

Everything You Always Wanted To Know About Zombies . . .

The zombies in Palambros have very specific orders. As outlined in the sidebar *The Zombie Jamboree* on p. 49, they have been commanded to patrol the town and search for living beings other than the Servants of the Kraken. If any such are found, they are to be subdued and returned to the government house. Currently, 75 zombies are employed in this task.

The frequency of zombie patrols may force the PCs to dodge and hide, or to pick off the undead one by one. Fortunately, the abandoned buildings of the town provide a great deal of cover, and the zombies are very unimaginative about their orders – because they have not been specifically told to, they are not even looking inside the buildings they pass. They will also not notice if they are waylaid one at a time, as long as the supers are relatively subtle about it.

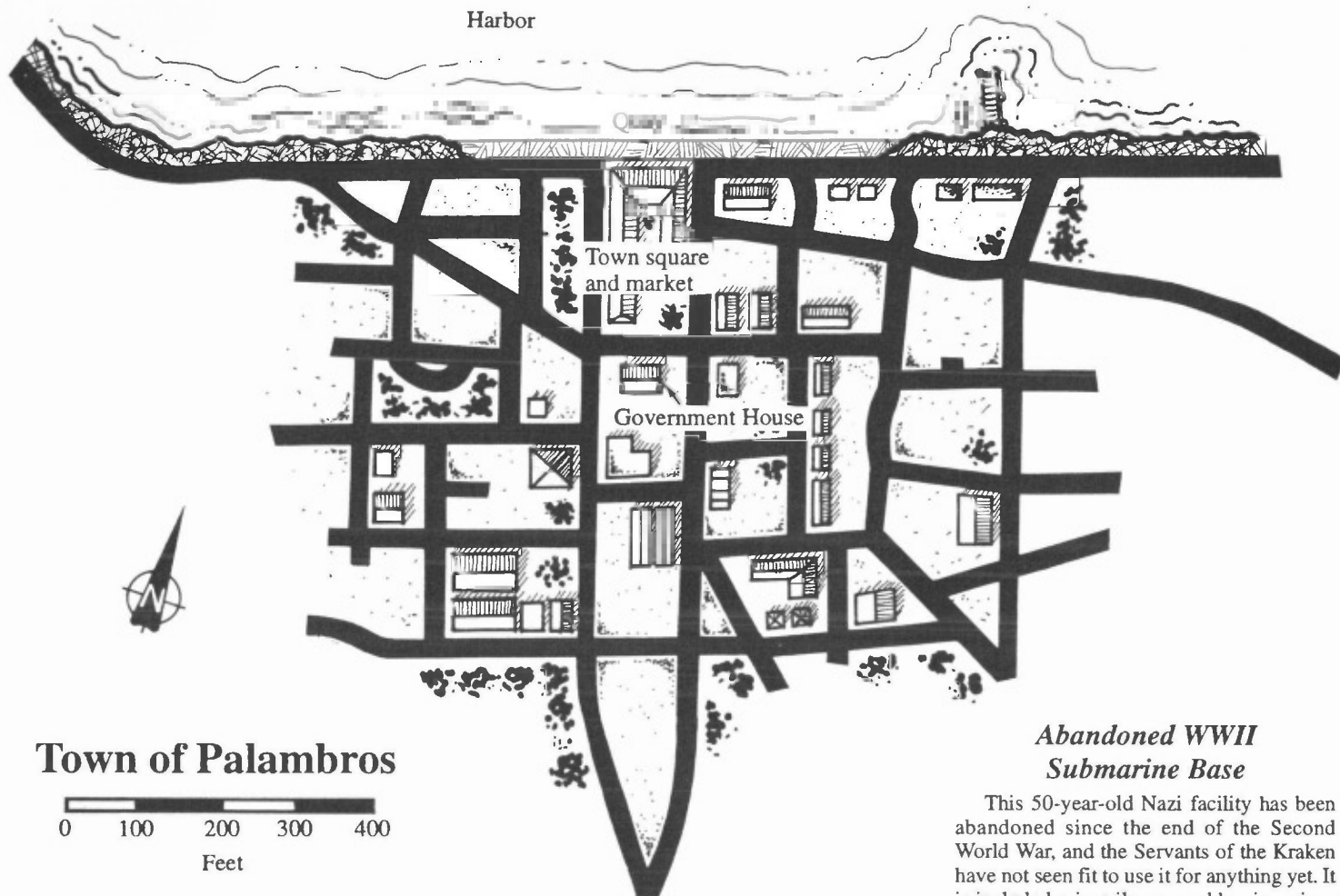
As noted elsewhere, there are only 250 zombies on the entire island; as zombies are killed, make sure to remove them from the ranks of active opponents.

Palambros Government House

The "government house" is a two-story building at the south end of the town square/marketplace and facing the sea. Since their formal occupation of the island and the conversion of the native population into zombies, the Servants of the Kraken have taken over this building as their headquarters and personal dwelling. All of them other than Sea Wolf can usually be found here, at least until the Kraken is freed. In particular, Carrionette has set up extensive sleeping quarters for herself, and the others likewise have their own rooms. Unless otherwise noted, all rooms have at least one window in each exterior wall.

First Floor. The ground floor is made up of two small chambers on one side, separated by a hallway and stairwell from a larger room. The High Priest has reserved one of the small chambers on this floor for his meditations and studies, and the others are forbidden to enter it.

The largest room on the ground floor – formerly a meeting room for the town governing body – is now Carrionette's personal quarters, which are usually occupied at all times by several of the biggest and most handsome of the male zombies, even when she is not present. It is lavishly furnished and decorated in sybaritic



Town of Palambros

Abandoned WWII Submarine Base

style, eclectically assembled from the best materials that her zombies could find on the island. Its centerpiece is a king-sized bed draped in antique red satin; the rest of the room resembles a Turkish harem. Buried somewhere under the excessive interior decor is a functioning telephone connected to the Greek telephone company.

Out in the hall, the stairwell leads up to the second floor and down into the cellar.

Second Floor. The stairs open up on another hallway, off of which open three medium-sized rooms and two smaller, closet-sized ones. A ladder against the back wall of the building allows access to the roof through a trap door.

One of the medium-sized rooms is filled with paper and cloth shreds, swirled into a circular nest large enough to suit a buffalo. This is Were's quarters; he prefers to sleep in animal form, hence the "den" he has created for himself.

The other two medium rooms were offices and are relatively intact, except for the evidence of their inhabitants' violent demises.

One of the closet-sized rooms is a toilet and shower. The other is an actual closet, in which are shoved many file cabinets and other fixtures of the government office. They are relatively intact (although some of the papers have gotten into Were's "nest"), and their recovery will please the Greek government no end.

Cellar. Until the villains took over this building, the cellar was mostly unused, relegated to the storage of old furniture and out-of-date records. The new occupants have continued with this practice, and for the most part have left the room untouched. However, unless the first six have already been used up, the remaining half-dozen bombs will be found here. They are stored in a cistern dug in one corner; the cistern is covered by a sheet of plywood, and various boxes and junk are piled on it.

This 50-year-old Nazi facility has been abandoned since the end of the Second World War, and the Servants of the Kraken have not seen fit to use it for anything yet. It is included primarily as a red herring, since its designation as a Nazi base will attract the attention of players. As such, it is an excellent location at which to introduce the investigators to their first zombie patrol, if they have so far avoided encountering one.

The layout of the base is simple: concrete docks run the entire length of the shoreline subsumed by the base. About half of these docks, which all run perpendicular to the shore, are sheltered by cavernous buildings – former dry docks and refit facilities. A pair of huge, rusting steel fuel tanks, surrounded by a tattered chain-link fence, loom over the northernmost end of the yard. Within them are a few gallons of decades-old diesel fuel, accessible only with a decrepit hand-pump that lies overgrown on the ground at the chained and locked gate.

Back from the docks, rotting wooden barracks and sheds stand in tight formations. Anyone who speaks German can read the various signs on them: "Engineers' Quarters," "Machine Shops," "Enlisted Men" and the like. There is a sheet of crumbling asphalt that was once the base's airstrip, and the ruins of its wooden and corrugated sheet metal control tower lie in a heap by its side.

Nearly anything of any possible value has long since been stripped from this site. Whatever is left has been converted by the ravages of time into heaps of rust or rot.

Running This Adventure

Troubleshooting

Sometimes even the best-laid plans of GMs and game designers go awry. Here are a few suggestions for solving some of the difficult spots that showed up in playtesting. Whenever multiple suggestions are given, they are to be considered separate alternatives, not necessarily to be used in conjunction.

They knocked out Sea Wolf – now there's no one to set off the nukes.

Sea Wolf is not the only villain who can plant the bombs. In a pinch, the High Priest himself can do it, or Carrionette can send out a set of zombies with an armed bomb to walk to the amphitheater.

Even without the Kraken, the villains outgun the heroes.

Reduce the number of zombies on the island, or make them easier to kill.

Provide backup on the U.N. ship which is now several miles to the south in the Aegean. This backup is in the form of a 10- or even 20-man squad of powered infantry (see pp. 50-51 of *GURPS International Super Teams*, or the sidebar on p. 98 of *GURPS Supers*, for their capabilities). This squad can be summoned through the com relay unit that was set up when the team first arrived.

The PCs are much more powerful than the villains.

Increase the number of zombies, and use them to give the villains a chance to escape.

Raise all the villains' DRs by 10 or even 15 points.

Release the Kraken ahead of schedule.

Give Carrionette the opportunity to Deathtouch a straggler PC, and then turn him into a zombie to use against the party. To prevent ill-will, allow the player to work with the GM. For obvious reasons, though, this would work well only in a one-shot adventure, less well in a campaign.

The PCs are roaming aimlessly.

Have IST Command call in over the com relay and demand a status report, or to provide "new intelligence information" about the situation in Palambros.

Present them with a single zombie who is moving "suspiciously," so that they will follow it towards either the sub base or to the town.

Make sure that they are in position to see the next tacnuke go off, so that they have a direction and a goal for further travel.

As the GM has no doubt seen, there is no pre-programmed plot summarized here, encounter-by-encounter. Because it is impossible to determine ahead of time what route(s) the players will decide to take – both physically and mentally – the GM must be prepared to adjust and improvise as necessary. In particular, although "encounter odds" are given for various activities and opponents, the GM should not feel constrained to only "rolling for wandering monsters." Use Were or a band of zombies as desired, not just as dictated by the dice.

One possibility is using them to sting a lethargic party into action. Allow them to investigate, but don't let them stall at any one point. Remind them that they've been dropped on the far side of the island to avoid immediate notice of their arrival and have to get to the harbor area as quickly as possible. Don't allow them to bog down!

The primary emotion and even motivation to convey to the players is primal urgency: recover the bombs before . . . before they damage the ecology too much, before they're sold, before they're used on a populated target, before the strike forces arrive . . .

It is therefore vital that the GM keep track of time as precisely as possible. There are several programmed aspects of the adventure – in particular the bomb schedule (whose sudden change in frequency is intended to unnerve the PCs) and the pending noon arrival of the various strike forces – which must be handled exactly on time. Remember that the world around the PCs is operating on its own schedule, and does not conveniently pause while they consider their next move!

In general, this adventure must be free-form because much of the activity that actually advances the plot will take place independent of the PCs' actions. It is only as the pieces begin to fall together, and the PCs discover the awful truth behind the mysterious theft and use of the bombs, that the two separate plot threads will draw together. The GM must weave the two plots into one while maintaining the horrific aspects that should serve to keep the characters – and their players – just a touch off balance.

To aid the GM in making sure that the player characters are expressly *not* the center of all attention on Kupros, the following advice and information is provided.

Encounters with the Villains

Except for Sea Wolf, who will defend his turf, the other villains will carefully observe the heroes before encountering them (if they choose to do so at all). If the supers have been spotted and deemed an immediate threat, a zombie ambush may be arranged as the initial (and hopefully only) assault to be made on them. (Remember to keep count of the zombies! There are "only" 250 of them!) Only against lone individuals or in the most dire straits – the heroes are on the verge of disrupting their plans – will the villains make the first attack.

This alone will disconcert many players, who will be confused by the enemy's general refusal to confront – and in some cases even acknowledge – their characters. But the Servants of the Kraken have more important things on their minds, and while the supers are still only trying to figure out what's going on they are not yet worth worrying about.

If a confrontation does occur, Carrionette will use her Telesend Zombie power to summon as many zombies as she can to act as cannon fodder and distraction. This will be an important part of any pitched battle with the Servants of the Kraken – the zombies will attempt to simply bury their master's enemies in rotting human flesh, and will do their best to force the PCs to deal with them instead of the

villains. In the mean time, the living opponents will attempt to withdraw, usually towards the water.

If a Villain is in Trouble . . .

. . . he can call on the Kraken. On a Patron appearance roll (9 or less), the Kraken will send a Slimespawn, teleporting it into battle. A Danger Sense roll will warn of its impending appearance, as will Combat Precognition (a psi power from *GURPS Psionics*). The villain requesting aid need not roll for control of the Slimespawn (see p. 61); it will arrive ready to fight on the behalf of the villain, but will vanish at the end of the combat unless it is killed first.

This option is open to any of the villains, not just the High Priest.

Threats to the Archaeological Expedition

Further complications can be added to the adventure if the PCs have made any arrangements at all for communications between them and Dr. Stanley's dig. If the communication is initiated only on the PCs' end (as with Telepathy, for instance), then the first time that the dig is contacted after the characters' departure, they are in the midst of repelling a patrol of zombies that have finally found them.

If, on the other hand, communication can be initiated by Dr. Stanley, as with a spare com unit left in his hands, then at the worst possible moment – a combat, or a stealthy infiltration – there will be a beep, a crackle of static, and a frantic call for help!

Coming Soon . . . The Sequel

The Horror Released has a sequel: *Project Oceanus*, which begins on p. 63. In that adventure, the heroes face the Kraken again . . . a Kraken shorn of its mystic powers but in some ways more dangerous. Players expecting a repeat of the first adventure will be surprised. Where *The Horror Released* draws on the “eldritch horror” of the H.P. Lovecraft school, *Project Oceanus* is more of a “monster movie.” The Kraken is no longer a malevolent supernatural intelligence; now it is a mindless force of nature, manipulated (but not controlled) by humans.

This change is due to the huge gem embedded in the Kraken's forehead. If this gem is destroyed the Kraken's body is freed from the evil supernatural entity that gave it its intelligence (see p. 61).

Continued on next page . . .



Coming Soon . . . The Sequel (Continued)

For Part 1 and Part 2 of Mark of the Kraken to mesh perfectly, it is necessary that the PCs destroy the gem to banish the evil entity and successfully complete *The Horror Released*, while leaving the Kraken's body alive to appear in *Project Oceanus*.

Therefore, it is strongly suggested that the GM who wants to play both adventures with the same party play up the evilly pulsing, horribly glowing gem embedded in the monster's flesh in his descriptions, to make sure that the PCs know it's there, and that it's important.

Nonetheless, there are at least two major ways that the connection between the adventures can become derailed. Below are suggestions for getting the campaign back on track.

If the Jewel Is Undamaged: If the team survives the adventure without destroying either the Kraken or the jewel, the GM is advised to follow the advice in "What if the PCs Lose," above, orchestrating a series of encounters between the Kraken and his minions, until the plot is satisfactorily concluded. If the GM lacks the time or inclination to design intermediate encounters, and wants to go directly from one pre-written adventure to the next, he may have to resort to *deus ex machina*. One day a memo comes across the daily IST worldwide action report – "Gargantuan oceanic creature designated 'Kraken' (see archive OPPFOR.ALIEN.MONS.KRAKEN) sighted and engaged by IST Tokyo south west of Kamchatka (151°E, 47°N). After 2.7-minute engagement, opponent fled, apparently wounded." During its battle with the NPC supers, the Kraken's gem was shattered . . .

If the Kraken Is Killed: If the supers somehow manage to completely destroy the Kraken's body, beyond all hope of regeneration, the GM should then assume that the monster in *Project Oceanus* is not the "real" Kraken, but a duplicate, bred and nurtured by the evil entity that controls the Kraken. It was created as a "spare," in case its original body was ever destroyed, and kept imprisoned in the great cave in the abyss (see p. 83). When the gem was broken at the death of the original body, the power of the Kraken's guiding intelligence was reduced enough to allow the second Kraken to escape. Presumably, the Kraken's mind is actively seeking a way to inhabit the second body, but by the time of the events in *Project Oceanus* it has not yet made more than preliminary progress.

The Release of the Kraken

Let's be honest about this. The Kraken is just too much fun (for the GM, at least) not to use. Unless the team manages to recover the tactical nukes before the sixth one is detonated, the Kraken is going to shatter its ages-old bonds and appear to reward its faithful servants and to utterly destroy their enemies. (Maybe . . .) The best time for this to occur is, naturally enough, in the middle of a pitched battle with the landbound villains. (Remember, unless he is found and dispatched early, Sea Wolf will continue with his personal mission, regardless of what happens on land.) While the PCs make (or fail) their Fright Checks, and while zombies crawl all over them, the villains will make a break for the harbor.

Once the Kraken comes close to the quay (or the beach, if the combat wasn't located in Palambros), it will begin to declare, in the very best expository villain manner, just what its plans are – beginning with its false promise to balance Earth's faltering ecology. (Actually, it *will* keep this promise – by flooding out all the landbound, air-breathing polluters.) The PCs will clearly hear the telepathic summary of its evil intentions. Then the next step will be up to them.

But what if the team *did* recover all the remaining nuclear devices before the sixth – and deciding – bomb was set off? Congratulate them and shower them with bonuses, extra leave time, public acclaim and U.N. accolades. Then, six months later, the Kraken will finally work its way out of its damaged (but not shattered) prison. As the world watches in horror, it will make a beeline for its imprisoned servants.

What happens next is up to the fiendish imagination of the GM. Several excellent long-term storylines can be developed from this lead. Advice on moving on to *Mark of the Kraken, Part 2* after this event can be found in the sidebar on pp. 53-54.

The Strike Forces

The one thing that the PCs and the U.N. don't want is the deployment of the Greek, Israeli and PLO strike forces on Kupros. Even if the team fails in its primary mission, this diplomatic disaster *can* be avoided. If it took all 12 bombs to free the Kraken (see sidebar, p. 48), satellite reconnaissance will report this, and the task forces will be called off, even as the PCs deal with more pressing problems.

However, if the PCs have failed utterly, any survivors from their team will awaken at gunpoint. The various forces will have landed and will be engaged in all-out warfare with each other. Kupros will have become a battle zone. In the time between the PCs' defeat and the arrival of the first strike force, the Kraken and its faithful minions will have departed for a safer location, taking the bombs with them. The fighting on Kupros will continue for quite a long time, until it can be proven conclusively to all sides that none of them managed to get their hands on the devices. In the long run, the stability of the entire Mediterranean/Middle East region while have suffered a major shock, and tensions will rise dramatically. PLO activity will soar, and Greece will remain diplomatically distant from everyone for months. As for what happens to the PCs themselves, see the sidebar *What Happens If The PCs Lose?* on p. 50.

A third possibility, which may occur to the players, is to *use* the massed military forces, by calling them in on the released Kraken. If they do so, and can convince the authorities that they are not insane, then the GM should arrange things so that, after an appropriate amount of carnage, the helicopter gunships and rocket launchers destroy the gem in the monster's forehead. This will cause the Kraken to flee at top speed to the nearest oceanic abyss (see p. 83), and will set up the supers for their encounter with the monster in the next adventure (see p. 53). At the end, after the evil's defeat, there may be some tension over the disposition of the bombs, but the U.N. will claim them and make that claim stick.

THE VILLAINS

The High Priest

Age 48, 5'9", 180 lbs., swarthy, wispy black hair, brown eyes, scaly skin, pronounced hunchback.

ST: 11 (10 points) **IQ:** 15 (60 points) **Speed:** 6.75
DX: 13 (30 points) **HT:** 14 (45 points) **Move:** 6
Damage: *Levinbolt:* 10d-10 Imp; *Thrust* 1d-1; *Swing* 1d+1
Dodge: 6 **Parry:** 6 (Knife)

Point Total: 550

Advantages

Charisma +4 (20 points)
Clerical Investment (5 points)
Magery 3 (35 points)
Patron: The Kraken on 9 or less (30 points)
Voice (10 points)

Disadvantages

Appearance: Hideous (-20 points)
Fanaticism: Kraken (-15 points)
Intolerance: Israelis and Jews (-5 points)
Jinxed×1 (-20 points)
Major Delusion: The Kraken comes to right the ecological balance. (-10 points)
Minor Delusion: He is unchanged physically. (-5 points)
No Sense of Humor (-10 points)
Overconfidence (-10 points)
Stubbornness (-5 points)

Super Advantages

Amphibious (10 points)
Breath Holding×5 (10 points)
Damage Resistance 30 (Switchable, special effect: glowing green force field; Costs 2 Fatigue -10%, Takes Extra Time -10%; 72 points)
Extra Fatigue 13 (Usable for magic only -10%; 35 points)
Nictating Membranex1 (10 points)
Walk on Liquid (15 points)

Psionics

Mind Shield-13(20) (Always On -10%; 37 points)

Super-Powers

Levinbolt-15(10) (Bought as Laser; Full Power Only -10%, Affects Insubstantial +20%; 82 points)
Neutralize Fire-16(10) (Special effect: fire is doused as if by water; Increased Area ×3 +60%; 52 points)

Skills

Area Knowledge (Israel)-15 (1 point); Area Knowledge (Jordan)-15 (1 point); Area Knowledge (Kupros)-16 (2 points); Bard-18 (4 points); Brawling-14 (2 points); Detect Lies-13 (1 point); Driving (Jeep/4WD)-12 (1 point); Ecology/TL7-12 (½ point); Guns (Pistol)/TL7-16 (2 points); Guns (SMG)/TL7-16 (2 points); Intelligence Analysis-15 (4 points); Knife-13 (1 point); Leadership-19 (2 points); Occultism-16 (4 points); Politics-15 (2 points); Research-15 (2 points); Stealth-14 (4 points); Strategy-14 (2 points); Tactics-16 (6 points); Theology (Kraken)-16 (6 points).



Languages

Arabic-15 (0, native tongue); English-14 (1 point); Greek-13 (½ point).

Grimoire

Sense Life-17 (2 points); Sense Foes-19 (6 points); Sense Emotion-16 (1 point); Persuasion-19 (6 points); Seek Water-16 (1 point); Purify Water-17 (2 points); Create Water-17 (2 points); Destroy Water-17 (2 points); Shape Water-19 (6 points); Detect Magic-18 (4 points); Aura-17; Contact Kraken-18 (8 points; see text); Summon Slimespawn-18 (4 points; see text).

Quirks

Unswayably singleminded about his goals.
Nurses a hope that he can use the Kraken against Israel.
Sometimes doubts his control of his magic.
Feels ill at ease when far from water.
Devoted to cause of ecology.

Story

Khalid Habib once held a position of some responsibility within the PLO, acting as the equivalent of a squad-level military commander. However, his devotion was not solely to the terrorist group; he had an interest in ecological issues and supported the goals of the Green parties of Europe. Furthermore, he dabbled lightly in the occult, more for amusement and intellectual interest than from any real search for power or enlightenment. Nonetheless, power found *him*.

Several years of study and practice had revealed that he did possess some aptitude for magic, which he assiduously hid from the PLO. His range of spells was small, and his skills far from imposing, but he continued to pursue his researches in his few free hours, with the hope he might someday master mighty magicks that could help the Palestinian cause. Then, five years ago, he came upon an ancient tome that dated from the time when Caliph Haroun al-Rashid ruled Baghdad; in it were even older secrets from the ancient Greeks – secrets meant to be kept hidden from Man until the end of Time. Studying this volume, Khalid slowly came under the influence of the Kraken.

The imprisoned Thing found in Khalid a servant to its liking, and granted him a measure of power. The power was not without its price, though – the handsome Khalid was physically and mentally warped. Convinced by the Kraken that the ecology of the Earth was doomed unless it could be freed, Khalid (now its High Priest), began to work towards that end, even while hoping he could use its otherworldly power against Israel. Meanwhile, he collected and organized the others whom the Kraken had begun calling to Kupros. With the tacnukes now in their possession, Khalid is anxiously looking forward to the change that will sweep the Earth after the Kraken is freed.

The other spell is *Summon Slimespawn*; otherwise identical to *Summon Elemental*, it allows the High Priest to summon a Slimespawn (see p. 61). Once it arrives, the High Priest must try to control the Servant with a separate roll. Roll the High Priest's IQ + skill for this spell (total 33) vs. the Servant's ST + IQ (30). (The High Priest will have a bonus of +5 on this roll if the Servant is being summoned to specifically advance a request or plan of the Kraken's.) If the High Priest wins, he can direct the Servant to perform one task, so long as the task takes less than 1 hour to perform. After the hour, the Servant will return to its own dimension, whether or not the task is finished.

ST: 40 (180 points) **IQ:** 12 (20 points) **Speed:** 7.75
DX: 17 (100 points) **HT:** 12/20 (60 points) **Move:** 7 land
56 Swim

Damage: *Thrust* 4d+1; *Swing* 7d-1
Dodge: 7 (Apply targeting modifiers to hit while swimming)
Point Total: 590

Absolute Direction (5 points)
Acute Hearing +5 (10 points)
Patron: The Kraken on 9 or less (30 points)

Appearance: Ugly (-10 points)
Bad Sight: Nearsighted (-10 points)
Color Blindness (-10 points)
Eunuch (-5 points)
Fanaticism: Kraken (-15 points)
Major Delusion: The Kraken comes to correct the ecological balance. (-10 points)

- Amphibious (10 points)
- Discriminatory Smell (Only in water, -30%; 11 points)
- Flexibility (15 points)
- Gills (10 points)
- Nictating Membrane×3 (30 points)
- Pressure Support (15 points)
- Regeneration, Fast (50 points)
- Sonar, 18-hex radius (Radar Sense; Differential Effect: 1/3 radius out of water, -20%; 54 points)
- Super Swimming×3 (30 points)
- Temperature Tolerance (-25° to 150°) (10 points)

Dependency: Water, daily (-15 points)

Area Knowledge (Kupros and harbor)-12 (1 point); Area Knowledge (Sicily)-12 (1 point); Brawling-21 (16 points); Ecology (Ocean)/TL7-10 (1 point); Fishing-11 ($\frac{1}{2}$ point); Free Fall-15 ($\frac{1}{2}$ point); Lip Reading-13 (4 points); Naturalist (Ocean)-12 (4 points); Spear-17 (2 points); Speargun-17 (2 points); Survival (Undersea)-15 (8 points).

English-10 (1 point); Italian-12 (0; native tongue).

Highly territorial.
Stays underwater as much as possible.
Speaks only in monosyllables.
Slavishly devoted to the service of the Kraken.
Completely subservient to the High Priest.

Small backpack, 3 lbs.
Spears, 3, for speargun. 3 lbs.
Speargun (treat as a crossbow) 6 lbs.
Sea Wolf will usually be carrying a Barrût tactical nuclear bomb in his backpack!

Story

Carlo Mazzini was a wealthy Sicilian businessman until he heard the seductive call of the Kraken one winter's morning during a vacation in the Aegean. He had anchored his yacht off the island near the mouth of the harbor that day, without even caring to visit the island's one town. He had felt drawn to that spot ever since entering the Aegean, as though by a voice demanding his presence; once there, a strange apprehension seized him. Driven beyond understanding by the goading voice of the Kraken within his mind, Carlo leapt from his yacht and plunged into the cold water of the sea.

When he emerged from the deep, the touch of the Kraken was evident upon him. Carlo had become the Sea Wolf, shaped into something born of the sea but yet manlike. Unlike his compatriots, much of his original personality was stripped away in his transformation, leaving a willing tool with almost no drives and motivations of his own. But the Sea Wolf is not a robot or devoid

of thought by any means. When on his own, he can freely use his own initiative and will prove clever and imaginative, especially as an opponent. However, he cannot and will not disobey an order from the High Priest or from the Kraken.

The Sea Wolf has been entrusted with the job of placing the tacnukes properly over the Kraken's cell, and will frequently be found carrying one during this adventure. As the "brick" of the group, he is often called upon for simple muscle jobs. Undersea, his primary weapons are his speargun and his speed. Unless specifically ordered to do so, he will be loath to waste a tacnuke upon any but the most threatening enemy.

He considers the harbor on the whole to be his personal territory, and will defend it vigorously from any invasion. He spends most of his time in the sea, and dwells separately from the others in an underwater cave just outside the harbor, where half of the stockpile of tactical nukes is stored.

Were

Age 22, 5'5", 140 lbs., swarthy, black hair, black eyes, brutish appearance (human form).

ST: 10 (0 points)	IQ: 12 (20 points, shared)	Speed: 6.5
DX: 14 (45 points, shared)	HT: 12 (20 points, shared)	Move: 6
Damage: Thrust 1d-2; Swing 1d		
Dodge: 6	Parry: 7 (Knife)	

Point Total: 105 (human form). Shared attributes and advantages 120 points. Grand total 550 points.

Advantages

Combat Reflexes (15 points, shared)
Patron: The Kraken, on 9 or less (30 points)

Disadvantages

Appearance: Ugly (-10 points)
Fanaticism: Kraken (-15 points)
Major Delusion: The Kraken comes to correct the ecological balance. (-10 points)

Super Advantages

Costume (15 points)
Multiple Forms×5 (Instantaneous +20%, 30 points)

Skills

Area Knowledge ("Good Fishing Areas")-12 (1 point); Area Knowledge (Kupros)-14 (4 points, shared); Brawling-16 (4 points, shared); Fishing (Sea/Net)-13 (2 points); Knife-14 (1 point); Mechanic (Diesel Engine)/TL7-12 (2 points); Navigation/TL7-13 (6 points); Powerboat-14 (2 points); Stealth-15 (4 points, shared); Swimming-14 (1 point); Tracking-15 (8 points, shared).

Languages

English-11 (1 point); Greek-12 (0, native tongue, shared).

Quirks

Prefers animal forms to human form.
Cautious and careful.
Finds Carrionette's zombies disgusting.
Wishes he had a water-going form.
Tone deaf.



Story

Poulos Apostolidis was a fisherman before being called by the Kraken. A native of Kupros, he was reasonably well-to-do and actually owned a diesel-powered fishing boat – unusual on the tradition-bound island.

Poulos heard the summons of the Kraken while sailing into the island's harbor. Overwhelmed by its power, he threw himself overboard as the boat passed over the ancient Thing's cell.

Before he struck the water, though, Poulos was transformed into a seabird; instinct carried him into the air, and some inner sense led him to the High Priest. At the feet of the Priest, he learned of the mission of the Kraken to cleanse the Earth, and had the full range of his power revealed to him. From that day forth, he never returned to his life in Palambros, and his boat was found abandoned, a mystery to the people of the island.

Were is a shapeshifter, capable of changing into a limited number of animal forms. In every form, he retains his full personality, although the knowledge and skills available to him will vary. Since none of his forms, except perhaps the lion shape, is exceptionally powerful, his role in the group is scout and intelligence

gatherer. In the shape of a bird or a cat, he constantly roams the island, seeking anything or anyone that might be useful, or might pose a threat to their plans. If something catches his interest, he will usually remain unobtrusively with the object of his attention until he either tires of the task, or feels he has learned as much as he can. Were will then fly back to the High Priest and make a full report. However, if he has the opportunity to attack a single person who does not seem too powerful, he may choose to do so.

Although he is supposed to cover the entire island in his patrols, Were believes that this duty is largely symbolic since Carionette has turned the entire known population into zombies. Knowing this, and being slightly lazy, he does not bother to survey the uninhabited lands on the southern side of the volcanic cone. He is therefore completely unaware of the recently-established archeological dig.

The attributes and description given above are for Were's human form. His alternate forms are as follows. Of the advantages and disadvantages used here, two come from *GURPS* sourcebooks other than *Supers*, and need brief explanations. *Bite* allows the character to make a biting attack, with damage determined as per the sidebar on p. B140. *No Fine Manipulators* means that the form has nothing approaching hands and cannot perform acts of manual dexterity.

Shared attributes, advantages and skills are not counted towards point totals.

Seagull

ST: 10 (0 points) **IQ:** 12 (shared) **Speed:** 6.5
DX: 15 (shared) **HT:** 12 (shared) **Move:** 3
 ground, 12 flying.

Damage: *Thrust* 1d (× 0.25); *Swing* 1d+2 (× 0.25)

Dodge: 4 (ground), 13 (flying)

Point Total: 78

Advantages

Absolute Direction (5 points)
 Acute Vision +5 (10 points)
 Combat Reflexes (shared)

Disadvantages

Fanaticism: Kraken (-15 points)
 Major Delusion: The Kraken comes to correct the ecological balance. (-10 points)
 Mute (-25 points)
 No Fine Manipulators (-30 points)

Super Advantages

Claws (15 points)
 Flight, Winged (30 points)
 Super Flight×2 (40 points)

Super Disadvantages

Shrinking×2 (Permanent, -20 points)

Skills

Area Knowledge (Kupros)-14 (shared); Brawling-17 (shared); Camouflage-12 (1 point); Flight-18 (16 points); Greek-12 (shared); Navigation/TL7-16 (12 points); Shadowing-16 (10 points) Stealth-16 (shared); Tracking-17 (shared, +4 points).

Quirks

As for human form.



Cat

ST: 10 (0 points) **IQ:** 12 (shared) **Speed:** 7.5
DX: 15 (shared) **HT:** 12 (shared) **Move:** 7, +4 to Climbing

Damage: *Thrust* 1d (× 0.25); *Swing* 1d+2 (× 0.25); *Bite:* 1d-4 Cut

Dodge: 8

Point Total: 99

Advantages

Acute Taste and Smell +4 (8 points)
 Bite (5 points)
 Combat Reflexes (shared)
 Four Legs (5 points)

Disadvantages

As for Seagull.

Super Advantages

Catfall (10 points)
 Claws (15 points)
 Dark Vision (25 points)
 Increased Speed×1 (25 points)
 Perfect Balance (15 points)
 Super Climbing×4 (12 points)
 Super Jump×1 (10 points)
 Super Running×1 (20 points)

Super Disadvantages

Shrinking×2 (Permanent, -20 points)

Skills

Area Knowledge (Kupros)-14 (shared); Brawling-16 (shared); Climbing-15 (4 points); Greek-12 (shared); Jumping-16 (4 points); Stealth-17 (shared, +12 points); Tracking-17 (shared, +4 points).

Quirks

As for human form.

Wolf

ST: 10 (0 points) **IQ:** 12 (shared) **Speed:** 9.5
DX: 15 (shared) **HT:** 12 (shared) **Move:** 10

Damage: *Thrust* 1d; *Swing* 1d+2; *Bite:* 1d-2 Cut

Dodge: 11

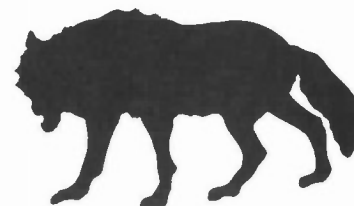
Point Total: 94

Advantages

Acute Taste and Smell +5 (10 points)
 Bite (5 points)
 Combat Reflexes (shared)
 Four Legs (5 points)
 Night Vision (10 points)

Disadvantages

As for Seagull, plus:
 Color Blindness (-10 points)



Super Advantages

Claws (15 points)
Discriminatory Smell (15 points)
DR 5 (15 points)
Increased Speed×3 (75 points)
PD 1 (25 points)
Ultrahearing (5 points)

Skills

Area Knowledge (Kupros)-14 (shared); Brawling-16 (shared); Greek-12 (shared); Intimidation-12 (2 points); Jumping-17 (8 points); Running-12 (4 points); Stealth-15 (shared); Tracking-15 (shared).

Quirks

As for human form.

Lion

ST: 25 (-40% from Growth, 90 points) **IQ:** 12 (shared) **Speed:** 6.25
DX: 13 (shared, -10 points) **HT:** 12 (shared) **Move:** 6
Damage: Thrust 2d+2 Imp; Swing 5d-1 Cut; Bite: 1d+1 Cut
Dodge: 8

Point Total: 104

Advantages

Bite (5 points)
Combat Reflexes (shared)
Four Legs (5 points)
Night Vision (10 points)

Disadvantages

As for Wolf, plus:
Bloodlust (-10 points)

Super Advantages

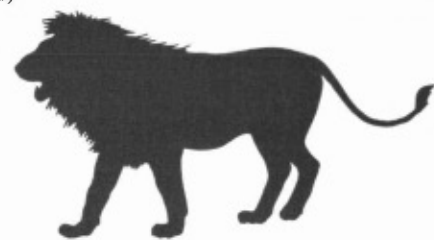
DR 5 (15 points)
Growth×1 (Maximum size only, -40%; 6 points. Used to represent the 2-hex size and greater mass of a lion.)
PD 1 (25 points)
Super Running×1 (Costs 2 Fatigue per minute of use, -10%; 18 points)
Talons (40 points)

Skills

Area Knowledge (Kupros)-14 (shared); Brawling-15 (shared); Greek-12 (shared); Intimidation-13 (4 points); Stealth-14 (shared); Swimming-13 (1 point); Tracking-15 (shared).

Quirks

As for human form.



Carrionette

Age 22, 5'8", 90 lbs., pale skin, ash-blond hair, green eyes, emaciated and "undead-looking."

ST: 10 (0 points) **IQ:** 15 (60 points) **Speed:** 6.5
DX: 16 (80 points) **HT:** 10 (0 points) **Move:** 7
Damage: Deathtouch: 3d; Thrust 1d-2; Swing 1d
Dodge: 6

Point Total: 550

Advantages

Combat Reflexes (15 points)
High Pain Threshold (10 points)
Immunity to Disease (10 points)
Patron: The Kraken on 9 or less (30 points)

Disadvantages

Appearance: Unattractive (-5 points)
Fanaticism: Kraken (-15 points)
Major Delusion: The Kraken comes to correct the ecological balance. (-10 points)
Odious Personal Habit: Necrophilia (-15 points)
Skinny (-5 points)

Super Advantages

Death Touch (Magical "knack": Deathtouch plus 3 points of Power; 90 points. See text for details.)
DR 8 (24 points)
Regeneration, Regular (25 points)

Super-Powers

Create Zombie-16 (Magical "knack." Costs 0 fatigue, must touch body, takes 15 seconds; 135 points. See text for details.)
Telesend Zombie-19(15) (Based on Telesend; To zombies



only, -40%; Instantaneous, +20%; Area Effect, +50%, Increased Area×5, +100%; 116 points)

Skills

Archaeology-13 (1 point); Area Knowledge (Greece)-14 (½ point); Area Knowledge (Kupros)-15 (1 point); Bicycling-15 (½ point); Brawling-16 (1 point); Computer Operations/TL7-14 (½ point); Fast-Talk-15 (2 points); Research-14 (1 point); Running-8 (1 point); Sex Appeal-9 (1 point); Writing-13 (½ point).

Quirks

Talks in baby talk to her zombies.
Always curt and snappy to living folk.
Sometimes distracted by her own sensuality.
Overwhelmed with religious awe of the Kraken.
Hasn't noticed that two years have gone by since she was called by the Kraken.

Story

Two years ago, Carrie-Anne Nestor was an American college student studying archeology, with an eye towards a doctorate in the field. When the opportunity to participate on a dig on a Greek island arose, she leaped at the chance. She soon found herself one of two dozen students working under Dr. Jonathan Stanley of the British Institute. Their dig site was Kupros, where Dr. Stanley felt sure there was a long-lost city, buried Pompeii-style by the volcano which made up most of the island.

What success they had, Carrie-Anne never learned, for almost as soon as she stepped upon the island, the summons of the Kraken touched her mind. Within a few days of her arrival, she left the dig, and was never seen again by her companions. Shortly afterwards, the Kraken gained another servant: Carrionette, zombie mistress.

The Kraken granted Carrionette a touch that was deadly to the living, but gave new life to the dead: with one touch she could kill an enemy, and with the next raise him up as a servant. She could also command groups of zombies from a distance with a form of telepathy.

Carrie-Anne's transformation into Carrionette was as drastic as those of her compatriots. Once a beautiful young girl, she is

emaciated and pale with an unhealthy look. Her face is almost skull-like, and her long blonde hair hangs in tangled strings; she could almost be mistaken for a zombie herself. Like the others, she is insane, but even more so than they. She is fascinated with death, and disdains that which lives. She gains sensual pleasure from the company and attentions of her zombies, and may at any time (except in direst emergency) forget what she is doing to satisfy a casual lust with whatever zombie or zombies are handy. She is a malevolently whimsical and dangerously random opponent whose actions cannot be accurately predicted or anticipated.

At the time the adventure starts, the entire population of Kupros known to the Kraken's followers has been converted into zombies by Carrionette, much to her delight.

Carrionette's two major abilities are magical knacks from *GURPS Magic*, as suggested on p. SU18. For GMs who do not own that volume, their effects are as follows:

Create Zombie. Requiring a relatively complete dead body, this spell produces an undead servant. The type of body determines the result: a fresh body produces a Zombie, a skeleton produces a Skeleton, a very old, dry body produces a mummy. Its attributes are based on those of the original body, as are its physical skills. It does not have the "soul," mental skills, or memories of a living person. The Zombie remains animated until destroyed.

Deathtouch. This ability is touch-only. The subject takes 1d of damage for every point of energy the caster uses in the spell (Carrionette's knack is self-powered for 3 points of energy, making her Deathtouch 3d.) Neither passive defense nor damage resistance protects against this injury! This spell *does* affect the undead.

Typical Zombie

Undead cannon-fodder.

ST: 11	IQ: 8	Speed: 6.25
DX: 10	HT: 15	Move: 6
Damage: Thrust 1d-1; Swing 1d+1		
Dodge: 6		

Skills

Any physical skills possessed in life. Zombies from Kupros may possess any of the following weapon skills at a level of 1d+9: Axe/Mace, Brawling, Broadsword/Shortsword (for clubs, batons and other battering weapons), Guns (police especially), Knife and/or Staff. The GM should not forget non-combat skills: Zombies *can* use Stealth, Swimming, Climbing and so on.

Description

These are magically animated corpses, created by the touch of Carrionette. They will follow her verbal or telepathic orders, or those she tells them to obey. They will always obey her, rather than another, if a conflict arises. Zombies can also be "programmed" with simple commands: "Attack anyone other than me who comes into this room, and keep attacking until they leave."

Zombies may use any weapon from tire irons to .45 automatics, but they are much more effective with melee weapons than with guns (zombies seldom remember to aim or reload). Most of the zombies encountered on Kupros will be either unarmed or carrying clubs, farm implements, 2x4's or other improvised melee weapons. (See the *Improvised Weapons* sidebar on p. 49.)

Zombies feel no pain. They are never stunned, and never suffer any skill penalty because of wounds. Should a zombie be crippled, or even lose a limb, it will continue to fight. A zombie with a missing foot moves a 4 (or 1 less than its normal move,

whichever is worse). With a missing leg, it hops along at 2; legless but with at least one arm, it drags itself along at 1. When its HT reaches 0, the spell is broken and the zombie "dies."



Minor and Major Healing spells will work on a zombie, but no other healing spells will have an effect. Treat the Healing super skill as Minor Healing if its Power is 3 or less, otherwise consider it Major Healing. Once a zombie is “killed,” Carrionette’s touch will not work on that body again.

Please note that most of Carrionette’s zombies are freshly killed, and may not appear too different from a human in some form of catatonic shock – until someone checks for a pulse.

Discovering what a zombie really is calls for a Fright Check at -2! Once the party is aware of the zombies’ nature, encountering a solitary one also requires that a Fright Check be made, at the same -2. Groups of zombies provide no additional modifier to the Fright Check, unless they are attacking, in which case a proximity modifier should apply for *each* zombie.

There are 250 zombies on the island.

Slimespaw

10', 600 lbs., supernatural creatures, hybrid humanoid-octopoid appearance.

ST: 22	IQ: 8	Speed: 5
DX: 8	HT: 25	Move: 5 land, 10 water

Damage: *Thrust* 2d; *Swing* 4d
Dodge: 5

A Slimespaw is a dull-witted creature of extradimensional origin sent into the mortal world to work the will of the Kraken or one of its agents. Amphibious in nature, these hulking brutes are at home both on land and in sea.

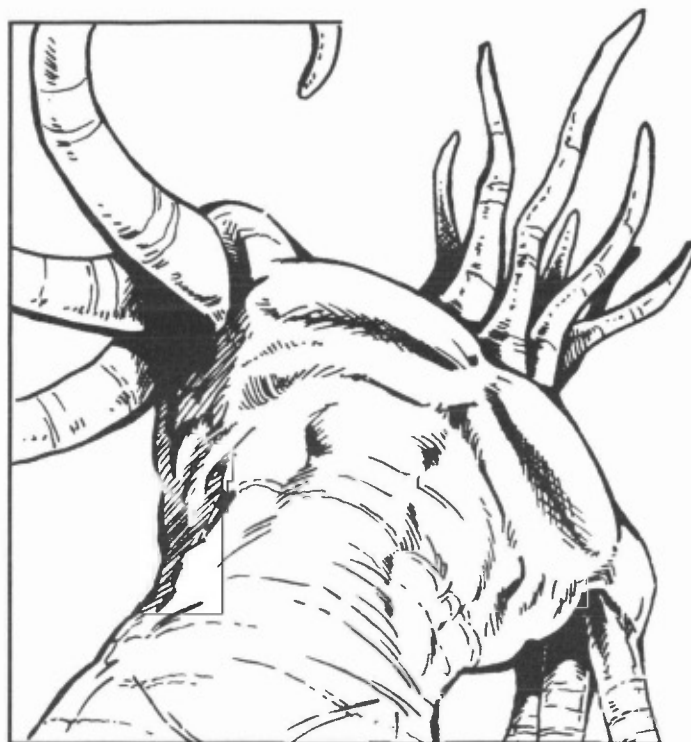
A Slimespaw stands no less than 10' tall, and occupies 2 hexes. At first glance, it resembles a horrifying hybrid of man and octopus. Its body is large and heavy, with thick, jointless legs that end in round, flat feet. Its long sucker-covered tentacles (the number varies from Servant to Servant, but never less than four) drag on the ground. It has no visible head, only a mass of foot-long squirming tentacles where a neck should be, and which never stop moving until the creature is killed.

The skin of a Slimespaw is leathery, a dark black-green in color and glistening with moisture; it gives off a stomach-turning odor of iodine and rotting fish. When the creature moves, it leaves behind a 2-hex-wide trail of slime that shares the same odor and can only be washed away with alcohol.

Persons encountering a Slimespaw must make a Fright Check at -3 (-1 for size, -2 for appearance).

A Slimespaw’s multiple tentacles allows it 4 attacks per round, at up to 4 different opponents; each tentacle has a reach of 3 hexes, and attacks for crushing damage. Its thick skin gives it PD 2 and DR 3, but it has a 2d Vulnerability to Heat and Dehydration.

Slimespaw are by nature primarily aquatic, and as such have the equivalent of Amphibious, Gills and Pressure Support.



The Kraken

ST: 150/350	IQ: 30/6	Speed: 9
DX: 16	HT: 20/400	Move: 9 on land, 180 in water
PD 3	DR 20	
Reach 10/40		
Damage: <i>Thrust</i> 16d/36d; <i>Swing</i> 18d/38d		

The Kraken is a Thing Man Was Not Meant to Know – an eldritch monstrosity formed by unearthly energies and intelligence.

For centuries it lay trapped in the ancient Minoan ruins on the sea bottom at the mouth of Kupros’ harbor, imprisoned in a mystic cell by a seal of power inscribed on the floor of the dead city’s amphitheater. The seal is potent, and protects both the cell and the amphitheater from the ravages of time. However, the seal is vulnerable to repeated assaults with tactical nuclear weapons, and this is the method the Kraken has chosen to shatter his bonds.

Over the eons, the Kraken has had many earthly dens, some of which still survive. The impossible, abyssal refuge described on p. 83 represents perhaps its first and strongest lair.

There are actually two distinct parts to the Kraken, which for convenience’s sake can be designated the Thing and the Monster.

The Thing is a noncorporeal entity from another plane of existence. It is inhumanly intelligent and psychically powerful. Its goal is to rule the Earth by covering all land masses with water, incidentally wiping out humanity and all other land-based species.

The Monster is a gargantuan mutated animal, grown by the Thing over a matter of millennia as a fitting house for its spiritual essence. The Monster is self-aware, but usually under the complete control of the Thing. It is savage, but not malicious. It wishes only to be left alone, and hates the Thing and any other entity which tries to control it.

Though the Kraken is usually recorded in legend as a giant squid, the Monster is in fact closer in appearance to a mutant octopus. It has deep-set, malicious eyes, a gaping three-beaked mouth and twenty tentacles. Most of the tentacles are 30' long and 2' in diameter, with a ST of 150, but two are 120' long and over a yard in diameter, with a ST of 350. These two primary tentacles are tipped with diamond-shaped pads like a squid's. The lesser tentacles can be severed with 20 points of damage, and the primary tentacles require 50 points of damage to sever.

The Thing controls the Monster through a large, glowing gemlike organ embedded in the Monster's head, between the eyes. The gem is 10" in diameter, has 10 DR, and can withstand 100 points of damage before shattering. Due to its size, most attacks are at -5 to hit the gem (see p. B201).

If the gem shatters, the Monster is freed from the Thing's control. Usually it will leave the battle as quickly as possible, destroying anything that stands in the way of its escape. It will then seek out the deepest ocean depth available to hide in.

When the Thing and the Monster are united, the Kraken has Fast Regeneration, IQ 30 and Telepathy Power-25, with Telesend and Telereceive both at 30, limited to communication and the ability to scan surface thoughts. It has Psionic Resistance and Magic Resistance at 100 each. It has High Pain Threshold (it takes no stunning effects from injuries inflicted). It can take hard radiation and convert it to energy, just as natural bodies convert

food to energy. It can also perform stranger manipulations through unknown means. These include the ability to grant super-powers to certain human beings, and the ability to create its Slimespawn servants. It can also Teleport the Slimespawn with a power of 20 and an Exoteleport skill of 30. Under ordinary conditions, it cannot teleport anything except Slimespawn.

The Kraken has extremely bad eyesight, and relies upon its telepathy and passive sonar. Thus, the Monster can be fooled by floating motionless and making no noise (Contest of Stealth vs. its IQ). Its sonar has a range underwater of about 1,000 yards, and perhaps a tenth that with its body resting on the surface.

In physical combat, the Kraken's usual tactic is to seize a ship in the two large tentacles and squeeze until something gives. It will attempt to grab anyone in reach with the lesser tentacles, squeezing for 16d, and drag them to its maw (at a rate of 1 hex/turn). Should the unfortunate survive the crushing grip, he must still contend with the danger of drowning; the Kraken's beak also does 16d cutting damage, should an enemy get close enough to snap at.

Once the gem is shattered, the Monster's IQ drops to 6 and it loses all telepathic abilities (but it keeps the Psionic and Magic Resistances). Its Regeneration advantage also drops to Slow without the psychic support of the Thing. It remains immune to hard radiation, but cannot derive nourishment from it without the gem.

Presumably there is some way for the Thing to repossess the Monster after the gem is destroyed. Perhaps the gem regenerates naturally over a period of years, or perhaps it requires elaborate and unspeakable ritual magics.

The Monster is a creature of the abyss, and is most comfortable in the very deepest parts of the ocean. It can survive unharmed on the surface (and even pull itself painfully along on dry land, if need be), but it does not enjoy the experience. When not under the control of the Thing, the Monster will not willingly stay on the surface for more than a few minutes.

Deprived of its monstrous body, the Thing is stripped of all Earthly power. At best it can sometimes communicate with certain mystically-sensitive individuals, and encourage (but not command) them to do its will.

Although physically unchanged when the gem is destroyed, the Kraken under the control of the Thing has a malevolent, almost human expression that's profoundly terrifying on such a monstrous creature. Sighting the Kraken requires a Fright Check at -6, or an unmodified Fright Check if the Thing is not in control of the body.



The Mark of the Kraken

The Mark of the Kraken is a ritual magic discovered centuries ago by a dark cult in India. The ritual is described on p. 67. The person performing the ritual need not be a mage. The magic of the mark is unaffected by the creature's normal magic resistance.

The mark summons the Kraken, but does not bind it. When summoned with the Mark, the Kraken will contact the summoner telepathically, and hear his petition. What its response will be to the request is completely unpredictable to human minds. Only very rarely, however, will its response be in the best interests of the summoner. The Kraken is sly, and will not hesitate to make any false promises which might induce a victim to do its will. In recent years, its favorite lie is to tell its human allies that it seeks only to restore the natural balance which has been upset by human pollution.

If the Mark is used when the Thing is not in possession of the Kraken's physical form, the results of placing the mark are quite

different. The Monster's natural ego hates being under the control of the Thing, or of anyone else. It does not respond to the call of the mark out of obedience, but out of *rage*. It will seek to destroy the Mark whenever it is made, by destroying whatever object it was placed on.

However, the Monster hates discomfort, and if it takes more than 200 points of damage it will flee the battle. It will not stay on the surface for more than a few minutes, whether it destroys the Mark or not. When the monster flees for any reason without destroying the Mark, the Mark's magic fades and it becomes just a odd-shaped bloodstain. The entire ritual must be re-enacted to call the creature again.

Presumably the Ward over the Kraken's cell in the arena is a similar ritual magic, though certainly it's much more difficult and elaborate, and very dangerous.

MARK OF THE KRAKEN

Part 2: Project Oceanus

*By J.B. Sanders, with Chris W. McCubbin
Illustrated by John Hartwell*



About the Authors

J.B. Sanders is a freelance author who lives and works in Galway, New York. This is his first professional effort, as well as his first project for Steve Jackson Games.

Chris W. McCubbin is the staff writer and art director for Steve Jackson Games. He is a non-graduate of the University of Nebraska – Lincoln, in English. His is the author of *GURPS Fantasy Folk*, *GURPS Aliens*, *GURPS Magic Items*, and the just-released *GURPS Callahan's Crosstime Saloon*. He also edits the *Car Wars* magazine, *Autoduel Quarterly*.

Chris lives in Austin, Texas, with his wife Lynette Alcom and two cats, Polychrome and Clipper.

Adventuring Underwater

Things work *differently* under the ocean, including many metahuman powers. Although it is never *necessary* for the supers to get their tights wet to complete the adventure, this section provides guidelines for GMing underwater situations, in case the PCs choose to take a swim.

It is strongly recommended that all *Project Oceanus* GMs review the section on swimming in the *Basic Set* (p. B91) before reading the rest of these suggestions.

The first consideration, of course, is whether a given hero can breathe water (assuming he needs to breathe at all). If they don't, they'll have to carry an air supply or hold their breath (see p. B91). Remember that the more strenuous the activity, the more oxygen needed.

Second, operating in a deep-sea pressure suit (or environment suit) is a clumsy prospect, and supers using such suits "off the rack" should have a -3 penalty to all DX-based rolls, including all physical skills and combat rolls. This penalty can be reduced if the team has access to custom-tailored or high-tech materials (GM's option), but pressure-suited heroes should be at least -1 to physical skills, unless such a suit is an essential part of the character's concept and design. Some physical skills will be practically useless underwater, like Jumping or Throwing. IQ-based rolls are unaffected, except for sense rolls (see sidebar, p. 67).

Suit punctures are just as dangerous as running out of air. Small punctures will probably kill a normal human in 10 seconds at most. Major breaches can kill almost instantly (depending on the water pressure – see below). Fortunately, deep-water pressure suits are tough, with DR 5 and HT 20/80.

Finally, in most cases the ocean floor is made up of a deep layer of fine mud or silt. Unless a rocky surface is available, the PCs are going to have to move around by swimming – this could be a difficulty for very dense supers.

Continued on next page . . .

Introduction

The following is a live presentation of NNN News . . .

This is the Evening News, with Chad Reilly.

[fade-in from full-screen NNN logo to Reilly. United Nations graphic in corner]

Two hundred and thirty-seven people died today when Tethys Station, an undersea research station that makes up part of the United Nations "Project Oceanus," was mysteriously swept away, leaving only bodies and debris in its wake. According to officials at the United Nations, metahuman involvement is considered a strong possibility. A radical environmentalist organization calling itself the Green Dawn has claimed responsibility for the disaster in a videotape sent to this station. This is a portion of that tape:

[Poorly-lit, amateur video of a human male in a green uniform, background of space-shot of planet Earth]

The people of Earth must learn that the rape of our Mother Planet will not be tolerated. The Green Dawn will stop any attempt to do more damage to our oceans, or to the rest of the planet. Nature strikes back through the Green Dawn. This is merely the beginning of our crusade.

[Back to studio]

The Green Dawn tape also accuses the United Nations of using Project Oceanus to secretly perform weapons research, and of doing untold damage to the ocean's ecology.

The Oceanus Project was designed to do oceanic research, and to explore the possibility of permanent human colonization under the ocean. It consists of three separate underwater installations. The original Oceanus Station, the destroyed Tethys Station, a smaller installation devoted to pure scientific research, and the Palace Complex, which will, when completed, form the world's first independent underwater city – an undersea arcology capable of accommodating 20,000 permanent residents. U.N. officials deny any allegations of weapons research . . ."

About the Adventure

Project Oceanus takes place almost entirely underwater. It can be run as a one-shot, or as part of an ongoing campaign, and is designed to be run in one setting or over multiple play sessions, as the GM prefers. It has been designed for maximum flexibility, and can be easily tailored to any *Supers* campaign world.

This adventure is designed for three to five 500-point characters. It takes place mostly underwater, but is primarily intended for PCs who *don't* actually breathe water – most of the action takes place in man-made habitats or submersibles. Several scenes, however, are ideal for amphibious or wholly aquatic characters.

It is recommended that aquatic characters be amphibious, if possible; if more than one or two team members are able to survive the ocean depths, the whole team should have this ability. This will prevent one or two characters being stranded inside when most of the action is going on in the water, or vice versa.

If the adventure is being presented as the sequel to *The Horror Released*, the GM should *not* start by telling the players that the Kraken is back. Should they become involved in the adventure through an official assignment, the IST officials might comment that they were selected because of their experience working together in an undersea environment, but that's all.

Project Oceanus in the Campaign

Project Oceanus was designed with *GURPS I.S.T.* in mind, and fits most easily into campaigns using that background. However, the adventure can work just as well in any *Supers* campaign, with a minimum of GM effort.

For instance, if the United Nations is not powerful enough in the GM's campaign world to support such an ambitious undertaking as Project Oceanus, then any large country or large corporation could be substituted (i.e., the United States, Russia, the Soviet Union, the U.K., Terradyne, The Thorn Company, Alladin International, whatever).

Where Is It?

Project Oceanus can be placed anywhere under any of Earth's (or even some other planet's) oceans – wherever it best fits the GM's needs.

If the Vacation option of introducing the PCs (see p. 66) is being used, it's most appropriate for the base to be located in Caribbean or Mediterranean waters.

Outline of Events (Major Scenes)

Getting the Characters Involved: The super-team is ordered to investigate the strange occurrences at Project Oceanus. Note that at this point – unless the project is located in the Mediterranean – there is no evidence to suggest that the Kraken has returned. The earmarks of the first Kraken affair were tac-nukes and magic, and neither of these is evident . . . yet.

The Kraken Attacks the Ship: On their way to the project, the heroes have a brief encounter with a monster out of legend. The Kraken will be recognized now, for what it's worth!

Explosion and Fight at Oceanus Station: As the supers arrive at Oceanus Station, multiple crises erupt. The heroes must make the right decisions about which emergency to deal with.

Rush to the Palace: The team borrows a submersible and heads for the under-construction Palace Complex, possibly in hot pursuit of the villains.

Encounter at the Palace: The final confrontation with Green Dawn terrorists.



Adventuring Underwater (Continued)

Under Pressure

The greatest danger of the ocean depths is the tremendous pressure of the water. All the settings in this adventure are pressurized to normal sea-level atmospheres. This makes the difference between the inside and the outside pressure tremendous. An instant pressure change from sea-level to 600 fathoms will probably prove fatal to all but the very toughest supers. Of course, the GM can usually avoid such disasters (the airlock door opens just a *second* sooner than expected . . .).

If someone is exposed to outside pressure without a pressure suit, roll a quick contest of ST each second he is exposed, with the water pressure having a ST of 100 (note that this makes supers with a ST of 120 or more completely immune to the pressure). If he fails the contest, he takes thrust/crushing damage as though from a character with ST equal to the amount he missed the roll by. Active and passive defenses do not protect, but the damage is reduced by any DR which is effective against all crushing attacks.

If a pressure suit takes between 0 and 19 points of damage, it is considered intact. As long as the suit remains at this level of damage, the diver inside takes only crushing damage, regardless of the attack mode used (normal bonuses for cutting or impaling damage are still in effect against the *suit*, however).

If the suit takes between 20 and 49 points it is punctured. The wearer must roll each round against pressure, as above, but the pressure is only considered to have a ST of 40. Pressure suits all carry a patch kit which can be used to repair a puncture in 2d seconds (instructions on how to use the patch kit will be given by station personnel whenever the PCs borrow a pressure suit). Any further damage to a patched suit will unseal the patch, reopening the puncture. The suit still keeps its PD and DR, but the wearer takes full damage from cutting and impaling attacks.

If the suit takes between 50 and 80 points of damage, the wearer takes full pressure damage each round, but the suit can still be patched in 3d seconds, if the wearer can survive for that long. And even when the patch is on, it will only last 1d minutes if the suit is that badly damaged. The suit loses its PD but keeps the DR.

Continued on next page . . .

Return of the Monster (optional): If the PCs think they can handle it, they can take on the Kraken head-to-head.

Adventuring Underwater (Continued)

A suit which takes 81 points of damage or more is considered completely destroyed, and cannot protect the user in any way.

The depths of the ocean are also *cold*. For the effects of this cold on unprotected supers, see the sidebar on p. 68.

Example: Klutz-Man accidentally teleports himself outside the submersible without a pressure suit. He has ST 55 and 15 points of DR, effective against all damage. He rolls a 14 for the contest of ST, while the GM only rolls a 7. Thus Klutz-Man fails the contest by 38. Thrust damage for ST 38 is 4d. The GM rolls 13 points of thrust/crushing damage, which our hero's DR absorbs. However, he also takes 1d damage from cold (see sidebar, p. 68), for an additional 5 points, only two of which are absorbed by his remaining DR. He takes 3 points of cold damage. He makes his HT roll and does not go into shock.

The next round Klutz-Man and the GM both roll 12s, and Klutz-Man loses the contest by 45. Rolling 5d for damage, the GM rolls a 19 – Klutz-Man takes 4 points of crushing damage after DR (he will not have to check again for cold damage in this minute). In this round he manages to pull himself into the airlock, and stops taking damage.

Project Oceanus underwater structures and vehicles maintain an interior atmospheric pressure equal to normal sea level. This is maintained so that the residents and crew can move freely between the surface and the ocean floor, without having to undergo lengthy depressurization.

Powers Underwater

The effects of deep-sea conditions on metapowers are detailed in the sidebar on p. 74. In addition to those effects, the GM should also remember that many powers will be restricted or impossible for a super wearing a pressure suit. In particular, GMs should consider whether a given super should be allowed to use his ranged energy attacks without damaging his pressure suit. (If a character has the Costume super advantage, and has previously stated that he has a pressure-suit version of his outfit, it will work as normal. Otherwise, it requires a Gadgeteer 2d days to “whip up” a costume pressure suit.)

If a character is attacking hand-to-hand while wearing a pressure suit, the suit will take 1 point of damage each time the wearer rolls a 5 or 6 on any damage die.

Sea Cruise

Below are two possible means of bringing the players into the adventure. The GM should feel free to devise other situations better suited to his campaign.

On Vacation

The characters are taking a well-deserved rest on an ocean cruise. This can offer a number of interesting roleplaying possibilities independent of the *Project Oceanus* adventure – perhaps an international jewel thief is plotting a daring heist from the hotel safe, or an important passenger turns up dead under suspicious circumstances. There are also plenty of opportunities for pure character development, especially in terms of shipboard romance.

If the team has never worked together before, this option can be used to bring them together. The shipping line is offering a “super cruise” promotion. They’ve given a select group of metahumans (the PCs) free passage and first-class accommodations. In exchange, the heroes are expected to spend a certain amount of time hobnobbing with the passengers (who, under the circumstances, are liable to include a disproportionate number of metahuman groupies, presenting lots of fodder for humorous roleplaying).

The GM should read the news report from the introduction (p. 64). The broadcast will probably come in over the ship’s televisions a few minutes before the Kraken attacks.

The Assignment

The characters are brought into the adventure under official orders.

In an IST campaign, they can simply be dispatched from the appropriate IST embassy. The team should be briefed with the television report, the general layout of Project Oceanus – show them the map on p. 70 – and the fact that the U.N. has no information about the terrorist organization calling itself the Green Dawn. The team will also be given very grainy photographs of what remains of the Tethys station. The mooring pillars and a trail of debris leading to a nearby abyss are all that remain of the second Project Oceanus station. The Oceanus people were warned not to investigate the site any further, pending metahuman investigation.

The U.N. has told authorities at the Oceanus Station about the characters, and instructed them to extend full cooperation.

If the characters (or the campaign) aren’t IST, the United Nations (or whoever is sponsoring Project Oceanus) may ask the heroes to aid them in their investigation of the incident. This is particularly appropriate if the team includes some aquatic specialists (if they have none, then Black Pearl from *GURPS Supers* would be a logical NPC to attach to the team as IST liaison). As non-IST supers, the team’s status will probably be a little less official, and they’ll have to work a little more diplomatically with the Oceanus authorities. The officials will brief the PCs as in the IST option. If the PCs aren’t underwater specialists in some way, they might be called in simply because they performed well in the Kupros incident, as described in *The Horror Released*.

The last provides a way to mix the two options – the players are on a vacation cruise, and they’re called upon by the authorities simply because they’re the closest metahumans to the emergency.

After the heroes have been briefed, they will be rushed by helicopter or VTOL to a U.N. (or whoever) science ship. This ship will then rendezvous with an Oceanus submersible. Since Oceanus is fully pressurized for sea level, the characters don’t have to submit to pressurization (see p. 65).

Routine Maintenance

During the cruise, or shortly after arriving on the science ship, one or more of the supers will come upon a member of the crew entering one of the heroes' cabins. This is an outside cabin (i.e., it's equipped with a porthole). If questioned, he will claim that he was supposed to repair some plumbing in one of the cabins and got mixed up – he's new onboard. He wears engineering overalls, and carries a toolbox.

If the heroes spy on the crew member, they will see him perform a brief ceremony (a minute or so) with a strange tentacled totem (see illustration). PCs with Occultism or Archaeology skill examining the totem will recognize something useful if they make a roll at -3 (see the *Totem* sidebar, p. 69). Depending on how they're watching, a Vision roll (at appropriate penalties – subtract 8 for a keyhole) may be required to see the totem clearly. If the Vision roll is missed, additional penalties can be applied to the skill roll for recognition.

The point of the ceremony seems to be to place a drawing, or mark, on the outer wall of the cabin. If the PCs witness the placing the mark, and make an unmodified Occultism or Theology roll, they will see that the mark is actually made with the totem. When they get a chance to examine the mark close-up, they may make an Occultism or Archaeology roll while examining the mark; a successful roll will provide more information. PCs making a Biochemistry, Forensics or Physician roll will realize that the mark was made in blood. Whether the blood is human or not (it is) can only be told with appropriate tests and some good equipment (which is available on board the science ship, but not the cruise ship).

The mark is magical, and will be detectable as such to one with mystical senses. The mark's magical essence will normally be perceived as a piercing musical note combined with a visualization of monstrous strength. On a critical success, any magical investigation of the mark will strongly suggest the Kraken if the investigator has encountered the Kraken before.

If the PCs disturb the man while he is performing the ceremony, he will attack them with a blaster (see the Green Dawn agent descriptions, p. 86). If the odds are obviously impossible (more than one PC is present, or the PC is a particularly impressive metahuman), the man will concentrate on destroying the totem with his blaster. This takes one full second, and requires no skill roll (though a contest of DX might be appropriate if one of the supers is trying to prevent the destruc-



Sense Rolls Underwater

Without artificial aids, land-born senses are greatly handicapped underwater. In a pressure suit, Vision rolls will be largely unaffected, but peripheral vision will be almost entirely useless. All Hearing rolls are at -5, unless the sound comes from internal suit components, such as a radio. Smell and Taste rolls normally are completely impossible, again with the exception of things inside the suit (e.g., contaminated air supply or rations). The sense of touch is greatly impeded, but not totally lost – a -6 penalty for touch is appropriate.

Without a suit, the senses can work a little more efficiently. Vision rolls receive a -2 penalty because of the water (assuming that there's an adequate light source available – at customary depths for *Project Oceanus* it's dark (an additional -10 for darkness). Normally suits have lights, and hand-held lights are available. Also, most of the exterior of the Oceanus and Palace complex areas can be illuminated out to 100 yards. The -2 applies, even with a good light source, but special goggles are available which can eliminate that penalty (if the player thinks to ask about them).

Hearing is a little less effective. Although sound actually travels better through water than air, it is difficult for normal humans to interpret underwater sounds. If the diver is listening for a simple noise, like banging Morse code on a metal surface, the hearing roll is normal. But if it is necessary to interpret the sounds he hears, he's at -3 to all hearing sense rolls.

Smell and taste can work underwater. It is, however, impossible to smell anything but the canned air supply through any sort of breathing apparatus. Smell and Taste rolls are at -2 due to the effect of the salt water and other undersea chemicals on the substance in question.

Touch rolls are normal for swimmers not in a suit.



Deepwater Cold

Each minute an unprotected diver spends in the water, he takes 1d cold damage. This is assessed on the first round he spends in the cold. Once again, there's no active or passive defense, but DR which is effective against cold (including Toughness) protects.

A greater danger from the cold water is hypothermia. Whenever anyone takes damage from the cold, he must also immediately make an unmodified HT roll. If he fails, he goes into shock. He will be unable to take any action whatsoever (exception: with a successful Will roll he will be able to call for help, assuming he has a means of underwater communication) until he's warmed up and First Aid is successfully administered. While in shock, he will continue to take damage from cold each minute, and to make HT rolls to see if his heart stops.

The cold water will stop a diver's heart on a critically-failed HT roll. If the heart stops, he'll die in 3d minutes, unless he's removed from the water and successfully resuscitated with CPR or defibrillation. To accomplish CPR the attending character (the "medic") must make a successful roll vs. First Aid-3 or Physician, and the incapacitated character (the "patient") must make a HT roll. If either roll is failed, electronic defibrillation can be attempted. This involves restarting the heart by administering an electric shock to the patient, and requires specialized medical gear (available at both the permanent undersea stations, but not normally carried in the submersibles). Defibrillation equipment is about the size of a suitcase. Defibrillation requires a roll vs. First Aid-5 or Physician-2, and even if successful, the patient must roll vs. HT-3 to survive. (Supers with electrical powers may be able to perform impromptu defibrillations in the absence of proper equipment. If the GM wants to allow this, he should require substantial penalties to the super's skill roll for such a delicate use of power).

Once he recovers from shock, the patient will be incapacitated for a number of hours equal to (24 - HT + 1d). If he required CPR to resuscitate, add 3d to the amount of time incapacitated, and if defibrillation was used, add 6d. An incapacitated patient is conscious, but cannot leave his bed.

Deep Freeze

Occasionally there are stories of people surviving "frozen" underwater for a long period of time – their metabolism slows down to the point they're almost dead – and being revived. Such a victim *might* survive beyond the normal 3d minutes. The GM should secretly roll 1d – if the unconscious diver is brought to the surface within this many *hours*, he should be allowed a single roll versus HT-8. If the victim is able to breathe underwater during this time, whether through a super-skill or normal air tanks, the roll is only HT-4.

tion). If captured, he will say nothing useful. He will actively resist mental intrusion. (He has Mind Shield power 13, but he's not naturally a psi. Presumably whoever gave him his orders arranged to somehow temporarily imbue him with this power, as a security precaution.) All he will say is rabid ecological slogans, like "You are blights on the body of the Earth-Mother, and will be cleansed!" See the *Captured Agent* sidebar, p. 73, for more information.

If confined, the agent will make every effort to escape and place the mark on the ship, even at great personal risk. If the PCs are careless enough to confine him along with an unsearched tool box, he will simply prepare another totem (he has one, already carved, in his tool box; the ritual takes about a half hour) and place the mark on his cell wall (if it's an outside cabin).

If discovered after he has placed the mark, but before he makes his escape, he will do anything in his power to escape, including jumping overboard if all else fails. He will be obviously agitated, and if he can't escape he will once again try to destroy the totem or throw it into the sea. While fleeing, he will continue shouting: "You are all doomed! The Earth-Mother will have her revenge!" If the PCs, for whatever reason, leave the mark on the wall for more than five minutes (removing it takes about 20 seconds of good hard wiping, or an appropriate power, such as Flame Jet), the Kraken will show up.

Meet the Kraken

The seas boil, the ship rocks, and a Thing Man Was Not Meant to Know surges out of the water.

PCs on deck will notice the ship begin to rock. If they're on the same side of the ship where the mark was made, they'll see the sea begin to roil as something *huge* surfaces. The Kraken can be described to the party as "a really *ugly* octopus, with an extra 20 tentacles or so, bigger than the ship." Of course, if the PCs have encountered the Kraken previously . . . or even read the newspapers . . . they'll recognize it. Two things will be obvious to those who have fought the Kraken before: its jewel is still gone, and its aura of malevolent intelligence is also gone. It is merely an angry animal . . . but it's very large and *very* angry.

PCs that are still in the cabin with the mark will notice that when the monster arrives, the mark on the wall starts to glow red. The blood will become fresh and viscous, and will be suffused with a pulsing, radioactive glow. If at any time the mark is erased from the wall, the Kraken will submerge immediately!

The monster moves slowly at first; after about a minute it will reach the ship. The Kraken will grasp people, parts of the ship, and anything else it can get its tentacles around, and then pull them underwater while squeezing them. It will only grasp one object per second, but it can hold a couple of dozen things at once.

This encounter is intended as a teaser, and isn't the real confrontation with the monster. It is out of its element on the surface, and is sluggish and uncomfortable. After 5d seconds of attacking the ship, the Kraken will drop all its captives and depart at full speed. The heroes should be too busy saving lives to follow. See p. 61 for more information about the Kraken.

Sinking Feelings

If the Kraken makes any contact with the ship whatsoever, its hull will be breached. The team has about 10 minutes before the ship sinks completely. In that time, they have to save about 100 people – crew, passengers and themselves. There are sufficient lifeboats, but the PCs have to rescue the Kraken's victims from the sea (see the rules on swimming on pp. B49 and B91).

About ten minutes after the ship sinks (sooner if the PCs need help), the Oceanus submersible which is coming to pick up the heroes will arrive. They will provide emergency assistance to the survivors, and they have a radio on board.

Another ship will be in the area to pick up the survivors, minus the PCs, in about an hour.

At this point the team is introduced to Commander Donnelly, Chief of Oceanus Station security. Commander Donnelly is really not happy to see the PCs. She will be extremely terse, and just a little belligerent. She will also be extremely shaken by the appearance of the Kraken. She'd assumed that Tethys Station had been lost either to computer sabotage or to a hostile submarine. An attack by a magical beast is a bit much for her. And not only does she feel guilty about what she perceives as her failure to protect the project, she has a personal attitude about supers. She feels guilty about that, too, but she can't overcome the bias entirely. If the PCs are respectful and discuss the Kraken intelligently with her, she will warm slightly, but will still feel that she needs a few nuclear subs, not some super-freaks. She is *not* entirely rational about supers. Even if the PCs have previously defeated the Kraken, she'll wonder if it's somehow their fault that the monster reappeared when they were in the neighborhood.

Under no circumstances will she offer useful new information. Unless the supers offer *her* information, she will snub most attempts at conversation, staying on the "bridge" for the extent of the voyage down. The descent takes about an hour.

However, two members of her security team came along, armed with blasters, and they're happy to talk (discreetly, of course). Mike and Bob have been on the station from the beginning, and they think the whole situation is "really weird." They will also relate a brief version of the last transmission from Tethys station (see *Good-Bye Tethys* sidebar, p. 71) if they think the PCs are "on the level." Like their boss, they'd really rather not have supers doing *their* job. On the other hand,



The Tentacled Totem

The totem is a wood-carved figure of ghastly aspect. It is difficult to make anything meaningful of its appearance at first glance, except as a glob of tentacles and small, evil eyes. Under close scrutiny, 20 tentacles can be counted, and three eyes. The wood is fine mahogany (which must be cut from a certain secret, sacred grove in India, though only a handful of people worldwide will know this, and fewer still will know where the grove is – roll versus appropriate skills at -6 and -8). The carving is rather crude. Note that the totem is enchanted, and will register as such to any appropriate spells or mystical senses.

Depending on how well the examiner makes his Occultism, Theology or Archaeology rolls, the team can learn the following information. The better they make the roll, the more facts they should be told (-2 or better yields two paragraphs, -5 or better yields all). If they make a roll based solely on observing the mark, give them no more than the first and third paragraphs.

The totem used by the Green Dawn is remarkably similar to a statue/icon used by a cult in India over 150 years ago. The cult was thought to be wiped out during British rule. The case is well documented, due to a detailed private journal kept by one of the British officers who helped destroy the cult; it was used in a popular text on mysticism some 30 years later. (If the team requests, U.N. librarians can dig up a copy of the original journal and download it to Oceanus Station, but it will take at least 12 hours to locate the book, digitize and transfer it and extract the facts below).

The cult worshipped a god of the sea who wreaked terrible vengeance on those who disobeyed its teachings, and regular sacrifice to the god was necessary. They believed that the god would one day swallow the world, but that through regular sacrifice they could avert this fate for a time.

The mark was used in the sacrifice ritual, and was placed on the chest of the intended victim. According to legend, the god claimed the sacrifice itself (represented in the officer's drawings as a multi-tentacled horror). The officer was of the opinion that the worshipers used a hallucinogenic incense, and that the tentacled thing was simply religious frenzy.



Project Oceanus Station

Bulkhead doors

Habitat Module

Airlocks

Corridor

Environment systems

10 feet

Area Map

Power

feet

Production

Labs

Supply

Docking

Labs

Labs

Habitat module

100 Feet

Trapped people

Water

#2

Mark

#1

Water

Supply

Water

Airlock to corridors

Airlock to corridor

Equipment

The Hub

Control

Sec

Dir

Bulkhead doors

Docking airlocks

Docking Bay

1 hex = 1 yard

Airlocks to corridors

Bulkhead doors

they have no illusions about their ability to deal with an octopus as big as a ship, and privately, both welcome the super-aid. If the supers are sympathetic, friendly, relaxed and approachable, Bob and Mike could become valuable allies. But if the team is imperious, accusing, suspicious or threatening, the security men will decide that their chief was right all along, and freeze up completely.

Bad Day at Oceanus Station

Just after the submersible has docked at the Oceanus Station, the whole sub will rock, and the heroes will hear a loud thumping noise. No one in the sub will be able to shed any light on the origin of the disturbance. PCs who have spent a lot of time underwater, or who have underwater demolition experience, will realize that something has collapsed or exploded not far away (make a successful IQ or Underwater Demolition roll). A moment later, Commander Donnelly leaves the bridge, moves quickly to the aft of the sub, and begins cycling the airlock to the station. She has no expression on her face, but her movements are hurried. If asked, she says, "There's been an explosion."

At the same time, a man and a woman are involved in a firefight with station security forces in the Docking Bay, just outside the heroes' sub. If the supers have any metasenses they may be able to see the fight before the inner airlock door is open. If not, it will be the first thing they notice when they step into the airlock and look through the small window on the outer door.

The woman is obviously a super – she's very large and shooting at the security team with lightning bolts from her fingertips (see *Gaia*, p. 88). Anyone who can read her magical aura will see she is somehow linked to the Kraken, but that's absolutely the only possible clue at this point. Even telepathy would reveal no link; unlike the Kraken's earlier servants, she doesn't know she has been manipulated.

The other figure is *huge* and seems carved from solid ice (Glacier, see p. 86) – but he is using what appears to be a standard-issue blaster. His aura has nothing of the Kraken about it; in fact, he would "detect" as a basically good person.

They are crouched behind a large chunk of machinery (the remains of a sea-farming robot). Glacier is firing sporadically, keeping his foes pinned but hitting nobody, while simultaneously attempting to open the airlock to the submersible docked behind them. There are three security people across the room, firing through an open door (only two can fire at one time). See the map of the Docking Bay, p. 70. The villains are trying to escape from the far left docking bay; the supers are docked in the second bay from the right.

While the PCs are taking in the situation, Commander Donnelly has contacted the station's control center on the intercom. If the supers wait for information, she'll be able to report the following facts in less than a minute (during which time Glacier continues to fiddle with the door, and the gunfight remains in a "Mexican standoff"): Two of the crew apparently went crazy and broke into one of the supply rooms, where they were found by security. Under questioning, they opened fire. Someone used a grenade, and parts of the station have lost pressure. Three casualties have been reported, and several people are trapped in one of the supply rooms.

Since it takes 20 seconds for an airlock door to cycle, PCs who don't leave the sub by force, teleportation or some other outré means will hear at least part of this conversation (both sides of which are easily audible to anyone in the airlock).

Just before the airlock opens, the Commander will (with ill grace) order the supers to aid the trapped people. "We can't do anything in time, dammit."

At this point, the heroes face two choices. They can confront the villains (over the commander's objections), or to try to rescue the trapped crew in the storeroom.

The villains left the Mark of the Kraken on the wall of the storeroom where the crewmen are trapped. Anyone with appropriate mystical senses will hear the call from the mark, anywhere in the station. The Kraken will arrive about 5

Good-Bye Tethys

This is the last recorded transmission from the Tethys station:

"Oceanus Station, this is Tethys control. We have an object on deep sonar, registers class 5 size, confirm reading, over."

"Tethys Station, this is Oceanus Control, we no longer have a reading on deep sonar. Repeat, we no longer register deep sonar. Verify your findings, Tethys. Sounds like equipment failure. Over."

"Oceanus, this is Tethys, deep sonar is out. Repeat, deep sonar is out. Seismic station reports movement in the abyss, possibly rock fall. Currents are up . . . damn, 35%. Repeat, water movement is up 35, no, 40%. Do you read, Oceanus? Over."

"Tethys, this is Oceanus, confirm your readings. Are you having a system-wide problem there? Over."

"Oceanus, regular sonar gone wild. Object as big as the damn station. Moving at . . . 60 knots. Oceanus, we have possible hostile. Repeat, hostile. Over."

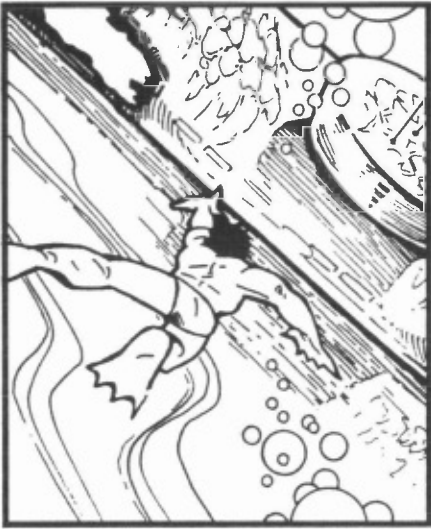
"Tethys, this is Oceanus. What the hell is going on over there? This is Commander Donnelly, what's going on? Over."

"Oh my God! Oceanus, there's something in the abyss. Repeat, there's something . . ." [transmission garbled, screams, end of transmission, loss of signal]

Hostage Add-On

If the Game Master wants to run *Project Oceanus* over several gaming sessions (or one marathon session), a hostage situation could be added to the Vacation Option introduction. The Green Dawn agents aboard the cruise ship have discovered, by whatever means, that the PCs are in fact metahumans (particularly easy if they're IST, or if the cruise line is advertising the heroes' presence). The Green Dawn decides to take over the ship and make sure the heroes can do nothing about the Kraken until it's too late, by holding the normal passengers hostage in a sealed part of the ship. If the team makes any effort to free the other passengers or interfere in the Oceanus situation, the terrorists will start to kill hostages. They'll also see to it that the supers are someplace where they can't see the Kraken coming until it's actually attacking the ship.

Sneakier GMs might have terrorists (or even simple pirates) totally unconnected to the overall adventure take over the ship. This means that the mysterious Green Dawn agent (who is still intent on destroying the ship) has to deal with the terrorists just as much as the PCs do. Perhaps he'll even help the supers capture the hostagetakers – and while the heroes are mopping up that situation, he'll quietly be placing the Mark of the Kraken.



A Little Luck

Project Oceanus has the potential to be a very dangerous adventure. Not only are the villains cruel and merciless, but if the PCs make the wrong move, the environment itself can turn savagely against them.

Consequently, the GM should not hesitate to nudge the odds in the PCs' favor, if things start to look too hopeless. If the Kraken is about to destroy Oceanus Station, and the supers aren't up to facing the monster head-to-head, have one of the rescued crewmen mention the strange mark in the storeroom. Or if the crewmen perished, have a horrified Glacier radio a secret message to Oceanus HQ that the mark must be destroyed (thus providing the party with a valuable clue that Glacier might be sworn to their side at the Palace complex).

Or, if the Kraken is about to collapse the Palace dome, have the PCs stumble upon the control module, or an exterior airlock in time to take cover – perhaps with a submersible parked conveniently outside.

Sometimes, a stroke of luck as simple as an extra tank of air in the equipment locker, or an airlock opening (or closing) sooner than anticipated can mean the difference between survival and extinction for the team.

Of course, while the amazing coincidence is a staple of four-color adventure ("Whew, lucky for me there was a mattress truck parked under that window,") it is important that the GM guard against making the PCs feel like they're only there to provide appropriate scenery for the adventure to happen around. In general, the GM should not nudge the odds to protect the team from *failure*, but should reserve such methods for situations when the PCs face *certain death* – and not always then. A PC shouldn't die horribly because of an honest mistake, or a missed roll, but there are levels of pure idiocy that leave the GM with little choice but to let the hero pay the full price of his carelessness.

minutes after the airlock opens. One minute before its arrival, the monster will become visible on sonar.

Green Dawn Getaway

If the heroes choose to try to apprehend the Green Dawn terrorists, they basically have two options – fight or talk.

If they fight, the villains' responses will be purely defensive. Their main goal is to escape as quickly as possible. Glacier will get the airlock door open about 10 seconds after the team emerges from the sub.

Talking, surprisingly, has a reasonable chance of success. Glacier is an idealistic young man who's starting to feel far over his head. He really has no idea what the totem does, and he doesn't condone the idea of mass murder as the answer to Earth's problems. If a PC appeals to Glacier's conscience, the GM should allow a contest of skills, with the PC's Fast-Talk (+1 to +3 if the hero sincerely believes in the ideals he's espousing) vs. Glacier's unmodified Will. If Glacier is convinced to stay, he'll wholeheartedly assist in the rescue or the fight with the Kraken, if allowed to. He will not make any overt effort to halt Gaia's escape.

Gaia, however, is completely immune to all rational argument. She will completely refuse to communicate with the team or any station personnel. She believes that all her opponents are brainwashed pawns of ruthless Big Business. Nothing can sway her from her determination to escape. She will try any plan that offers a good chance of escape, no matter how brutal or dangerous. If Glacier refuses to accompany her, or wavers for even an instant, she'll abandon him without a backwards glance.

If one or both of the villains escape, they will proceed away from the station as quickly as possible, and then go by a roundabout route to the Palace complex. If the PCs are giving chase (rather than attending to the other brewing crises at the station), and haven't erased the mark of the Kraken at Oceanus Station, they will see the monster (visually, through meta-powers or on sonar) moving towards the station. They'll have about a minute to return to the station and erase the mark – otherwise they'll have to face the Kraken in combat.

If the team can round up the villains in a minute or less, it will add to Commander Donnelly's resentment, but she'll take no further action against them. The second the Green Dawn raiders are captured or make good their escape, she'll angrily repeat her orders for the supers to rescue the trapped crewmen. If the terrorists escape and the heroes give chase, Commander Donnelly will be enraged, particularly if the Kraken attacks or the trapped crewmen perish while the supers are out of the station. She'll withdraw all station support from the team, while she files a formal complaint on their conduct (the outcome of the resultant inquiry is up to the GM, but the case against the PCs will be a strong one).

Trapped Crewmen

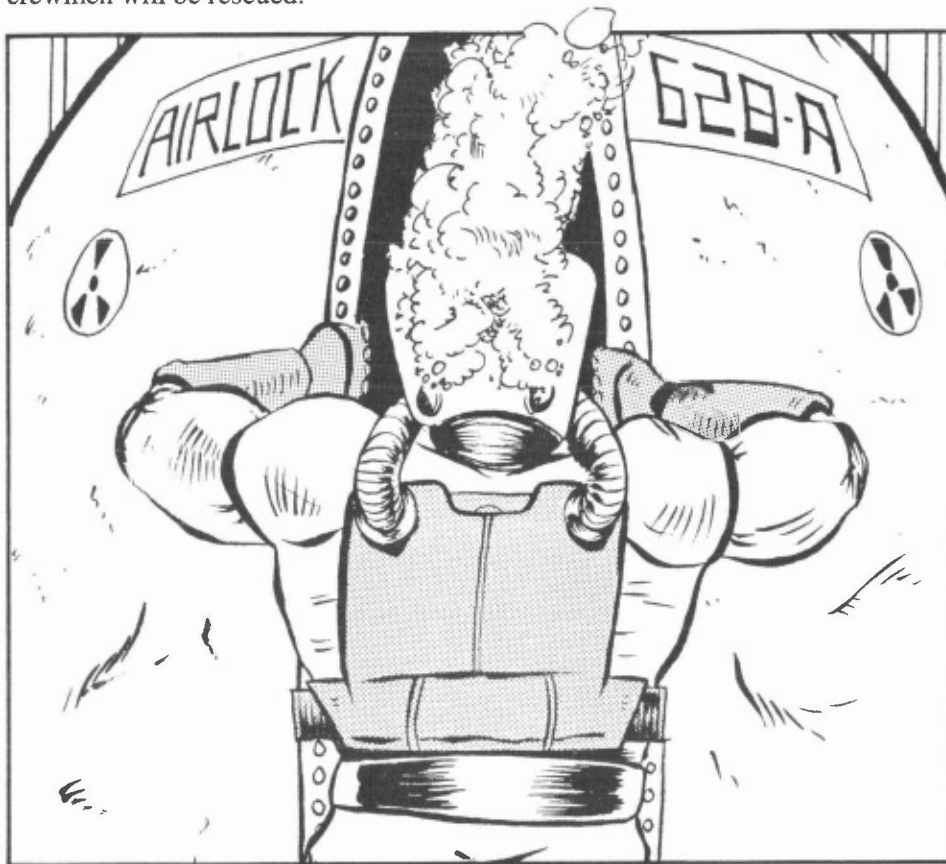
If the heroes elect to follow the Commander's orders and rescue the trapped crewmen, she, Mike and Bob will lay down a heavy covering fire with their blasters the second the outer door opens. This will allow the supers to get out of the docking bay without being fired upon by the villains, provided they head straight for the nearest exit. The villains will make good their escape a few seconds after the team leaves the docking bay.

The remainder of the encounter requires the GM to be thoroughly familiar with the description of the station found on pp. 79-80.

A large portion of the Supply habitat has collapsed. The bulkhead wall which would normally protect the area got the brunt of Green Dawn's demolition pack. The explosion was intended to simply collapse part of the habitat so that the mystic mark wouldn't be disturbed, but Gaia underestimated the effects of the explosives.

The nine people are trapped in a room which still has air, but is surrounded by water (this is also the room where the terrorists left the mystical Mark of the Kraken on the wall – but the trapped crewmen have been too busy to worry about odd graffiti in their compartment). Four are wearing pressure suits from the emergency lockers, the rest are unprotected. Their time is running out very quickly. They're losing air slowly but steadily, but the real danger is that the area is rapidly weakening under the external water pressure. Since the bulkhead wall of their habitat section has been breached, only emergency systems are providing temporary support against the severe pressure. It will collapse about 6 minutes after the team leaves their submersible (of course, by that time the Kraken will have already arrived).

The airlock (labeled “#1” on station map 1) nearest the trapped people won't open because the corridor (labeled “A” on station map 3) just outside it is flooded, due to the fire-fight, and the outer airlock door was damaged in the explosion. Fortunately, however, the puncture in the corridor wall was a small hole, and the pressure equalized quickly, so the puncture has stabilized at only about a foot wide. If the hole can be repaired, then the corridor can be re-pressurized and the crewmen will be rescued.



A Helping Hand

As the team arrives at the scene, station personnel are donning pressure suits. Their only possible plan is to enter the corridor, patch the hole, repressurize the corridor and remove the victims. The only problem is, there's no way to do all that before the storeroom collapses. The crew is counting on the supers to use their metapowers to buy them the extra time they need.

Some possibilities:

The supers could extract the prisoners directly, through teleportation, perhaps, or under the protection of a force-bubble capable of withstanding the pressure. Another possible use of teleportation is to transport pressure suits to the prisoners. If they're suited up when the module collapse, they'll have an excellent chance of

Maps for the Ship

No actual maps have been provided for the ship the heroes will be on at the start of this adventure, since the team could end up on a science ship or a cruise ship, and either way it's not part of the central action.

However, if the GM has a few days to prepare for the adventure, he should strongly consider writing or visiting the nearest travel agent, to ask for some brochures on cruises. Many such brochures include very detailed floor plans for the cruise ships, showing the location and layout of the cabins, and the entertainment areas of the ship. Even if the team starts out the adventure on a science ship, such maps can still be useful – just replace recreation space with cargo space, shrink the allotted cabin space by about half, and put labs in the extra space thus created.

In fact, travel agents are an excellent source of information about all kinds of exotic places and glamorous situations. Be warned, however, that if you once write to a travel agency for cruise information, you could well end up on their mailing list for the rest of your natural life, and maybe longer.

Captured Agent

If the PCs actually manage to capture the Green Dawn agent on the ship, they may obtain a certain amount of information about him, despite his silence. If the team asks the captain about him, they will get some or all of the following information.

He has no identifying marks or tattoos. He was hired on new at the last port as a last-minute replacement. He was captured with the totem (see *Totem* sidebar, p. 69) and a small vial of blood (human) on his person. He was also carrying a blaster (which the supers may have already discovered the hard way), and extra RPC cells for it. His accent indicates that he is from Canada (IQ roll at -5 to detect, or Linguistics -2).

If the PCs have time and the ship's radio is unharmed, they can discover more. The blaster is from a consignment stolen from U.N. supplies two years ago; the thieves were never found. The man's finger prints are not on file with ICTF or IST, but he did serve time for felony assault in Canada (unless the players specifically request the IST check with the Canadian government, they're unlikely to find out about his criminal record).

Metapowers in the Deep

Below is a list of some of the super advantages and metapowers which will be notably changed in the ocean depths.

If, in the GM's judgment, the super was *designed* to routinely operate in conditions resembling those on the ocean floor, the special modifiers on these powers should be ignored.

Amphibious

Offers no protection against the cold or pressure of the waters around Project Oceanus.

Anti-G

Each level of Anti-G power will reduce pressure damage by 1 point for each character within the power's area of effect.

Body of Air

The character becomes a series of bubbles. Otherwise the power works normally.

Body of Earth

The character becomes a creature of mud or silt. Otherwise it works normally.

Body of Fire

The character can raise the water temperature in his immediate vicinity (1 hex) by 25 degrees. No other effect.

Body of Ice

The ice coating is much thicker than on the surface. DR bonus is doubled, but the character is at -4 to DX and all DX-based rolls and skills (including a -1 to Move and Speed, and a proportionate reduction to all active defenses).

Body of Water

This advantage protects completely from cold and pressure anywhere in the Earth's oceans, as long as the character remains in aqueous form.

Call Hail

Produces random small ice globs within normal range. Underwater hail reduces water temperature by 10 degrees. At power 10+ the hail reduces all movement by ½ within the area of effect. Other than that, underwater hail has no game effects. Hailstones will float towards the *surface* until they melt.

Continued on next page . . .

survival (they'll each take 4d damage in the collapse, but emergency help will be available almost immediately).

The supers could plug the hole with their own bodies, eliminating the need for a patch. There are two ways of doing this. A super can leave the base (probably from the docking bay, as soon as the terrorists escape or are captured) and position himself outside the hole, allowing the suction from the repressurization to keep him in place. If he tries this, he'll take 1d damage each turn for the first minute, then 2d for the next minute, then 3d, 4d and 5d each successive minute, as the pressure differential increases. (A pressure suit, if worn, will not take damage from this pressure differential. It will lend its DR to the wearer's, but will not otherwise protect him from the suction.) After 5 minutes the prisoners will be released and the habitat will collapse; the pressure will re-equalize and the human plug will stop taking damage. (It would be much simpler, of course, if the super could simply hold something strong enough to withstand the pressure over the hole. Unfortunately, there's nothing like that handy in the station. If the hero has an indestructible magic shield or something of similar size and strength, the process will be much easier.)

Alternately, the super can try to plug the hole with his body from the *inside*. To do this, the super must win a contest of ST vs. the outside pressure each second for five minutes. Furthermore, there's no good footing in the corridor, so the water is considered to have a ST of 300 for this purpose. If the super can somehow brace himself firmly against the opposite wall of the (6' wide) corridor, the outside pressure will resist with a ST of only 100.

A super with Altered Time Rate might be able to attach the patch much quicker than a normal repair team, but if he doesn't already have significant underwater experience, this would require a successful roll vs. IQ-3, for the hero to receive and understand his instructions for applying the patch.

The heroes can hasten the repressurization process. Perhaps Destroy Liquid can annihilate enough water to buy the few crucial seconds, or a gadgeteer can jury-rig a way to temporarily double the pumps' capacity – if they can just hold together long enough to empty the corridor.

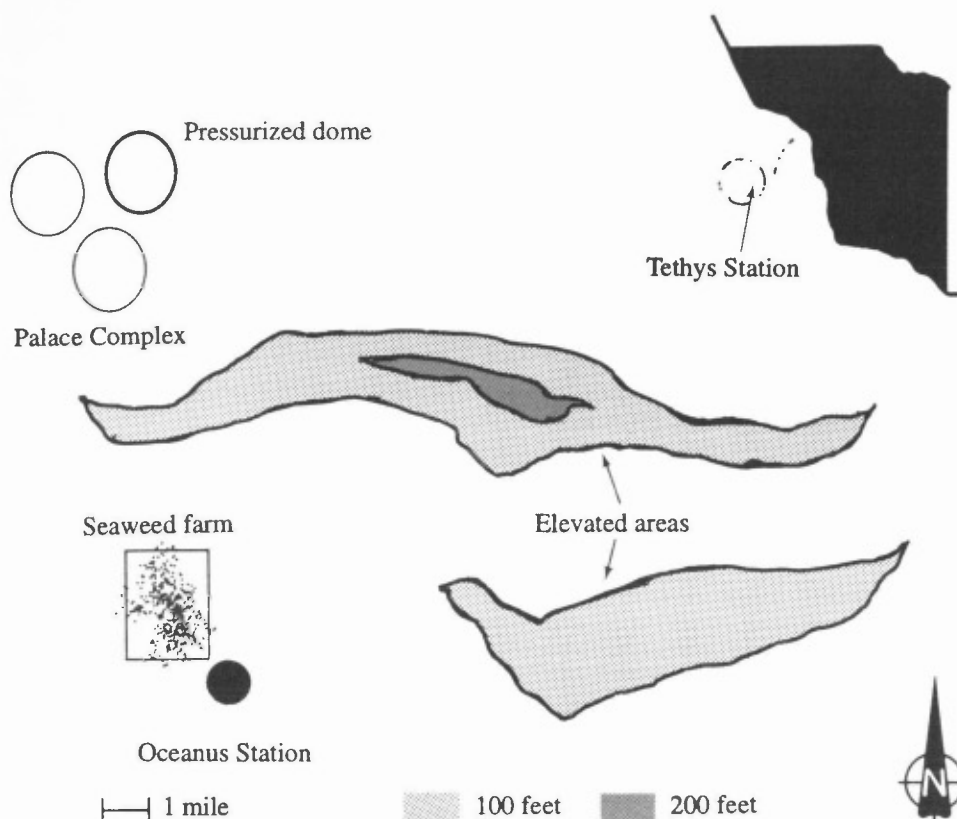
The heroes can brace the habitat against the external pressure. If they can somehow get into the room with the trapped crewmen, they'll be able to hold the habitat together if they can put 150 points of ST behind certain key stress points. This ST can come from a single super, or from as many as three. Or, if they can get into the flooded area (#2 on the map), they will be able to brace the structure by bringing 300 points of ST to bear on the pressure points. This ST can come from one to five different characters. The structure can't be adequately braced from outside or from corridor A. If they think to leave a line of communication open to the station crew, they can get instructions detailing exactly where and how to brace the structure. Otherwise they'll need to make a successful structural engineering roll to pinpoint the location of the braces.

There are many other possible ways to use metapowers to save the trapped crewmen. The GM should be sympathetic to any plan, no matter how wildly improbable, to rescue the prisoners. Of course, it's entirely possible that through a particularly unfortunate mix of powers, or through a simple lack of imagination the team will not be able to come up with any remotely reasonable plan to aid in the escape. In that case, they will simply have to stand helplessly by while the prisoners die horribly.

Finding the Mark

If any of the team enters the supply room (before or after it floods) they will automatically notice the Mark of the Kraken. If they never get any closer than the airlock, they'll have to make a Vision roll to spot it.

Project Oceanus Area Map



Metapowers in the Deep (Continued)

Control Weather

Can be used to create or increase the force of underwater currents.

Create Gas

Can be used to create breathable air, but (as the power description says) cannot change the pressure. If there's no airtight container available, the air will just bubble up uselessly.

Create Liquid

Works normally, for what it's worth.

Damage Resistance

Any DR which is effective against crushing damage will protect the character from pressure damage.

Decrease Density

Each level of this power increases the subject's buoyancy. The character will shoot towards the surface at 1 yard per level of the power, unless he grabs something heavy or solid enough to offset his loss of density.

Dehydrate

Works normally against living creatures (except sponges).

Destroy Liquid

Works normally, for what it's worth.

Doesn't Breathe

Offers no protection against pressure or cold. If a character with this advantage is wearing a standard pressure suit, he must carry an oxygen supply as well, since he can't absorb oxygen through the suit, and there's no way to absorb it from the surrounding water without exposing himself to the external pressure.

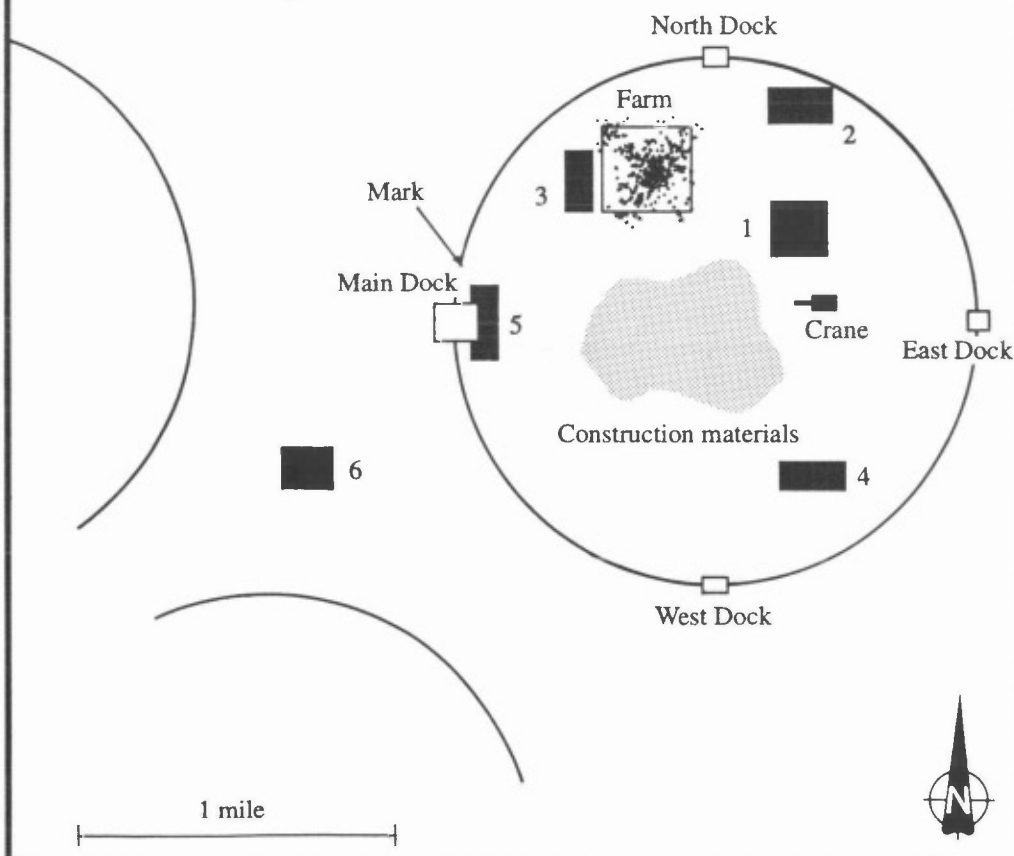
A successful gadgeteer roll will allow the creation of a valve system, which will allow the character to cycle exterior water through his suit at a safe pressure and temperature.

Fireball, Flame Jet

Creates an area of boiling water. Does 1 point of heat damage for each 1d of damage normally done, but each use causes 1 point of damage to the firer as well.

Continued on next page . . .

Palace Complex



Metapowers in the Deep ***(Continued)***

Flight

Anyone capable of self-propelled flight can push himself through the water without swimming at half his normal flight speed. This does not apply to characters with the Winged Flight limitation.

Frost Jet, Ice Spear, Ice Sphere

Damage is doubled, but range is halved.

Gills

As "Doesn't Breathe," above.

Ice Wall

Thickness is doubled but height and width are the same.

Icy Surface

In mid-ocean it creates a thin pane of ice with no DR or PD, of no practical effect. On an underwater surface it might be more useful, causing an enemy to lose his footing, or making it possible to walk along the muddy ocean floor (if the walking character isn't too heavy).

Increase Density

With any level of this power the character will be unable to float without the aid of flotation devices. The heavier the character is, of course, the more extreme the artificial assistance he'll need to keep from sinking.

Increased Density

As Increase Density, above.

Insubstantiality

Protects against pressure, but doesn't protect against cold or eliminate the need for air.

Laser

Unless the laser is blue-green (a 10% enhancement), lasers will be attenuated in the water. Max and ½ damage range are halved, and damage is half normal beyond a number of hexes equal to the laser's power, then halved again at the new ½ Damage point.

Lightning

The user will be at a -5 to all skill rolls for targeting purposes (-3 in fresh water).

Continued on next page . . .

The mark is completely immune to water and water pressure. It can be erased by about 20 seconds of rubbing by a normal person. It can be erased much quicker by super ST or an energy blast. As soon as the mark is erased, the Kraken will turn around and head away from the base at top speed, whether or not it has started its attack yet.

If the supers never spot the mark, and it comes to a direct confrontation with the monster, see the *Big Bad Finale* section on p. 81. Even if the heroes do subdue the monster this early in the adventure, they'll still have to go after the Green Dawn at the Palace complex.

Chase Scene

If the heroes set out immediately in pursuit of the fleeing terrorists, and were not turned back by the threat of the Kraken or the commander's orders, they will be able to follow Gaia's submersible to the Palace complex.

If they waited until the crewmen were rescued and the monster turned back or defeated, there will be a conference at Oceanus Station as soon as the situation is once again secure, for the moment.

Oceanus Station is out of immediate danger, and Tethys Station is known to be lost. Therefore the metahumans will be asked to investigate the under-construction Palace complex. Several normal construction crews were working at Palace before the troubles started, and none of them has reported since.

The team will have to take a submersible to Palace. A submersible uses a specialization of the Piloting skill. With minimal training, any character can be taught to pilot a submersible on a roll vs. any other Piloting skill-3, or Driving, Powerboat or IQ-5.

If the team is in hot pursuit of Gaia, they'll have to make numerous Piloting rolls, some at substantial penalties, to keep their vehicle under control and keep their quarry in sight. The GM can make the chase last as long as he wants; "She's leading you into a vast school of fish; make a Piloting roll to stay in control. Now she's cutting sharply around an undersea hill. You'll have to make a roll at -3 to take the corner without slowing down or giving ground. OK, you make the turn, but now you don't see the submersible. You can make Vision rolls, or try to use the sonar." If she's being chased, Gaia will certainly try to lose her pursuers in the seaweed farm (below).

If the team heads for Palace at a more reasonable pace, they'll only need to make three unmodified Piloting rolls – one when leaving, one to bypass the seaweed farm, and one when docking. A failed roll when leaving or docking only means that the pilot has to make another roll. Only in a critical failure will there be actual damage (GM's choice) to the sub. A normal failed roll during the chase will usually only mean that the heroes' sub loses a little ground to the villains. Again, only on a critical should there be an accident.

The PCs will have to pass through the seaweed farm between Oceanus Station and the Palace complex. The seaweed is quite dense, and an average of 80' tall. Vision or Sonar Operation rolls will be at -4 in the weeds, regardless of other modifiers. There is some danger that a submersible could become stuck here. If a pilot critically fails a Piloting roll in the weeds, the submersible will be helplessly stuck until rescued. If the roll is missed, but not critically, it will require about one minute, and a successful Piloting roll at -3, to disentangle the sub.

If the villains are on the way to Oceanus Station, they will contact Agent Orange on the radio and tell him to prepare for boarders. PCs will only overhear this conversation if they are scanning across the bands, since the villains are using an unusual frequency. If the pursuers are getting too close for comfort, Gaia will tell Agent Orange to place the Mark of the Kraken.



At the Palace

There's a *clank*, a distant *whoosh* of water, and the sub docks at the Palace dome. The airlock cycles, and the doors open. The docking bay is virtually identical to the one at Oceanus Station. Directly across is an airlock leading into the Palace dome itself.

This airlock clangs open on infinity. The vast, transparent arch of the dome peaks more than 500 yards above the heroes' heads. The opposite wall isn't even visible in the dim yellow construction lights. A slight breeze cools the face, and the air is very fresh.

Welcome to the Palace

Depending on the strength and composition of the party, this scene could be the climax of the adventure. This is where the team will have the final confrontation with the Green Dawn. The GM can do much to enhance the effect of the encounter by playing up the dome's rather eerie atmosphere (the dimness, the quiet, the threatening water above), particularly in the time leading up to the actual fight with Green Dawn. The tension should grow steadily until the moment when the heroes see the Kraken looming over the roof of the dome (hopefully just as they are erasing the mystic mark).

If the party is very tough, and well-suited to underwater action, the climax could come in the next scene. The heroes are unable to locate the mark, and once the Green Dawn is defeated, they must venture outside to prevent the Kraken from destroying the complex.

Be sure to read the Palace Dome description on p. 81 before running this part of the adventure.

Metapowers in the Deep (Continued)

Ring of Fire

Creates a ring of boiling water which does 1 point of damage for each 1d of damage the fire would normally cause.

Sand Jet

Creates a jet of silt. Range is $\frac{1}{2}$ normal, but the power otherwise works normally.

Shadow Form

Protects against pressure, but doesn't protect against cold or eliminate the need for oxygen. Shadows can't swim, they must travel along the ocean floor or attach themselves to some sort of solid surface (a large fish, a submersible, another character).

Shockwave, Smoke

Work normally underwater.

Sonic Blast

Range is doubled.

Stone Missile

Range is halved.

Vacuum

Doesn't work underwater. Repeated uses of this power in an airtight environment can cause serious danger of suffocation or structural collapse.

Vacuum Support

Allows you to exist comfortably in the deepest ocean depths with no external life support.

Walk on Liquid

No effect underwater.

Wall of Fire

As Ring of Fire, above.

Water Cannon, Water Jet

Range is twice normal.

Whirlwind

Creates an area of whirling water. Works normally, but the user must make an "extra effort."

Wind Blast, Wind Jet

Creates a high-pressure string of air bubbles. Works normally, but range is only half normal.

Combat in the Dome

The most important thing to remember while fighting in the Palace dome is to watch those stray shots! The dome is tough, but it's under inconceivable pressure already. If any blast or blow doing more than 40 points damage hits the dome, there'll be a leak. Fortunately, there are automated systems to deal with leaks in the dome, but warning lights will go off, water will shoot out/down on people, and someone (PC or villain) might be significantly distracted (everyone must make a Will roll at -2, or be distracted for 1 turn). PCs who state they are trying to be careful with their shots should have a -3 penalty to all to-hit rolls (this penalty can be reduced to -2 if the edge of the dome is more than 200' away), but will have no chance of causing a leak. The GM may assume that nothing the PCs or the Green Dawn can put out is capable of destroying the complex.

Since the dome is still under construction, there are huge piles of heavy construction material everywhere. The construction materials range from alloy struts to plastic interior walls to modular building sections. The piles reach up to 150 feet in some places, and towards the middle of the dome they make an interesting blind labyrinth for super combat. There's an immense crane, and various other small construction vehicles, such as forklifts and trucks. All vehicles are electric and powered by RPC. Plants are already growing in the farm areas. The several acres of tall corn make a particularly interesting place to fight.

Very strong supers can find plenty to pick up and hurl at enemies, and almost anyone can try to topple piles onto opponents. Since the complex is using only emergency lights at the moment, everyone is at a -1 to Vision rolls.



Whether the team arrives in hot pursuit, or at a more leisurely, investigative pace, Agent Orange will monitor their approach from the control room, and will observe any entrance via any of the docking bays or airlocks. If the heroes enter surreptitiously, using Teleportation, Insubstantiality or any similar method, he may still spot them – the GM should make a Vision roll at -6 to see whether he happened to be checking the right monitor at the right moment.

If his compatriots were captured at Oceanus Station, Agent Orange will place the Mark of the Kraken on the dome wall as soon as he sees the team's submersible approach.

The mystic mark will always be placed on the dome wall itself, near the large docking area (#5 on map).

Hostages

The work crews that would normally be swarming all over the dome area have been rounded up and confined in two external airlocks in the northern docking area. There are only 20 prisoners (ten to an airlock) because preliminary sabotage (caused by Agent Orange over a period of weeks) had reduced the normal complement to a skeleton crew, pending a full investigation.

The airlocks are fully pressurized, but the controls (internal and external) have been seriously damaged by Agent Orange. The people are completely sealed in until rescued. Although they have attempted to bypass the jammed controls, they have had no success.

Unless the PCs use super-senses to find the hostages, they will have no idea where they are (or even that they're still alive) until they can gain control of the control room.

Anyone attempting to help them from inside the dome may make an Electronics Operation (security systems) roll at -2 to notice that someone (Agent Orange) has arranged things so that anyone tampering with the airlocks will cause them to cycle, killing the crew. If the supers inadvertently set this trap off, they have 15 seconds to rescue the crew, at the end of which time the outer doors will suddenly open.

The trap can be defused with a successful roll vs. Electronics Operation (security systems) at -5, and the door mechanism can be repaired on a roll vs. the same skill at -3. The first operation, if successful, takes 2d minutes, and the second will take 4d minutes. Of course, metapowers can be used to make such tinkering unnecessary. If the doors are broken down before the trap is defused, the Palace Complex will drop a pressure shield. If the airlock floods while the supers are still trying to rescue the prisoners, warning lights and sirens will start going off everywhere, to alert the supers that the outer door is open. Further violence against the pressure shield can only result in flooding the dome and destroying the Palace Complex.

Running Fight

If the supers arrive in hot pursuit of the Green Dawn terrorists, they'll probably dock within a minute or two of Gaia's sub. Gaia will have already contacted Agent Orange, and he'll be rushing to place the Mark of the Kraken on the dome.

Gaia Alone

If Gaia arrives alone (for whatever reason), she will enter the dome and delay the PCs for as long as possible. Her first action will be to shoot the airlock controls, which means the doors must be opened manually. This requires a minimum ST of 13 and takes about a minute, minus 5 seconds for each point of ST over 13. Minimum time to open the door without destroying the airlock is 10 seconds.



After sealing the door, she'll take one minute to run to the supply building and obtain demolition packs (same as US Mk. 67 Defensive Grenade, p. B209) to throw at people and create interesting traps with.

If for any reason Gaia doesn't have time to get to the supply building, she will just engage the heroes directly, regardless of the odds. Her goal is to delay the heroes as long as possible. She will use the surroundings as much to her advantage as possible, moving into the maze of construction materials and toppling parts of it on the PCs by blasting supports. Falling construction materials will do 1d to 6d damage (GM can select damage levels or roll randomly) and can be avoided with a successful Dodge roll. It will take non-airborne attackers 3d seconds to climb over any fall of construction materials.

Gaia will continue to fight until Agent Orange sets off a flare, signaling that the mark has been set. At this point, she will flee as quickly as possible.

If the PCs try to chase her, Agent Orange will try to help her out. He will be subtle, attacking isolated targets from behind or above.

If the villains manage to take out all the PCs, they will gather them up and deposit them in an exterior airlock, and destroy both the automatic and the manual

Oceanus Station

Oceanus Station is the first and main station in the Oceanus project. Its success led to the development of the other two stations. All three stations were built with experimental TL8 technology (provided by the alien Meeranon in the IST world), and many parts – particularly the flex-plas windows – are somewhat tougher than would be possible using standard TL7 materials.

Oceanus Station is composed of linked modular buildings. Each building is referred to as a "habitat." All habitats have the same basic design. The corridors connecting the habitats are all identical (except, sometimes, in length), and replacing a breached corridor is a fairly simple process. Unless stated otherwise, all exterior, or "bulkhead," walls in the station are DR 10, HT 90. Normal interior walls are DR 6, HT 20. The flex-plas windows are DR 7, HT 35.

Two areas of the station are less modular and replaceable – the hub and the power station. The Hub was the first structure placed at the site, and was used as living quarters by the construction crew while the rest of the station was being assembled. The power station is an advanced model of a U.N. fusion plant (or campaign equivalent), and is set several hundred yards away from the station (several small but sturdy mountain bicycles are kept racked at both ends of the power corridor for quick trips between the power station and the main complex).

In the adventure as written, it is unlikely that the fusion reactor will be significantly disturbed, even if the Kraken completely wipes out the rest of the station. The Green Dawn would never place the Mark of the Kraken anywhere on or near the power station, since the risk of a fission explosion on the ocean floor is antithetical to the organization's ecological mission – confused though the Green Dawn's motives might be, they are completely clear on that point.

Airlocks open like a clamshell, and are designed to withstand pressure nearly as effectively as the bulkheads. All airlock doors are DR 8, HT 40/60. Eight people can comfortably stand in an airlock (after all, the airlocks are designed to admit heavy equipment).

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Oceanus Station (Continued)

If there's more than a few points of pressure differential between the interior and exterior of the lock, the automatic door mechanism will override and the airlock will only open manually. The airlocks are designed to break, if they break at all, with their seals intact, thus the two HT values. If the airlock sustains only 40-59 points of damage, the door will jam and the lock must be cut open, but the seal remains tight. If it takes 60 or more points of damage, the airlock will rupture, letting the water in. Only through extreme manual intervention can both doors of the airlock be open at the same time.

Emergency lockers are located every few yards in the station (at least one in each room, corridor and airlock), and contain the following: condensed food for 30 person/days, a first aid kit and a pressure suit with eight hours of oxygen.

Every corridor and module in the station can be isolated, and there are airlocks wherever a corridor meets a module, or two corridors intersect. Other interior doors are pressure resistant, with DR 5, HT 25. All doors and airlocks can be sealed from the hub, or automatically when there's any loss of pressure in a module or adjacent corridor (this takes two seconds, and doors close with a ST of 45). Each room, corridor and airlock has an independent air supply, and each habitat module has an independent recycling environment system.

Emergency air supplies for corridors and rooms last 4 hours at normal occupancy. An intact habitat can support life indefinitely while connected to the power supply, or for up to 24 hours on emergency battery power. All habitats have emergency sonar beacons, which can be launched to the surface from any room in the complex. The beacons last for 10 days, and send out a universal distress signal on all bands, easily detectable from orbit. The base has enough rations stored to feed its normal complement for more than a year.

Every room, corridor and airlock has an intercom which can communicate with any other intercom station or the communications center in the hub. Throughout the station, flex-plas windows look out into the ocean. Normally, the areas outside the windows are illuminated with floodlights out to about 20 feet.

locking systems with a blast from her hand. This means that the PCs will have to blast through the inner airlock door to get out. She will then set the controls so that the lock cycles. Once the first super wakes up, he'll have about half a minute before the heroes will be drowned or compressed.

The team can save itself by making a successful Electronics Operation or Mechanic roll to bring the airlock under their control, or by using their metapowers to jam the *outside* door, leaving them time to blast or break through the inside door. Once again, the GM should be very lenient in assigning the PCs a chance for success.

Keep track of the time, because if they can't get out of the airlock in about 6 minutes, the Kraken will arrive.

If Gaia is defeated, the supers will still have to find Agent Orange before he can escape, as well as dealing with the menace of the Kraken. See *Find the Green Dawn*, below.

Gaia and Glacier

If both fugitives from Oceanus arrive together, things will go a bit differently. First, Gaia will attempt to ambush the team as soon as they come out of their submersible. This is to give Glacier enough time to get into the dome and assume his ice form. After no more than 10 seconds of combat, Gaia will pull back and both of them will attack the PCs. From this point the fight will continue exactly as detailed above. If Glacier gets knocked out or incapacitated, Gaia won't give a second thought to leaving him. If Gaia's down, though, Glacier will fight to protect her.

Assuming the team didn't already try and *fail* to reason with Glacier at Oceanus Station, they can try to reason with him during this battle, with the same chances of success (see p. 72). If he's recruited, Glacier will do nothing to hinder his former ally's escape, but he'll do what he can to rescue the trapped work crew and fight off the Kraken.

This is the climactic scene. The villains will fight dirty, tough and hard. If the heroes seem to have the bad guys completely out-gunned and outdone, the GM should not hesitate to throw in up to six Green Dawn agents armed with blasters to even the odds.

The GM should remember that the point of the fight is not to defeat the heroes outright, but to delay them from erasing the Mark of the Kraken. As soon as the monster appears over the dome, the terrorists will break off combat immediately and head for the nearest submersible. If the supers manage to find and erase the mark before the Kraken arrives, the Green Dawn will cut their losses and concentrate exclusively on escape.

Find the Green Dawn

If the supers aren't in hot pursuit when they arrive, they'll find the dome to be very, very quiet.

Since Agent Orange has seen them come into the dome, he has already placed the mark. The heroes have 5 minutes to find and erase the mark, before the Kraken arrives.

The most obvious tactic for the PCs is to split up and search the dome for the mark and/or Green Dawn agents. This is the best possible situation for the terrorists, because all they have to do is attack the PCs one at a time and take them out. They will attack from surprise – generally from above or in the shadows – and will try to quietly and quickly take the supers down. Then they'll slip back into the shadows, and go after the next person. If the PCs can fly, the Green Dawn will stay under cover when moving. Agent Orange is at his most devastating in this kind of combat.

If the PCs are smart, and stay together, the terrorists will have to attack *en masse*. Gaia and Glacier, and any random agents, will attack from the front, while Agent Orange harasses the flanks and rear. Once again, the point of the battle is to delay the supers until the Kraken arrives.

If Gaia and Glacier were captured at Oceanus, Agent Orange will attack as above if the party splits up. If they stay together, he'll provide numerous traps and distractions in various parts of the dome, such as explosions and toppling building materials. All of the distractions will be well away from where he left the mystic mark, and as soon as the Kraken shows up, he will simply leave in a submersible.

If the Kraken has been neutralized before the team arrives at the Palace Complex, much depends on whether or not the terrorists know of the monster's fate. If they don't know that the Kraken is gone, they'll set the mark normally and fight as above. In the heat of combat, it will be at least 10 minutes after setting the mark before they realize that things have gone wrong and try to escape. If they know the Kraken has been dealt with, the heroes will arrive just as the Green Dawn is making its escape. The team will have to react quickly and efficiently if they're going to capture the terrorists.

Follow That Sub!

If the Green Dawn manages to escape the Palace Complex, their plan is to take the submersible on a 3-hour cruise to a remote spot over the abyss. There they'll be picked up by a long-range helicopter, and taken to a third-world country hostile to the U.S. and the U.N.

If the PCs manage to follow the escaping terrorists in a submersible of their own, their last chance to apprehend the Green Dawn will come when the fugitives surface to transfer to their helicopter.

The helicopter will hover overhead, without interfering with the super-battle below. If the Green Dawn wins they'll be picked up and whisked off, and if they lose the unmarked chopper will vanish at full speed. If it is brought down, the PCs will find it crewed by frightened soldiers from a third-rate air force who know nothing about the people they've been sent to pick up. (The capture of the chopper crew will precipitate a minor international political scandal, but nothing the PCs need worry about).

If the Green Dawn finally defeats the heroes at the rendezvous site, they'll subdue the supers and set their submersible to head for the floor of the abyss at full speed. After about 2 hours the submersible will implode from the external pressure. The metahumans should be free in a fraction of this time, but the terrorists will have had plenty of time to complete their getaway.

Big Bad Finale (optional)

The team might have their final confrontation with the Kraken in any of three locations, under any number of different circumstances. Wherever the battle happens, there are some basic things to consider whenever the supers meet the Kraken.

First, of course, is the all-important problem of surviving underwater. If the PCs don't have the ability to operate in deep, dark and cold water, they won't be able to go out and fight the Thing. Some powers (psionic ones, for instance) will work if the supers are anywhere they can see the Kraken, but unless all the heroes can do this, it will be a really boring fight for the rest of the players. If the PCs can't make the grade underwater, then the adventure should end in the Palace Complex.

Second, the monster is *really* tough. The GM should be convinced that the PCs can handle it, or that he can rescue them if they can't. The game master should be supportive of imaginative ways to subdue the Kraken without coming directly to blows.

The Palace Complex

The most ambitious underwater construction project ever attempted by man, the U.N.'s Palace Complex will be a fully self-supporting undersea city with a population of 20,000. At the moment, however, only one dome has been pressurized.

The completed Palace dome is 0.62 miles (one kilometer) in diameter, and 1,500' (500 meters) tall at its apex. It is a geodesic dome made of alloy struts and flex-plas plates. The dome is made of a more advanced form of flex-plas than the windows of Oceanus Station. Each flex-plas plate has DR 12, HT 180. The dome is transparent and provides an awe-inspiring view of the surrounding ocean.

The dome's sophisticated, TL 8 robotic maintenance system is fully operational. Any damage to one of the geodesic panels or support struts will be repaired in less than a minute, without significant depressurization. Only if more than 5 percent of the panels and struts are damaged at one time will the maintenance system be unable to restore dome integrity before the dome collapses.

Airlocks are identical to those found in Oceanus Station, with the addition of automatic pressure doors, which will clang down with a ST of 75 if for any reason an airlock loses its seal. Once down, it will take a super with ST 250+ to lift the pressure doors. The pressure doors are solid slabs of thick, ultra-tough alloy, and are the toughest components anywhere in the project, with DR 45 and HT 250.

Since the dome and its interior are still under construction, the dome's interior is uncomfortable and not completely safe. Huge piles of construction materials form a complex maze in the center of the complex, and most of the interior structures are flimsy temporarily buildings. Most of the artificial lights are already in place, on the underside of the dome, but only about 1/3 are normally used, which creates only a dim twilight in most areas (-1 to all vision rolls).

The construction materials range from alloy struts to plastic interior walls. The piles reach up as much as 50 yards in some places, and the maze thus created can be an exciting place for super-combat. There's also a massive crane capable of reaching all the way to the apex, and several smaller construction vehicles - forklifts, mini-trucks and mini-tractors. All the vehicles are electric and powered by Roland Power Cells (or their nearest campaign equivalents).

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The Palace Complex (Continued)

The temporary structures in the dome are only DR 4, HT 10. The structures presently up include:

1. Motor Pool: This large building contains five forklifts, six electric trucks, three mini-tractors and full repair facilities. It's about 40' tall. In an IST campaign, 10 Muscle Man IV John Deere enhanced strength rigs (see *GURPS I.S.T.*, p. 49) are lined up against one wall.

2. Barracks: This is the living quarters for the construction crew, and normally houses about 100 people. It is a simple bunk-bed barracks, with a very minimal entertainment area (projection TV and VCR). At least the plumbing is hooked up . . .

3. Farm Building: This contains all the chemical and mechanical equipment necessary to run the farm already under cultivation, including seed, fertilizer and five experimental farming robots with ST 40, DR 4, HT 20 and DX 9.

4. Supply Building: This is the only locked building in the complex. It contains most of the construction tools, including 20 demolition packs in a locked cabinet with DR 6, HT 30. The cabinet has a "DANGER! EXPLOSIVES!" sign on it.

5. Control: The main controls for the building are all found here, including the environment, security monitors and communications consoles. This is *not* a temporary structure – it's identical to the hub of Oceanus Station. This means that it *does* have functioning airlocks, and its interior will probably survive the collapse of the dome intact.

6. Power: This building, which has one docking bay and four airlocks, provides power for the whole Palace Complex. This is a standard IST fusion reactor (or campaign equivalent) identical to the one in use at Oceanus Station.

Third, the monster will at all times be attempting to reach *and destroy* the mystic mark. Once this is accomplished, the Kraken will leave. Unfortunately, the Green Dawn has the uncivilized habit of leaving the mark in places where the Kraken can't get to it without destroying the structure or vessel it's placed on. The main point of fighting the monster is to prevent this from happening.

The moment the mark is erased, the Kraken heads back to its lair/prison in the abyss. Anyone chasing the monster is going to have a hard time – it is *fast*.

At the Palace

The Palace dome is perhaps the best setting for a showdown with the monster, if only for the great visuals. The Kraken looms out of the dark ocean, attaches its tentacles to the clear flex-plas dome, and begins to *squeeze*. The dome creaks and groans monumentally, and after about 2 minutes, slowly collapses.

A neat trick the players can try in this situation is to fly directly at the monster through the dome. This is a surprisingly effective tactic, since the dome's automatics are capable of sealing the break behind the super. The super will have to do 20 points of damage to the dome to break through, and will take 4d crushing damage himself in the process. What he does once outside, alone with the cold, the pressure and the Kraken, is entirely his own problem.

Even if the monster is dislodged from the dome, it will still continue to flail at the dome with any tentacles that aren't occupied in fighting off the supers. The automatic repair system should be able to handle this damage, though.

Dome Collapse

Even if the dome is destroyed, all is not lost. The structure will slowly collapse, and the water will rush in, but it takes 15 seconds for the dome to collapse to the point where the water rushing in and the pressure will kill everyone in the dome. Really powerful PCs might be able to slow this down, if they can hold back about 30 tons worth of water and structure, but this has to be a power that can affect a really wide area or a big object (like psychokinesis, or a really *big* super).

If the heroes can make it to an outside airlock, and seal it, they can survive the collapse. The best case scenario is for the characters to make it to a submersible and get away. A submersible can hold 25 people, if need be. There are at least three other submersibles at the dome besides the one the PCs came in, but not necessarily at the most convenient places. If the Green Dawn escaped, only two submersibles are left.

If the dome collapses, individuals in the airlocks can survive about a half-hour before running out of air. With some careful maneuvering, it is possible to transfer trapped supers and workers to a sub from a sealed airlock.

If the PCs and the workers manage to survive the collapse, but are somehow cut off from the subs, the GM should not hesitate to have a rescue sub from Oceanus show up just as the air is running out.

At Oceanus Station

If things go as planned, when the Kraken shows up at Oceanus Station, the team's first thought will be to find and erase the mystic mark. If necessary, the GM can even have one of the rescued crewmen drop a hint about the strange mark he noticed on their prison wall.

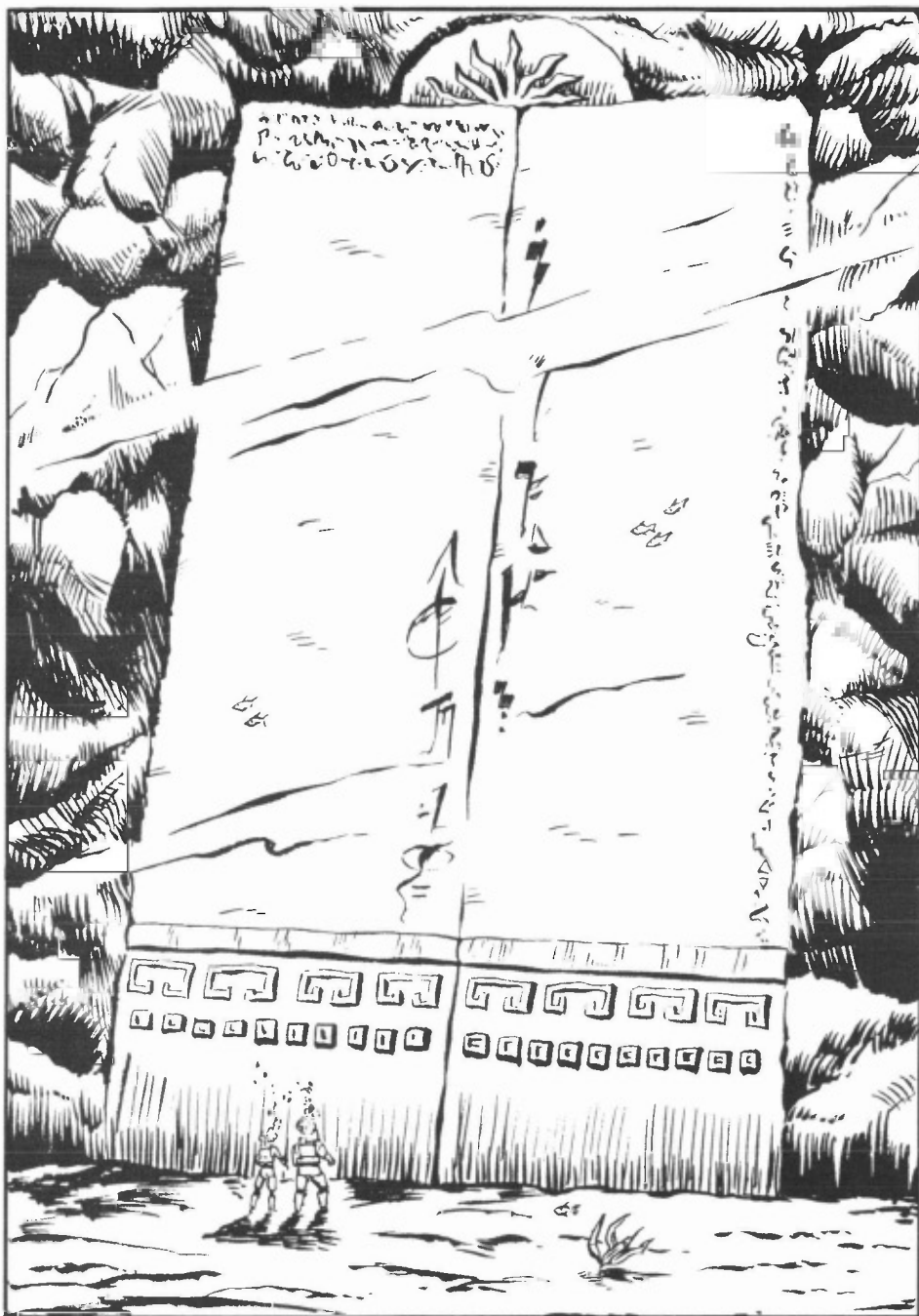
If the team and the Kraken come to blows, the creature will flee if it sustains more than half its HT in damage. If it flees without destroying the mark, the mark's magic will fade away and it will be washed off by the high-pressure seawater filling the cargo module.

See above for the consequences on the fight at the Palace dome, if the Kraken is somehow permanently eliminated during its attack on Oceanus.

In the Abyss

The Kraken lairs very near the bottom of the abyss, behind massive doors of stone, in a natural cavern. The doors are very large – over 100' tall, and just as wide – and carved all over with intricate geometric designs (many of which will be quite alarming to anyone who makes a successful Occultism roll). The area is littered with the debris of countless ships, a few lighthouses, the foot of some gigantic statue, and various parts of the Tethys station (and perhaps of the Palace and/or Oceanus Station if things go *really* badly).

The pressure at the bottom of the abyss is almost inconceivable. The Oceanus project has no equipment capable of descending more than $\frac{1}{3}$ of the way down. Nothing short of the Pressure Support power or some *very* sophisticated military



Adventure Seeds

The following ideas can be used if the GM wants to run further adventures in Project Oceanus after the completion of Palace City.

Fooled You!

One otherwise-normal afternoon, Palace Dome #2 shakes violently and the pressure alarms all go off at once. Several geodesic panels high in the dome shatter simultaneously inward, raining down frigid water on the city until the maintenance systems can plug the leaks. An emergency evacuation plan is immediately activated and the entire population is moved as efficiently as possible to another dome. It's all a ruse, though. Once the evacuation is complete a crack troop of Green Dawn commandos will emerge from hiding, seal off the dome, capture or kill all the engineering and security teams investigating the disturbance, and then go about the business of destroying the dome – a job which they can accomplish in a little less than 12 hours, unless someone stops them.

Fugitive

A dangerous metahuman criminal from IST McMurdo escapes and is hiding somewhere in the Palace. The PCs are assigned to track him down with a minimum of civic disruption. The villain is completely psychotic, and will cheerfully kill any number of civilians, or even destroy the whole complex, to secure his own escape. He shares none of the Green Dawn's reservations about blowing up the power plants. Even if it means his own death, he'll take any alternative to recapture.

Epilogue

Once the U.N. has cleaned up the mess, locked up the villains and de-briefed the characters, there remains lots of potential for more adventure (see above).

Even if the heroes decide to get on with their interrupted vacation (or go back to work, where it's safer), the PCs will probably end up on the nightly news, particularly if somebody thought to get a picture of the Kraken.

Green Dawn's Future

Just because the team was able to round up Agent Orange and his crew doesn't mean the end of the Green Dawn. Like many terrorist organizations, it operates on the hydra principle: cut off one part somewhere, and another springs up to take its place somewhere else. Since the heroes have encountered only a single cell of the Green Dawn in this adventure, they are very likely to run into the organization again, particularly if the terrorists' defeat is well publicized, or the supers manage to make off with one of the tentacled totems.

If the team thinks about it at all, they will certainly realize that the individual in the group's threatening video (see p. 64) was *not* one of the Green Dawn agents encountered or captured during the adventure.

If the Kraken is left in its lair, then the Green Dawn is certain to use it again (and a rock fall is *not* enough to keep the monster from answering its summons). Coastal areas and ships make the best targets, of course, and who's to say that the Green Dawn won't try for Oceanus again?

Of course, if the extradimensional horror can regain control of the Kraken's body, the Kraken will soon be controlling Green Dawn, rather than the other way around.

The Project Oceanus Campaign

Assuming Project Oceanus wasn't completely destroyed, the project will go on. In a little over a year, Palace Complex will become Palace City. The U.N. already has plans to establish IST Oceanus, and the supers who've already saved the complex will be right at the top of the list for its IST embassy. In a non-IST campaign, the Palace City government might simply ask the supers to return and take charge of Oceanus security.

Running an underwater campaign has its limitations, but for scenery and danger only outer space can compare. Since the embassy (or security headquarters) will be in the Domes, only some of the members of the local super team will need underwater specialties.



hardware will allow the PCs to descend to that level. Anyone exposed to the abyssal pressures will face pressures equal to ST 500 (see p. 65 for taking damage due to sea pressure). In short, this encounter normally will *not* occur as part of the main adventure. This section is provided in case the supers decide for whatever reason that the Kraken must be neutralized, or at least studied, once the immediate emergency is past.

The Kraken pulls the great doors shut behind it when it enters its lair, and once closed, they seal magically. Individuals with great occult knowledge (roll vs. Occultism at -4) and mystical powers might be able to unseal the doors; blasting through them with raw power is another matter entirely (see below). The doors can be sealed naturally by a very large rock fall, and there is evidence that they were, sometime in the past, sealed by such a fall – and somehow re-opened.

If the players open the door by performing the correct totem ritual, the Kraken will emerge immediately. However, immediately after destroying the mark the monster will re-enter its sanctuary. If the doors are opened without the ritual, the Kraken will attack whoever is handy until some sentient being has been killed in the battle. Then the doors will reseal with the Kraken (and anybody unlucky enough to be on the wrong side of the door) on the inside.

If for some reason the doors are smashed (DR 30, HT 450), the Kraken will fight until it is reduced to fewer than 50% of its normal hit points, then zip away into the greater ocean, presumably for some other ancient, hidden lair. It's really just a huge, dumb animal that wants to be left to hunt the sea bottom in peace, and will not resurface unless called by the totem ritual, or repossessed by the extradimensional entity that enslaves it through the power of the red gem (see p. 61).

The lair is mystically sealed against Teleportation, Astral Projection, ESP, Desolidification, divination spells and any similar means of scouting out the situation in advance.

The Green Dawn

The Green Dawn is a group of ecological terrorists, comprised of both supers and normals.

Background

Every cause has its fringe elements – even the most radical groups have people who are considered by their comrades to be a little extreme. Around the world, there are many ecological conservation groups which work towards improving and preserving the Earth's ecosystem. Unfortunately, even such a noble cause is not immune to lunatics.

About ten years ago, the Green Dawn was formed, dedicated to forcing society to respect nature through terrorist tactics. Since that time, the organization has grown from a few core members to several hundred across the world.



From its inception, the Green Dawn has been primarily aimed at wreaking ecological terrorism, usually by destruction of industrial facilities. This form of terrorism has made some corporations drop vulnerable projects, particularly development companies who devastate large areas to build housing, industrial complexes, etc.

Recently, however, the Green Dawn has become even more rabid and extremist. The leadership resolved that no longer would Green Dawn fight from the shadows, striking corporations merely in the pocketbook. Instead, they would treat humanity as a blight on the face of Mother Earth. This pseudo-religious fringe of the group is behind the current adventure.

Organization

To facilitate security, Green Dawn is split up into independent cells which operate with little direct guidance. One or two individuals in each cell know how to contact the leadership cell directly above them, but names or locations are completely unknown to them. When the time comes for an operation, the leaders of the cells are contacted via computer.

In nearly every case in which a member of the organization has been caught by authorities, they have been thought to be acting alone. Indeed, the leadership of the group often uses two cells at once in an operation: one to perform the task, and another to clean up afterwards. This, and a fair amount of bad luck, is why the U.N. has no concrete information on the Green Dawn.

In recent years, the leadership of the group has largely fallen into metahuman hands, and an unusual number of mages and supers have joined the leadership. One particularly shadowy member, known only to a few members of the leadership cell,

provided the tentacled totems used in this adventure. When they were initially tested, the Green Dawn expected the totems to call the ancient and intelligent Kraken to a conference, not summon thousands of tons of savage destruction. Several experiments ended tragically before the Green Dawn hit upon their current method of manipulating the monster.

Green Dawn's financial resources are enormous, and as mysterious as the organization itself. They also have contacts with many governments opposed to the UN's policies, either openly or in secret.

In an IST campaign, the Green Dawn may regularly patronize the Exchange to acquire specialized third-party talent, and some super-villains may even be members in good standing of a cell of the Green Dawn.

Sinister Plans

The Green Dawn's goals for the future include the immediate "cleansing" of the seas using their newest tool. The Kraken is an almost perfect weapon for ecological terrorism, both symbolically and practically, since it is Nature in a raw form and doesn't have any harmful effect on the ecosystem (the main thing that has kept them from utilizing nuclear weapons).

One of the cells of the Green Dawn has long been attempting to obtain or develop a virus or gas that would kill humans without harming other life.

Numerous scenarios could be created around the Green Dawn's activities, including such broad categories as industrial destruction, hostage taking, or piracy. Some members of the Green Dawn would consider it a small price to pay if they create a little ecological destruction to halt a greater threat (such as sinking a mostly-empty supertanker).

In general, although the Green Dawn is a small group by global standards, they make up for it in ruthlessness and organization.

Green Dawn and the Kraken

It can be assumed that the disembodied spirit of the Kraken is in contact with – or trying to get in contact with – some of the mystically-active members of the Green Dawn, to negotiate their help in reuniting with its earthly body. The degree of the Kraken's current influence over the Green Dawn is left to the GM. There is a strong possibility that the Kraken (when it was still embodied and at full psychic power) actively guided or influenced the formation of Green Dawn. Certainly it has duped humans before, representing itself as a "protector of the oceans" (see p. 61). It's quite possible that the whole organization was originally a Kraken tool . . . now, ironically, out of control and using the Kraken's monstrous shell as a tool of its own!

The mysterious empowerment and subsequent madness of Gaia, in particular (see p. 88), has all the earmarks of the Kraken's work (compare with the origins of the Servants of the Kraken, found on pp. 55 to 60). It is interesting to note that while the three Servants of the Kraken were all empowered in the immediate vicinity of its imprisoned body, Gaia was empowered halfway around the world. Presumably the Kraken has some sort of occult connection with Gaia's magic staff, and used it as a focus to extend its psychic reach. But unlike the Servants, Gaia has no conscious idea that the Kraken is anything but a beast to be used.

Depending on how well-publicized the PCs' earlier encounter with the Kraken was (see p. 54), the Green Dawn leadership may or may not know how the monster used nuclear weapons to free itself. If they know, this is probably a major mark against the Kraken in the eyes of the fanatically anti-nuke Green Dawn. Of

course, the Thing behind the Kraken is a deceitful creature, and probably can rationalize or lie its way out of this. It might reveal its ability to neutralize harmful radiation, or simply paint the earlier incident as a nuclear attack on its ancient resting place, initiated by irresponsible supers, or the I.S.T. itself.

Typical Green Dawn Members

This template represents the basic stats for a member of a Green Dawn terrorism cell. There are also specialized cells chosen specifically for technical knowledge, political influence, strategic planning or other purposes.

Remember that this template represents an *average*. Many

Glacier



Age 32, 5'10", 155 lbs., black skin, black hair, brown eyes. Wears glasses in civilian identity. Prefers expensive suits and ties, but for Green Dawn missions wears a sturdy military-style cover-all.

As Glacier, a 16-foot tall walking ice statue.

ST 10/200 (0 points) IQ 13 (30 points) Speed: 6.0
DX 12 (20 points) HT 12 (20 points) Move: 6 (12
running when grown)

Damage: Punch 21d+1; Kick 21d+3; Thrust 21d; Swing 23d
Dodge: 6

Point Total: 500

Advantages

Appearance: Attractive (5 points)
Status 1 (5 points)
Strong Will +1 (8 points)
Voice (10 points)
High Pain Threshold (10 points)

Disadvantages

Sense of Duty (The Environment, -10 points)
Secret: Identity (-15 points)
Bad Sight (-10 points)
Pacifism: Will not knowingly harm innocents (-10 points)
Lecherousness (-15 points)

Mark of the Kraken

Green Dawn agents will be quite different. Almost all members – even supers – will have some skill in firearms, stealth and unarmed combat.

ST 13, DX 12, IQ 10, HT 13

Advantages: Patron (Green Dawn)

Disadvantages: Fanatic (ecological), Enemy (U.N.)

Skills: Beam Weapons-12; Guns-13; Karate-12; Stealth-12.

Other common skills: Demolitions, Leadership, Ecology, Disguise, Tactics, Traps, Streetwise, Underwater Demolition.

The supers from Green Dawn that the team will meet are described below.

Super Advantages

Growth +200% (Max size only -20%, Linked to Body of Ice +10%; 18 points)

Body of Ice (At full size only -20%, Linked to Growth +10%; 23 points)

Radar Sense, 50-hex radius (full size only -20%; 80 points)

Recovery (10 points)

Enhanced ST +190 (Only when grown -20%; 204 points)

DR 20 (Only when grown -20%; 48 points)

DR 5 (from Body of Ice; 0 points)

DR 25 Ablative (Only when grown -20%; 40 points; recover 1/minute)

+51 Fatigue (from Enhanced ST)

Vacuum Support (Only when grown -20%; 32 points)

Super Running×2 (Only when grown -20%; 16 points)

Super Disadvantages

Vulnerability: Fire/Heat, 4 levels (-40 points)

Skills

Accounting-10 (½ point), Agronomy-11 (½ point), Area Knowledge (Washington, D.C.)-13 (1 point), Bard-14 (1 point), Brawling-12 (1 point), Computer Operation-13 (1 point), Criminology-12 (1 point), Diplomacy-13 (1 point), Ecology-12 (2 points), Law-13 (6 points), Law (Environmental)-18 (0 points, Law opt. specialty), Interrogation-13 (2 points), Research-13 (2 points), Performance-14 (1 point), Politics-14 (1 point), Savoir-Faire-15 (1 point), Survival (Urban)-13 (2 points), Sex Appeal-12 (2 points)

Quirks

Occasionally slips into “lawyerese” during conversation

Intimidated by attractive women

Rabid fan of all kinds of sports

Won't touch any alcoholic beverage except wine

Doesn't speak when in Glacier form

Story

Robert Tietgen was enthusiastic and bright – the brightest kid in his class, in fact. He was also a mutant. When he hit puberty, his powers surfaced. Unfortunately, the ability to surround his body with a tough shell of ice didn't seem like it would help him achieve his dream of becoming a lawyer, so his powers went largely unused during his youth.

Robert was valedictorian of his high school class, graduated summa cum laude from Columbia University, and was accepted into Harvard Law. He had a bright future in private practice, and received offers from several prestigious firms. He shocked everyone, however, by deciding to go into public service. He told

everyone that he wasn't in it for the money, that he wanted to do something good with his life.

He applied for a federal job, and wound up working for the Environmental Protection Agency. Robert had never been an active environmentalist, but under the influence of his coworkers, that quickly changed.

He labored for years to protect the environment from those who would exploit it for their own purposes. Unfortunately, he saw many of these people go unpunished, his hands tied in attempts to prosecute by red tape and corruption, while poaching, deforestation and pollution continued unabated.

Finally, it occurred to him that he had underestimated the usefulness of his powers. He left the public sector – working independently would offer him more freedom to do what he was planning. Using his ice powers, he systematically attacked the worst offenders: clear-cutting loggers, toxic waste dumpers and others he considered environmental “abusers.” His attacks were always aimed at equipment and property, never at people. He was very successful; within six months, he had bankrupted three companies.

Agent Orange

Age 40, 6'0", 185 lbs., white, brown hair (graying), brown eyes. Doesn't bother with a costume, usually – he goes incognito. Wears the uniform of the Nimba Cult (similar to a ninja outfit) when he must dress the part.

ST 13 (30 points)

DX 14 (45 points)

IQ 15 (60 points)

HT 10 (0 points)

Speed: 6

Move: 8 (from

Running skill)

Damage: *Thrust* 1d, *Swing* 2d-1; *Balanced thrown weapons* +3 (from *Throwing Art*); *Karate* +2 barehanded; *Thrust* 2d+2, *Swing* 5d when using *Power Blow*.

Dodge: 6

Parry: 8 (*Karate*)

Point Total: 270

Advantages

Absolute Direction (5 points)
Alertness +2 (10 points)
Danger Sense (15 points)
Fearlessness +5 (10 points)
Night Vision (10 points)
Strong Will +2 (16 points)
Trained by a Master (40 points)

Disadvantages

Terminally Ill (-50 points)
No Sense of Humor (-10 points)
Obsession: Destroy the U.S. Government (-15 points)
Unluckiness (-10 points)
Eunuch (-5 points)
Delusion: Thinks that all women who vaguely resemble his wife *are* his wife (-10 points)

Skills

Acting-14 (1 point), Area Knowledge (S.E. Asia)-14 (1/2 point), Armoury/TL3-4 (Thrown weapons/blown darts)-14 (1 point), Blowpipe-12 (1 point), Breath Control-12 (1 point), Chinese-13 (1 point), Climbing-12 (1 point), Disguise-14 (1 point), Escape-13 (2 points), Fast-Draw (Knife)-16 (4 points), Fast-Draw (Shuriken)-16 (4 points), Holdout-16 (4 points), Judo-15 (8 points), Jumping-14 (1 point), Karate-14 (4 points), Lockpicking-14 (1 point), Pickpocket-13 (2 points), Running-16 (16 points),

He was, however, in a desperate situation. With all of his eco-terrorist activities, he was paying less and less attention to his law practice. His environmentalism was costing him a fortune, and the money wasn't coming in the way it needed to. He had a substantial amount of cash put away, but it was slowly dwindling. He needed a patron, badly.

He considered joining an IST- or DMI-approved team, but felt that such a group would restrict his activities to their own agenda – not to mention the fact that what he did was blatantly illegal. It occurred to him that he might register with the Exchange, but to him, that was too much like an admission of guilt. He knew what he was doing was against the law, but he didn't consider himself a criminal, because he was *right*.

About that time, he was contacted by a Green Dawn cell. He jumped at the opportunity to join. Now he gets financial support to do what he considers his duty. He's all but abandoned his law practice. However, although he's happy about the opportunity to do his thing, he's becoming increasingly *unhappy* about the level of force exercised by some Green Dawn members.

Scrounging-14 (1/2 point), Shadowing-14 (1 point), Stealth-16 (8 points), Survival (Jungle)-15 (2 points), Throwing-16 (16 points), Tracking-15 (2 points), Traps-16 (4 points), Swimming-14 (1 point), Yin Yang Healing-16 (6 points)

Cinematic Skills

Power Blow (Thrown Weapons)-19 (12 points), Pressure Points (Thrown Weapons)-13 (1 point), Throwing Art-16 (16 points)

(Agent Orange has also spent 1 point on each of the following cinematic skills; however, he cannot use them yet as he has not sufficiently mastered the Chin Na form which teaches them, per p. MA56: Breaking Blow, Hand of Death, Power Blow, Pressure Points, Pressure Secrets).

Maneuvers

Feint (Throwing)-18 (2 points), Hit Location (Throwing)-15 (2 points), Hit Location (Throwing Art)-16 (4 points)

Quirks

Always attacks U.S. citizens first
Hates when the President appears on TV (smashes a lot of TVs)
Forever trying out quack cures
Donates all his money to St. Jude's Hospital
Sympathetic to fellow veterans

Story

In 1970, Richard Garrett was 19 and serving in Vietnam. He was an infantryman, and on several occasions he was exposed to the herbicide Agent Orange. During a mission, he was separated from his unit and sought refuge in a South Vietnamese village. Richard took freely from the villagers' food and water supplies, ignoring their protests. As he was preparing to leave, an elderly man who was obviously *not* Vietnamese intervened. He disarmed Richard using sophisticated hand-to-hand techniques, and seemed prepared to kill him with his bare hands. Then the old man laughed and said that he wouldn't kill him – Garrett was already dying, though he wouldn't know it for years. The elder then knocked Richard unconscious, and when he came around, the village was deserted. Eventually, he made his way back to his unit, finished his tour, and went home.

A decade later, he and his wife were having difficulty conceiv-



ing a child. After thorough examination, doctors told Richard that exposure to Agent Orange had rendered him sterile. Worse, he was also diagnosed as having terminal cancer. He filed suit against the government, but to no avail. It could not be demonstrated beyond a reasonable doubt that chemical exposure had caused his medical problems.

Medical and legal costs ate up his savings. Wanting children of her own, his wife left him for a former friend. Destitute and depressed to the point of suicide, he remembered the old man. Somehow he had known! Desperate, he held up a convenience store, and used the money to travel to Asia.

He traveled the length and breadth of the continent looking for the old man. He never found him, but in his wanderings he came across rumors of a secret sect with knowledge far beyond that of average people. He persistently pursued these rumors, and at last he made contact with the Nimba Cult (see *GURPS Super Scum*).

During his stay with the Nimba, Garrett learned ancient healing techniques which restored the balance of energy in his body, slowing the progress of the disease. He would still eventually die of his illness, but his new-found knowledge would extend his lifespan by years.

In time, Richard mastered the arts of war taught by the Nimba Cult, and decided it was time for revenge. The government had maimed him, taken away his manhood, and pronounced his death sentence – then had dared to deny its culpability! He swore to dedicate his few remaining years to the destruction of the government which had used and abandoned him.

He returned to the U.S. and registered with the Exchange as Agent Orange, specifically seeking missions which hurt the government. In several instances, he worked for a shadowy organization which targeted many of the U.S. government installations. After several successful missions, he was contacted by the Green Dawn to become a permanent member. Finding that his goals closely matched theirs in many ways, he became a valued member of an important U.S. cell.

Martial Arts Abilities

Agent Orange was built using *GURPS Martial Arts*. His abilities aren't extreme, however, and they are recapped here so GMs without that book may use his special maneuvers and skills.

First, he gets two attacks per turn using his Throwing, Throwing Art or Judo skills, per the Chambara rules (sidebar, p. SU83). He can also use the Chambara jumping defense.

Power Blow lets him double his ST for one turn. This requires 1 turn of concentration, and a successful IQ roll.

Pressure Points lets him induce paralysis on a hit that inflicts damage. He must hit a specific body part, taking a -2 to his Hit



Location roll (see following). If any damage gets through, he inflicts paralysis, if he wins a Contest of Skills: Pressure Points vs. the subject's HT. Paralyzed limbs are crippled for 5d turns. A torso hit can arrest the subject's breathing; he begins to suffocate per p. B122, and must make a successful HT roll to recover (1 roll per turn). A hit to the head stuns the victim; he must roll vs. IQ to recover.

Throwing Art allows him to do damage with virtually any object. Most long, sharp objects are treated as daggers. Pencils do thrust-3 impaling, playing cards thrust-3 cutting.

Feint (Throwing) works exactly the way it does in the Basic Set, except that the score for the maneuver (in this case, 17) is substituted for the attack skill in the Contest of Skills (p. B105).

Hit Location gives him a better chance to target specific body parts. By making a Hit Location roll immediately following a successful attack roll, he hits whatever body part he specified. The Hit Location roll is at +1 to hit an arm or leg, -2 to hit the Head, -4 to hit the Brain and 5 to hit an eye.

Orange's favorite tactic is to concentrate on his Power Blow, (hopefully) doubling his ST the following turn. He'll then Fast-Draw and throw two objects (ballpoint pens, for example, if he's trying to be inconspicuous). Both of these he aims for the eyes, rolling vs. Hit Location. Damage is 2d-1 impaling × 2 attacks – × 4, for a brain hit!

Gaia

Normal form: Age 30, 5'7", 135 lbs. pale skin, blonde hair (worn long), blue eyes. *Metahuman form:* 6'10", 220 lbs., hair is cropped short (like a military brush cut), extremely muscular.

ST 10/130 (0 points) IQ 13 (30 points) Speed: 7.25
DX 14 (40 points) HT 15 (50 points) Move: 7 (20 flying)

Damage: Thrust 14d, Swing 13d; Staff +2 thrust/swing; Lightning Bolt 8d

Dodge: 7 (Apply targeting modifiers to hit while flying)

Point Total: 725

Advantages

High Pain Threshold (10 points)

Immunity to Disease (10 points)

Longevity (5 points)

Appearance: Beautiful (15 points)

Disadvantages

Fanaticism (The Environment, -15 points)

Overconfidence (-10 points)

Paranoid (-10 points)

Secret: Identity (-20 points)

Delusion: Believes in the Great Corporate Conspiracy (-10 points)

Impulsiveness (-10 points)

Stubbornness (-5 points)

Super Advantages

Costume (15 points)
DR 50 (150 points)
Enhanced ST +120 (220 points)
Increased Speed +1 (25 points)
Temperature Tolerance (10 points)
Transformation (15 points)
Vacuum Support (40 points)

Super-Powers

Mind Shield-9 (12) (single skill only; 24½ points)

Magic Staff

Based on standard quarterstaff; does thr+2 or sw+2 cr damage

Staff Super Advantages

Flight (40 points)
Super-flight (20 points)

Staff Super-Powers

Lightning-16(8) (Instantaneous +20%; 82 points)

Staff Base Cost: 142 points

Unique (-25%)

Final cost: 107 points

Skills

Archaeology-15 (8 points), Bard-13 (2 points), Boating-13 (1 point), Computer Operation-13 (1 point), First Aid-13 (1 point), Flight-14 (2 points), Geology-10 (½ point), Naturalist-12 (1 point), Photography/7 13 (2 points), Pottery-13 (2 points), Research-14 (4 points), Seamanship/7-14 (2 points), Spanish-13 (2

points), Survival (Desert)-12 (1 point), Survival (Jungle)-13 (2 points), Teaching-13 (2 points)

Quirks

Dislikes Greenpeace members (she thinks they're wimps!)
Prefers to remain in metaform as much as possible
Unaware of her good looks; thinks only of her dead husband
Particularly vicious to whalers
Loves to intimidate corporate "suits"

Story

Athena van Kleeck was always an ardent environmentalist. So was her husband, Peter. When their archeological work permitted, they participated in Greenpeace activities, such as sailing a powerboat into the path of a whaling ship. On one of these expeditions, Peter went overboard and drowned. It was purely an accident, but Athena blamed the whalers. Those who would rape and despoil Mother Earth would stop at nothing, not even murder, to protect their precious economic interests!

In anger and grief, she retired to the country home she had shared with her husband. For several weeks, she remained despondent. Then one night, in a fit of emotion, she gestured violently and found herself holding a large, carved staff that she had recovered from a dig in Mexico. Furthermore, she seemed to be seeing the world from a new perspective. Upon examining herself in a mirror, she found that she had been transformed – she was almost seven feet of solid muscle!

Carefully she experimented with her new powers. She found that using the staff, she could fly and project devastating lightning bolts. As for the staff itself, it would teleport unerringly to her hand so long as it was anywhere within a four-mile radius. Even without it, she was strong, fast and incredibly tough.

She approached Greenpeace as a metahuman, without revealing her civilian identity. She proposed to use her talents to strike out against the evil corporate scum who were ruining the planet. Appalled, the people at Greenpeace tried to explain to her that they were *not* a violent organization, but she was unreasonable. Enraged by their gutlessness, Athena raised her staff to the sky and was gone in a gust of wind.

However, not all members of Greenpeace were of the same mind. In fact, a few were organizing a splinter group, which would spread the message of environmentalism with a war-like zeal. These people contacted her, and in time they formed the core of the Green Dawn.

Adopting the name Gaia for her alternate identity, Athena led charges against those, she felt, whose scrutiny of the profit margin interfered with their view of the big picture. In fact, she became so active that she was squeezed out of the leader cell. But that's just fine. She'd rather be on the front line, where the important work is being done . . .

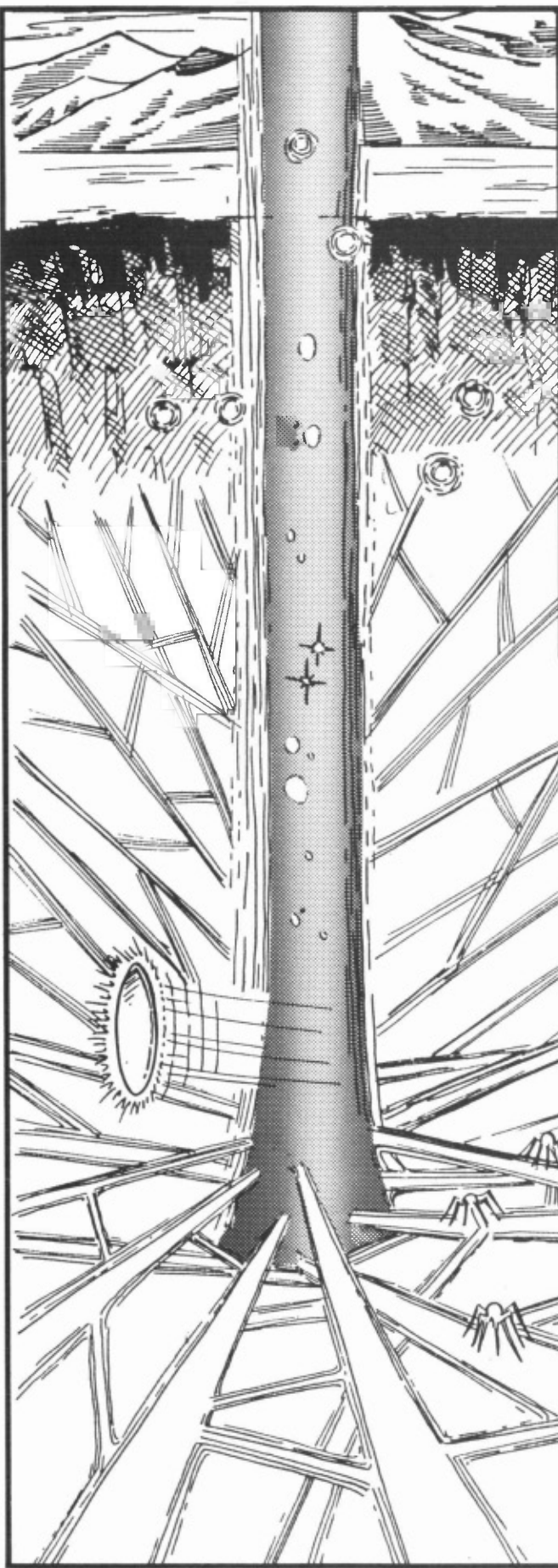
Gaia's Powers

Gaia's Transformation is triggered by the staff. However, she can remain in metaform or transform back to normal without it. Additionally, she can teleport the staff into her hand if it is within the 4-mile range, so there is no point break for these effects.

The staff could be taken from her in combat by a Contest of ST (but it's indestructible, and she can teleport it right back . . . again, no point break there). The staff *could* be taken away using guile (perhaps while she was unconscious or in human form), but it would then have to be removed from the 4-mile radius before she realized it.

Where the staff comes from, and how it interacts with her powers (does she *really* need it, or is she just psychologically dependent?) is up to the GM.





WEB OF THE ZYRANI

By David L. Pulver

Illustrated by Doug Shuler

Web of the Zyrani is an adventure designed for a four-color campaign. Two to four supers in the 750-point range, half as many 1,000-point characters, or twice as many 500-to 600-point supers are recommended. Characters optimized with water control or animal control powers will be at a disadvantage, while gadgeteers and heroes with energy-absorbing, magnetic or electrical abilities will be more effective than usual. At least one PC should have Magnetic Sense and/or Spectrum Vision, but this is not absolutely necessary.

Although it begins on Earth, this adventure introduces an entire alien planet to the supers. The adventure will work best if the GM can generate sympathy for Zyrane and its people – in other words, if the players see the aliens as “real” people rather than mere obstacles or information sources. Before running the adventure, the GM should carefully read the descriptions of the Zyrani and Shindaroth races at the end of the adventure, then use this information to extrapolate other aspects of their society as they become necessary. Have the most important aliens show curiosity about what the PCs are doing, talk to each other, ask a lot of questions, use Zyrani slang (see the glossary on p. 99) and, in general, make their presence felt beyond the needs of the plot. Lastly, remember that the alien planet they will be visiting is a world very different from Earth, with half Earth’s gravity, freezing temperatures, and covered by an all-enveloping orange fog – emphasize these differences repeatedly through the adventure. Don’t let the players forget they’re visiting an alien world!

Getting the Characters Involved

The heroes will receive a phone call from the secretary of a local university. It is a polite but urgent request to meet with a Dr. Josephine Braums, the chairperson of the university’s Geophysics Department. The secretary says Dr. Braums wishes to discuss the disappearance of a university science expedition. Will they be kind enough to come to the university to see her?

If they investigate (e.g., checking with other scientists in the field, or reading recent geophysics journals and making a Research roll) they will learn Dr. Braums has an international reputation as a “grand old lady” of Antarctic geology – a meticulous researcher and a woman of courage and integrity.

Meet Doctor Braums

When the PCs arrive at the university, Dr. Braums receives them in a brightly-lit seminar room equipped with a slide projector and screen. She is a middle-aged woman, formal and old-fashioned, but with a powerful personality. She is uneasy at dealing with beings as outlandish as the heroes – after all, the Geophysics Department’s reputation might suffer! But the situation has driven her to take extraordinary measures. Dr. Braums thanks the PCs for coming, asks them to be seated, and offers them tea or coffee (served by a boggled lab assistant). When they are settled, she informs them where her scientists have vanished – Antarctica! Over tea and muffins the full story emerges . . .

The expedition was led by two professors, Dr. Holger Karlsen and Dr. Katherine Lawrence. The nine members of the Karlsen-Lawrence Geophysical Expedition spent three months in Antarctica studying environmental phenomena such as the ozone hole and the effects of global warming on the Antarctic ice. The experiments were going well; the expedition reported regularly by radio and maintained intermittent contact with the Russian, American, New Zealand and United Kingdom stations. Five days ago, however, they dropped out of radio contact under highly unusual circumstances – circumstances that, Braums tells the heroes, led her to buck higher authority and call the supers.

The professor has acquired tapes of the last radio reports of the scientists, which she will play for the PCs.

The Karlsen Tape

The tapes were recorded by Dr. Karlsen, a man with a low, gravelly voice. The first tapes relate routine atmospheric tests, studies of the ozone hole, storms, supply requisitions, and so on. Then – about 120 hours ago – the dry scientific tone of the reports is broken by a new excitement.

About the Author

David L. Pulver is the author of *GURPS Ultra-Tech* and *GURPS Psionics*, the Phoenix Sector portion of *Space Atlas 4* and the adventures *Rebirth* (*Space Adventures*), *Mordag’s Little Finger* (*Fantasy Adventures*), and the upcoming *Medusa Sanction* (*GURPS Cyberpunk Adventures*). He also perpetrated Iron Crown’s *Aliens and Artifacts* sourcebook.

A student of history turned freelance writer, David has been published in *Challenge*, *Roleplayer* and *White Wolf* and frequently contributes to *All of the Above*, the *GURPS* APA. David lives in Canada. Besides gaming, his hobbies include science fiction, military history, and Japanese animation. He even reads the occasional comic book.



The Scientists

The PCs will be given a list of all the missing scientists. Dr. Lawrence’s party, sent to investigate the crater, consisted of . . .

Dr. Katherine Lawrence, age 35, Assistant Professor on loan from the Department of Anthropology as an expert in Arctic survival.

Dr. Albert Sprecht, age 52, Professor of Geophysics.

Lynn Bellmon, age 23, graduate student and pilot.

Eric Overbee, age 25, graduate student.

Peter Kerenski, age 24, graduate student.

At Little Bird Station

The scientists who remained behind included:

Dr. Holger Karlsen, age 48, Professor of Geophysics.

Dr. Andrew Washington, age 34, Assistant Professor of Geography.

Dana Wu, age 24, graduate student and radio operator.

Max Slater, age 27, graduate student and skilled mechanic.

Captain Denise Gibson

32 years old, 5'6", 130 lbs., athletic build, black skin, brown eyes, short black hair.

ST 10, DX 12, IQ 13, HT 12.

Basic Speed 6; Move 6.

Dodge 6; Parry (Karate): 8.

Damage: Thrust 1d-2, Swing 1d.

Heavy winter clothing (PD 0, DR 1); no encumbrance.

Advantages: Absolute Direction; Common Sense; Military Rank 4; Patron (an influential senator's aide, 9-).

Disadvantages: Duty (U.S. Army); Sense of Duty (United States).

Quirks: Dislikes fair fights; Doesn't drink alcohol; Hates cold weather but is always posted to cold climes; Reads Lovecraft; Tenacious.

Skills: Disguise-12; Driving (Snowcat)-13; Guns (Pistol)-13; Guns (Rifle)-13; Intelligence Analysis-13; Karate-12; Survival (Arctic)-12.

Languages: English-13; French-10; Russian-13.

Weapon: Beretta 92 9mm automatic pistol (under her winter jacket), 2d+2.

Equipment: Chemical handwarmer; cigarette lighter; pocket flashlight; Swiss army knife.

Once in Antarctica, the PCs may need a guide or snowcat driver. Deni Gibson is the assigned liaison for the heroes at McMurdo. An adventurous 32-year-old woman bored with the monotony of the research station, she is the best snowcat driver at the base, and is more than willing to accompany the PCs in their search for the missing scientists. If they don't need a driver or guide, she'll try to follow them in a snowcat, either helping them out of difficult situations, or getting them into some.

Deni is more than she seems. There has been official disinterest in the missing scientists, but that doesn't mean total blindness on the part of the Powers That Be. A member of U.S. Army Intelligence, Captain Gibson was transferred out from her Alaskan posting when the military learned the university was seeking supers to visit Antarctica. Gibson's assignment is to keep a close eye on the heroes, especially any with a bad reputation with the government or armed forces, and see that national interests are looked after. She will be especially interested in evaluating any threats to national security posed by the Zyrani, and in acquiring technology of military significance.

A light observation plane flown by Dr. Katherine Lawrence and student Lynn Bellmon reports a mysterious blue light some two hundred miles from their camp. A series of radio transmissions tells the story: Dr. Lawrence, four other scientists, and a party of dogs traveled across the ice, leaving behind Dr. Karlsen, Dr. Washington, and three other students to relay reports, although frequent bursts of static make this difficult . . .

"The wind is terrible – 40 miles per hour – and conditions are deteriorating rapidly. But we've sighted a glowing crater a hundred feet across. Our instruments show unusual magnetic readings and a high radiation count, though not immediately dangerous.

"We are two hundred yards from the crater. The glow is very eerie. Radio interference is worsening. The dogs are spooked, but we have them under control. We are approaching cautiously, taking regular Geiger readings.

"What? What's that? Sorry, Little Bird, something's happening. The light in the crater has begun to pulse. I think – I think something's moving in the crater . . ."

The transmission ends here, and a blanket of radio jamming immediately settled over a part of the Antarctic continent. Using the slide projector, Dr. Brahms displays a map of Antarctica (see p. 93). An overlay shows the interference is localized in a circular zone beyond the transantarctic mountains. Dr. Brahms informs the heroes that nothing more has been heard from either Lawrence's expedition or the scientists left behind at the base. Bad weather and the radio blackout deterred any of the other research stations from attempting an overflight of the crater at this time.

Sighing in frustration, Dr. Brahms tells the PCs that various research stations reported the blackout to their governments. Word leaked to the press, but the official and media reaction has mostly been to ignore the situation – there are troubles that make better copy, it seems. The strange lights mentioned in the transcript have been brushed off as a common Antarctic mirage – light reflecting off ice crystals in the snow, perhaps. As for the radio blanket, hasn't there been a lot of sunspot activity lately?

Dr. Brahms believes otherwise. She doesn't know what to make of all this, but she *knows* the radio blackout is no normal phenomena. As the ozone hole has shown, anything strange in Antarctica can have implications for the rest of the world. The university will provide transportation to Antarctica. Will the heroes investigate?

Around the World in Eighteen Hours

Dr. Brahms provides a full roster of the expedition (see *The Scientists*, sidebar, p. 91). If the team lacks their own transport, they can travel in a jet chartered by the university. Cold weather gear is also provided. If the group has its own transportation or long-distance flight powers they can use them, although attempts to teleport into the jamming zone will fail – the teleporter goes nowhere. The static field not only jams radio, it also blocks teleportation!

Assuming the PCs are based in North America and they take the university's chartered flight, they will fly to New Zealand, stopping for refuelling at Hawaii. It lands at Christchurch, a medium-sized city. There the heroes stretch their legs and exchange their passenger jet for a lighter ski-equipped aircraft designed for polar exploration. The pilot is a gruff 40-year old New Zealander named Roger Cook.

Antarctica

Unless the heroes have other ideas, the next stop is Antarctica. Flying through a rapidly-worsening snow storm, Cook lands the plane on a small airstrip at the McMurdo research station on the coastal side of the Transantarctic Mountains.

They are greeted by a parka-clad woman. Shouting over the gale, she welcomes them to the cluster of buildings that makes up McMurdo Base, and introduces herself as Denise Gibson (see sidebar, p. 92), their assigned liaison.

By this point the weather is too bad for a conventional aircraft to penetrate further inland. To reach Little Bird Station (see Antarctica map, below) the heroes must use their own powers or snowcat caterpillar tractors (or dog sleds) for cross-country transport. Denise and the other staff of McMurdo are eager to help – they’ve all been worried about the missing expedition and the radio jamming, and have been authorized to provide the PCs with any vehicles, survival gear or cold-weather equipment they need. Supers with skimpy costumes and no life-support powers should certainly consider augmenting them with winter gear (see *Freezing*, p. B188).

Beyond the Transantarctic Mountains

The obvious place for the heroes to investigate is the Byrd II research station (if they go first to the crater, 200 miles further inland, see *Web of Light*, p. 94).

Aside from the cold and the wind, travel into the Antarctic wastes goes smoothly. As they penetrate beyond the Transantarctic Mountains, the PCs find themselves in a bleak desert of endless snow and ice, where temperatures easily reach -30° F. They are also inside the mysterious zone of static, and will soon slip out of radio contact with the rest of the world.

Little Bird Station

Byrd II (dubbed “Little Bird” by its builders) is a small, semi-permanent research base. Little more than a large prefab hut, a radio mast, a hanger, a generator building and a snow-covered airstrip, it stands on the edge of a desolate icy waste, its back to the Transantarctic Mountains.

There are no signs of life. A single snowcat tractor rests empty next to the main building. Inside the hangar is an ski-equipped propeller plane and stocks of diesel fuel, aviation gasoline and spare parts. The main hut’s door stands open, swinging in the wind. The hut contains a living room, four bunk rooms, a washroom and a kitchenette. One chair in the living room is overturned, but that is the only sign of a struggle; a half-empty can of beer and two mugs of cold coffee on the table. A search of the bunk rooms will reveal signs of recent occupancy. There are unmade beds, scattered videocassettes and books, notepads covered with doodles and unwashed dishes. There are no signs of an organized evacuation, but a variety of puzzling clues:

Radio: There is a transistor radio on the table. Its batteries are totally dead.

Personal Computers: There are two personal computers, one in each bunkroom. Disks stacked next to them are labelled as containing normal geophysical survey data, computer games, and half-written geological dissertations by several of the graduate students. However, the computer does not work.

Lightspider

ST 10, DX 14, IQ 10, HT 10.

Basic Speed 6; Move 6.

Dodge 6.

Damage: Thrust 1d-2, Swing 1d.

PD 0, DR 10.

Advantages: None.

Disadvantages: Compulsive Behavior (Build and repair machines; Gullibility; No Sense of Humor; Sense of Duty to Owners; Social Stigma (Slave); Weak Will-2.

Super Advantages: Broadcast, 1 mile; Clinging; Doesn’t Breathe; DR 10; 5 Arms (Extra Flexibility, arranged radially); Radio Hearing; Temperature Tolerance.

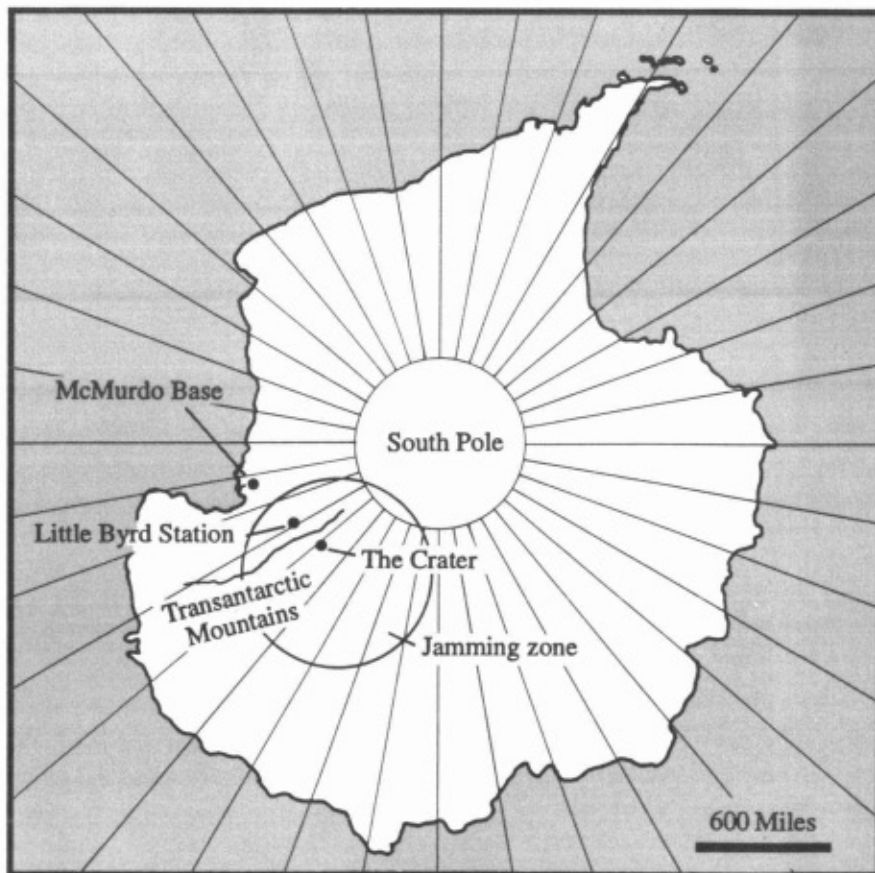
Super Disadvantages: One level Accelerated Aging; 5 levels Vulnerability to electrical attacks.

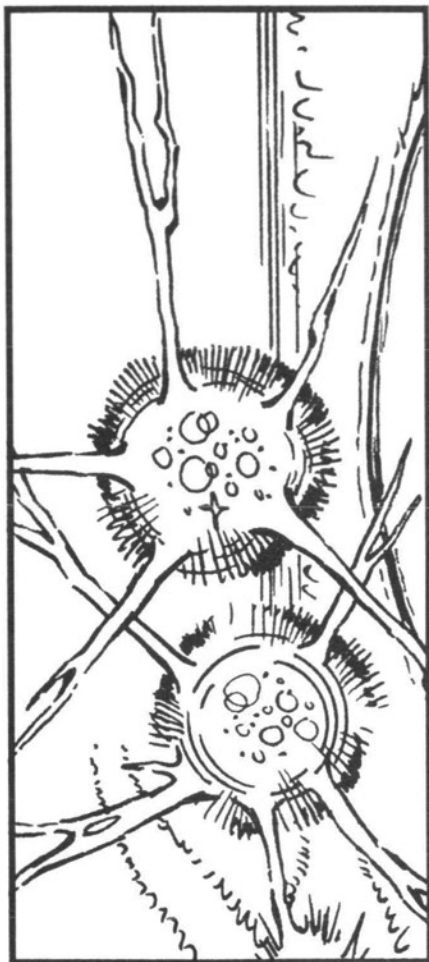
Quirks: Calls everyone “master”; Speaks too quickly; Agrees with everything anyone says.

Skills: Electronics (Force Fields)-15; Mechanic (Matter Transmission); Mechanic (Power Plants)-15; Mechanic (Vehicles)-15.

Weapons: They don’t attack.

The Lightspiders are bio-robots designed for engineering and maintenance tasks. Smart but lacking an ego, they are programmed to obey their owner’s every wish. Anyone, even a human, who is able to speak the Zyrani language can usually persuade a Lightspider that it is its duty to fix or build something. Cunning PCs may be able to get Lightspiders to assist in impromptu gadgeteering, or even bring one home as a “pet.”





Plasma Hound

ST 11, DX 14, IQ 8, HT 10/20.
Basic Speed 6, Move 3 (14 flying).
Dodge 3 (apply targeting modifiers to hit while flying).
PD 0, DR see below.
Damage: Thrust 1d-1; Swing 1d+1, Burning 3d.

Advantage: Fearlessness +2.

Disadvantages: Fanatic (serve the Loci), Mute, No Sense of Smell/Taste.

Super Advantages: Doesn't Breathe, DR 10, Body of Air (objects may be carried up to Medium Encumbrance +50%), Body of Fire (6 levels; DR 3 vs. heat/fire; DR 1 vs. bullets; +2 burn damage; Always On -40%), Doesn't Sleep, Fast Regeneration, Flight, Immunity to Poison, Magnetic Sense (32 hex range), Radio Hearing, Super Flight, 360-Degree Vision.

Super Disadvantages: Body of Air (non-switchable), Dependency (electric current, common, weekly).

Continued on next page . . .

If carefully examined, an Electronics, Computer Programming or Physics roll reveals its motherboards have been blanked, as if by an electromagnetic pulse.

The Vehicles: They won't start. Their engine batteries are totally drained of energy.

The Log: A model sailing ship (the *Erebus*) sits on a shelf in one of the bunk rooms. A deliberate search or an IQ-3 roll will notice a notebook hastily concealed under the ship. See *Karlsen's Log*, below.

Karlsen's Log

This is the most important clue. The log was kept by Dr. Karlsen. It records what happened after radio contact was lost with Lawrence's party.

0200 hours: Expedition worried about loss of radio contact with Katherine. Much speculation as to cause, and what "something moving" could refer to. We begin preparing the snowcat for a rendezvous with Katherine's party (we all avoid the term "rescue" – we don't **know** anything has happened to them). Andrew and I will go – we are the most experienced. I shall leave Slater in charge here.

0300 hours: Storm is worsening, and the cat's engines will not start. Reluctantly, we abort the rescue mission.

0330 hours: Slater claims he saw a light floating in the sky in the direction of the crater. We all go out to look, and there is nothing but the raging storm. Slater insists he saw something. Dana tried to radio McMurdo, but the interference continues. Sunspots?

0415 hours: Andrew joked the light may have been a UFO that kidnapped Katherine and the others. I laughed, but took him aside. Such fantasies must not be discussed – no sense panicking the young students. I told him we will hear from them come morning, when the storm blows over.

0530 hours: Will the damnable storm never cease blowing? I cannot think. Still nothing on the radio.

0600 hours: Dana reports seeing a "flash" on the horizon. I suggest someone in Dr. Lawrence's party may be signalling us, but she says it was no flare. Slater believes it connected with his light. We keep a watch out.

0610 hours: I see a flash as well. What could it be?

0615 hours: Andrew and Dana claim they observed what was "possibly ball lightning" hovering over the snowcat. They are going to investigate. I am at a loss as to what is going on – some weird atmospheric effect, perhaps, connected with the radio interference? Dana and Andrew are taking their time. Someone shouting – is it Dana screaming?

(Scrawled): Glow in the keyhole!

Web of Light

The crater lies 200 miles out from Byrd II, in the open ice fields. Five miles away, a brilliant glow is visible on the horizon. When they get within a mile, they will see a crater some 25 yards across, with a blue-violet-red web of light stretching across the crater rim.

The web is an intricate, ethereal construction that simultaneously suggests a spiderweb, a luminescent sea anemone and the skeleton of a vast machine. The strands radiate from a slim 50-foot tower of indigo light in the center. Periodically, brilliant sapphire beams shoot up from the bottom of the crater – their source lies at the base of the indigo shaft, a six-foot high disk of brilliant blue light which is spinning like a wheel around the tower. Scuttling over the web and the indigo obelisk are red-glowing beings that vaguely resemble giant nine-legged spiders formed from pure energy. Dancing around the pinnacle of the tower are five glowing sparks of light reminiscent of ball lightning.

Although the PCs may have some guesses, what is happening should be mysterious. In fact, the crater was caused by the landing of an alien robot probe, now buried at the base of the blue shaft. The probe's builders lacked a faster-than-light star drive. What they do have is an instant-teleportation stargate, but in order to work, a gateway must be constructed on both ends. This is that gateway. The web itself is an exotic power net, drawing energy from the planet's rotation.

The Creatures

The eight "spiders" are construction robots, mindless drones engaged in pre-programmed tasks – see sidebar, p. 93. They are responsible for constructing and maintaining the stargate. Although the heroes can interfere with them or even attack them, they will not fight (although they will try to escape) and will work to repair any damage to the web the PCs might inflict.

The Lightspiders are harmless, but the gate is guarded by the five sparks of living lightning – Plasma Hounds! They will fly out to attack anyone who approaches within a half-mile of the Web, attempting to incapacitate the heroes. If a combatant is bound or disabled, the Lightspiders will attempt to carry his body to the glowing disk and then toss him through: the victim will vanish! If three out of five Plasma Hounds are disabled, they will attempt to retreat through the blue gateway. See sidebar, p. 94, for their attributes.

The Stargate

The stargate complex is shown on the map on the next page. The individual components are:

The Indigo Tower: This is one yard across and 16 yards high. It is composed of interlinking solid force-fields. Anyone with Spectrum Vision will sense that it is generating and using power in the *gigawatt* range (billions of watts). Penetrating vision at Level 2 or better can see incredibly complex internal "circuitry" in the tower based on the dynamic interaction of magnetic fields, ionized gases and unguessable forces far beyond human technology. It is invulnerable to any attack short of a nuclear explosion, and Dampen or Surge will have no effect upon it.

The Strands: Attached below the summit of the tower and anchored to the crater rim, these are a net of shimmering cables, each about eight inches in diameter. The lowest (A) ring of strands is 1 yard up, the next (B) ring is 3 yards up, the third (C) 5 yards, the fourth (D) 7 yards up, and the highest (E) ring is 9 yards off the ground. As with the indigo tower, they are constructed of force fields and may be climbed (or even run along by anyone with Perfect Balance or Clinging). One hundred points of damage will break a strand, causing flickering blue-violet fire – ionized plasma – to spurt from the severed edges (this does 6d×2 damage explosion to anyone within 2 yards but a Dodge roll enables a character to get clear) before it automatically seals itself. Lightspiders will rush to repair any damage, reattaching the strand within a minute.

The Disk: The spinning disk (2 yards high) at the tower's base is the actual stargate. It is active, and anyone entering its hexes (purposefully or accidentally) will instantly vanish, reappearing at the other end of the stargate.

Plasma Hound (Continued)

Psionics: Mind Shield-14(10).

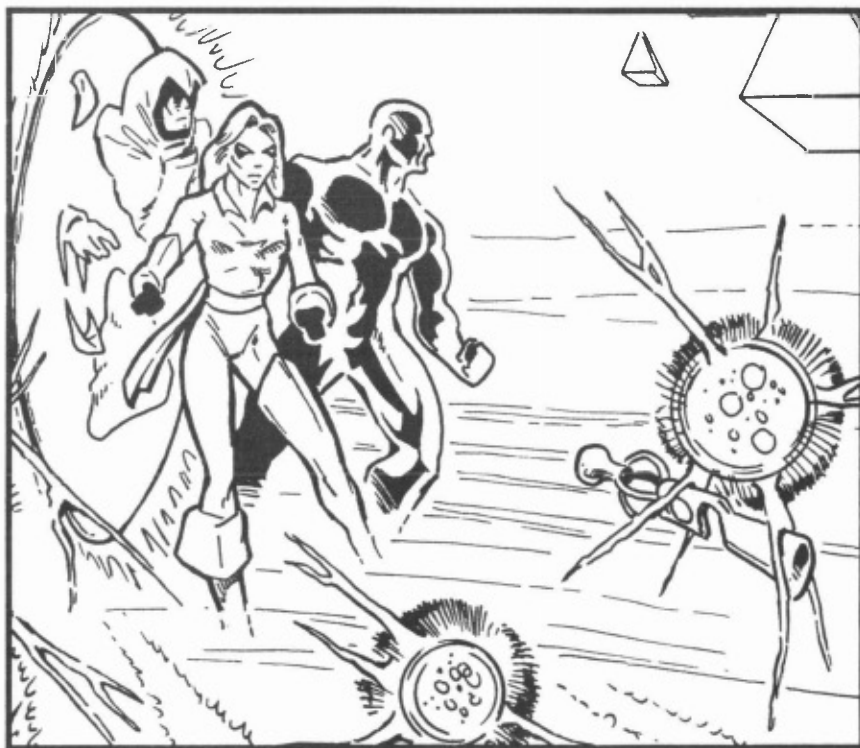
Super-Powers: Bind-14(15) (Instantaneous +20%; touch only -20%); Flash-13(3) (Instantaneous +20%; 15-second recharge); Lightning-14(7) (Continuing +50%; Instantaneous +20%; Costs 2 Fatigue -10%; No Knockback -10%); Surge-10(5) (Instantaneous +20%; 15-second recharge -20%).

Quirks: Buzzes and crackles constantly; Interferes with radio reception; Prefers to chase moving targets; Eats electronic components.

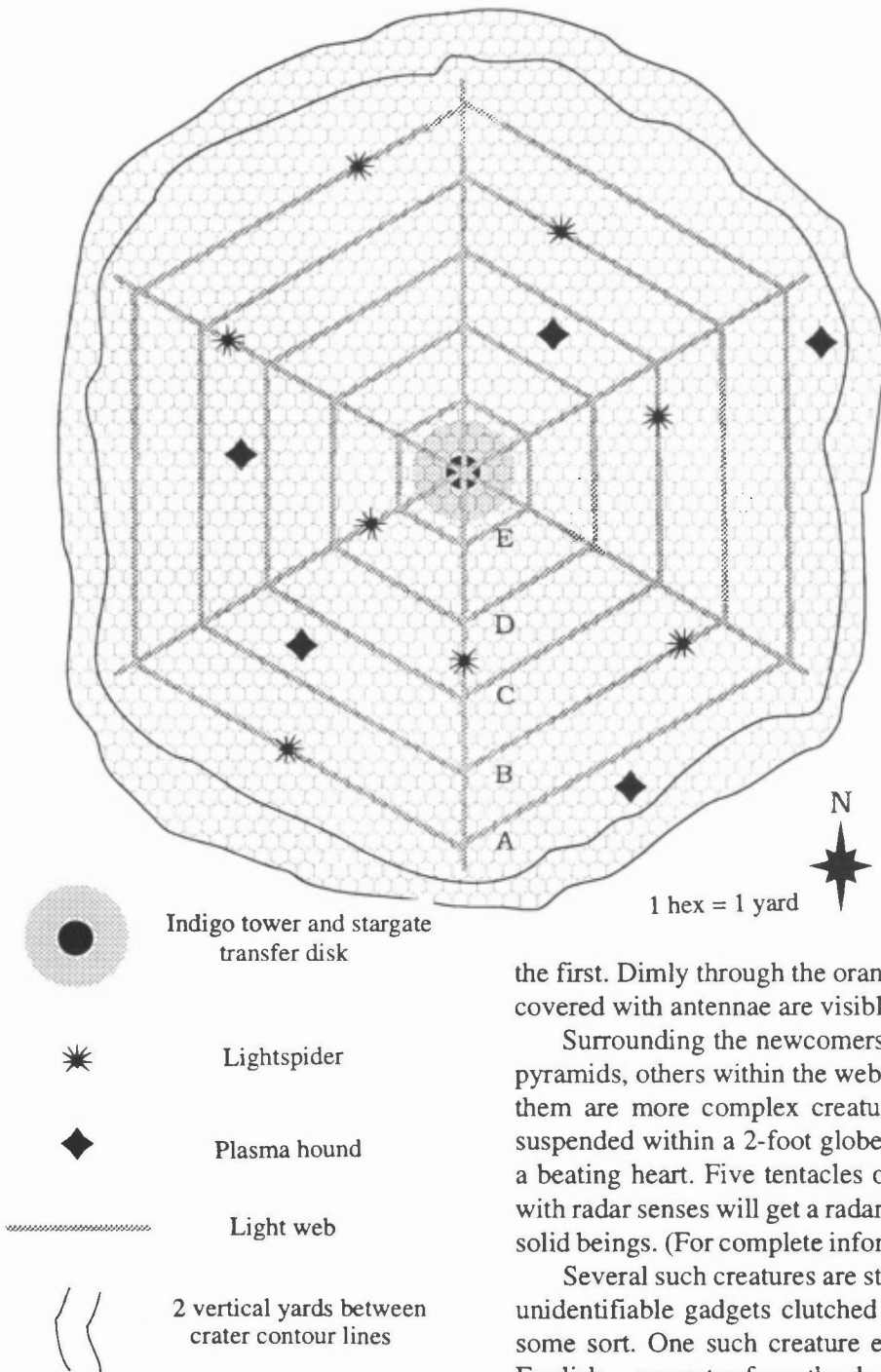
Total Points: 550

Plasma Hounds resemble balls of electrical energy 1 yard in diameter, constantly throwing off sparks. They are composed of ionized plasma (their joint Body of Fire/Body of Air). Plasma Hounds will attack with Bind, Surge or Flash to disable foes; against victims who resist that attack, they use their lightning abilities. Their Body of Air ability lets them flow through narrow cracks or (on Earth) through keyholes or under doors.

Plasma Hounds were created by the Patternmaster (p. 119) from Zyrani dissidents and prisoners. They have no memory of their old life, and exist only to serve the Loci government. Plasma Hounds are used as shock troops and watchdogs. They are mute, but can hear and respond to radio communications from their masters.



Web of Light Map



- A Web 1 yard above ground
- B Web 3 yards above ground
- C Web 5 yards above ground
- D Web 7 yards above ground
- E Web 9 yards above ground

Eta Cassiopia

The PCs should realize that what lies beyond the gateway is their only chance of finding the missing scientists. Stepping, falling or being carried through the gate, a character will be sucked into the eye of a tornado of azure energy and drawn toward a growing funnel of darkness. Nanoseconds stretch into subjective minutes; each hero seems to be alone in blue whirling silence, his body being painlessly torn apart and reconfigured. But after a few moments of disorientation, they pass through the end of the tunnel and materialize – elsewhere. Everyone who passed through the stargate will be Mentally Stunned and must make a HT-2 roll or lose 1d fatigue. At present, the gate is set for one-way (Earth to Zyrane) transit, so no one can return without the operators resetting the system.

Spewed forth from the rotating disk, the travelers find themselves in the center of a duplicate of the complex they have just left. Instead of the Antarctic ice fields, they will be standing within a small dome of clear cold air in the middle of an endless orange fog. They experience a light, buoyant feeling, as if their weight was halved. There is no wind; a bright yellow sun shines dimly through the orange fog. In another part of the sky, there is a dull red glow – a second sun, but far fainter than

the first. Dimly through the orange fog clusters of dozens of gray-white pyramids covered with antennae are visible, each one floating several yards off the ground.

Surrounding the newcomers are scores of alien beings, some on the floating pyramids, others within the web itself. A few resemble the Lightspiders, but with them are more complex creatures. These beings look like a cloud of fireflies suspended within a 2-foot globe of sparkling light, the whole slowly pulsing like a beating heart. Five tentacles of pure energy radiate from their centers. Supers with radar senses will get a radar echo from them, and will sense they are tangible, solid beings. (For complete information on these aliens, see *The Zyrani* on p. 126.)

Several such creatures are standing just outside the air bubble, and many have unidentifiable gadgets clutched in their tentacles, obviously devices or tools of some sort. One such creature enters the air bubble and a spoken greeting – in English – emanates from the device it holds:

“Peace, fleshlings! Spin slowly, do not take alarm, we mean no harm! We urge you most strongly to remain within the environmental field around the stargate. The external atmosphere consists primarily of methane and nitrogen at 100 degrees below zero. We believe you may not be comfortable. Life support devices will be provided imminently.”

If anyone leaves the environmental field, they will learn the alien is speaking the truth – see *Zyrane’s Environment*, p. 97. Those with Radio Hearing or Spectrum Vision will notice the alien’s speech is radio waves, translated into sound by the gadget in its tentacles, and that they are constantly being scanned by radar (the aliens’ vision). Bobbing and pulsing, the alien goes on to inform the visitors that:

“We do not seek conflict! The attack by the Plasma Hounds was mistake, they are merely androids, misprogrammed by over-zealous underlings, we are sorry, they will be disciplined . . . But welcome in the name of the Loci! Welcome, Earthbeings, to Gateway Cluster and Zyrane!”

After the heroes settle down, the alien introduces itself as the Scientist-Commander of Gateway Cluster, Enzag the Worldstalker (use the *Zyrani Scientist* statistics sidebar, p. 122, with the addition of Administration-15 and Leadership-12). Enzag explains the heroes entered an interstellar portal. In fact, they have arrived on the planet Zyrane, in the binary star system known to humans as Eta Cassiopeia, some 19 light-years from Earth.

As Enzag makes its introduction, three Lightspiders scuttle over to the characters from out of the fog, bearing small belt-sized gadgets for the entire party. Worldstalker explains these are translators and life support units (see sidebar, p. 97) and urges the PCs to don and activate them. Putting on the life support belts instantly alleviates any feelings of chill from the icy air, and protects the humans if they venture out of the artificial environment bubble.

Leaving the Gate

When they accompany Worldstalker out of the bubble, the PCs notice 30 Zyrani facing them, and at least 50 more around the stargate or flitting like insects in and out of circular portals in the surrounding buildings.

They may also notice (on a Vision roll) that some of the Zyrani (not Worldstalker) are orbited by large metal objects that are bigger than the translators. If asked, the Zyrani will say these are “scanning equipment, etc.” If pressed, they admit they are weapons – the PCs are surrounded by soldiers as well as scientists. Worldstalker will be somewhat apologetic – after all, who knows what can come through the gate? If the characters don’t press the point, they will see the weapons in action soon enough!

Sixteen of the Zyrani are *Spiral Guards* (sidebar, p. 113); the rest are scientists or technicians (see *Zyrani Scientist* sidebar, p. 122).

Inevitably, the heroes will ask about the scientists, the web of light, and the Plasma Hounds. Worldstalker will be happy to explain that the web is a stargate, and promise a full tour of the facility. It dismisses the Plasma Hounds as mindless security androids, saying the Zyrani are involved in peaceful interstellar exploration for scientific purposes. As for the scientists:

“Yes. They did come through, and we learned much from them, as you can see from these translators and support belts. Their fate was most tragic and regrettable . . . the terrorists . . .”

Speaking of Terrorists

In the midst of this conversation with Worldstalker, all the Spiral Guards suddenly whirl around to face away from the humans; the translators fill with gibberish. Anyone with radio-hearing or radar senses detects a discordant, painful electromagnetic transmission – a Zyrani alarm sounding an alert. A half dozen sparks of light arc out from one nearby building and into another – Plasma Hounds on the wing!

Before the PCs react intelligently, a huge explosion occurs at the tower’s base and the stargate disk vanishes in a burst of blinding blue light! All characters experience a wave of the same disorientation felt when they went through the gate (Will-2 roll or Mentally Stunned). Secondary explosions and showers of sparks come from surrounding pyramids, and strands cut loose from the web flap about, spraying blue jets of ionized plasma. Some of the Zyrani are caught in the gate explosion, and are stunned or hurled backwards by plasma beams or the force of the blast.

Zyrane’s Environment

Zyrane is a small, frozen world whose atmosphere is a dense nitrogen-methane soup spiced with noxious hydrocarbons. Instead of water, liquid methane forms seas, lakes and rivers. Thanks to tidal effects of its large moon, Zyrane suffers from constant earthquakes and active volcanoes that spew scalding water rather than molten rocks. But Zyrane is not lifeless – organic hydrocarbon slime coats its oceans, forests of exotic crystalline plants extend deep roots to tap geothermal heat, and complex cryogenic creatures with lipid-based (rather than protein-based) metabolisms stalk its alien jungles and deep seas in search of prey.

Terrans visiting Zyrane will experience the following differences:

Gravity: Zyrane has a .5 G gravity field. Halve encumbrance before calculating Move score. Also, calculate the change in the character’s own weight and subtract this from encumbrance. “Negative” encumbrance gives a +1 to Move for each 30 pounds of negative encumbrance, up to +3. Also, characters will be able jump twice as high or long, and throw things twice as far. Halve climbing time and damage from falls or falling objects.

Vision: This is cut to 100 yards, just like a thick fog. Unless the character has some sort of ability like radar, vision and attack rolls will take a -1 to hit per 20 yards of range.

Energy Weapons: Laser beams and blast-er bolts will have difficulty penetrating through the dense atmosphere for great distances: halve the ½D and Max ranges.

Breathing: Characters with life-support packs or advantages like Vacuum Support will be able to breathe; otherwise, they will begin to suffocate immediately.

Cold: Zyrane’s average temperature is -100° F. If the PCs lose their life support suits, see *Freezing*, p. B188.

Weather: Impose a -4 on skill rolls for anyone attempting weather control on Zyrane. Reduce this by 1 per day spent practicing. Zyrane has normal wind conditions. Precipitation consists of oily methane rain, sleet, hail and snow (a blizzard may reduce effective temperature by 1dx5 degrees).

Life Support Belt

This gadget projects a shimmering low-power deflector field (PD 0, DR 0) around the wearer to trap and hold in air and heat, and produces new air as long as energy is supplied. Its *Supers* statistics are: Vacuum Support (Breakable: DR 15, 10 hit points; Can Be Hit (-4): Contest of ST to steal). The solar-powered device masses 3 pounds and operates indefinitely given an ultraviolet light source (usually sunlight) or for 12 hours in the shade.

A Zyrani Armory

As with human guns, Zyrani ranged weapons tend to share a characteristic shape: these weapons are pistol size, but vaguely resemble a pure-energy trumpet mating with a cybernetic squid. All Zyrani weapons can be used at lower power settings to do fewer dice of damage – Zyrani will do so if they wish to knock a foe out without killing him.

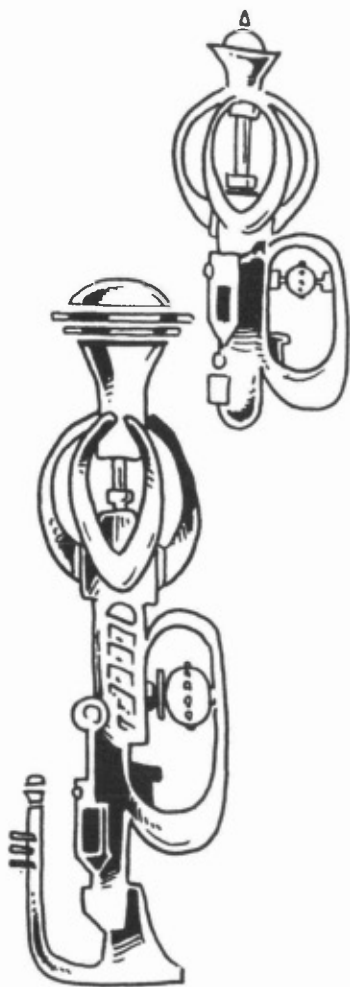
To randomly determine a Zyrani's weapon, roll 1d. Types of weapons are:

1. *Ferrous Pellet Accelerator* ("Gauss-rod"): Stone Missile-15(6)* (Instantaneous +20%; Rapid Fire x2 +40%; Breakable: DR 15, 10 hit points: -15%; Can Be Hit (-4): -15%; Contest of ST to Steal: -30%; 56 points). *Treat as bullets.

2. *Ball Lightning Launcher*: Lightning-15(4) (Homing +50%; Rapid Fire x1 +40%; Instantaneous +20%; Breakable: DR 15, 10 hit points: -15%; Can Be Hit (-4): -15%; Contest of ST to Steal: -30%; 56 points).

3. *Plasma Bolt Projector*: Fireball-15(6) (Explosive Effect +40%; Instantaneous +20%; Breakable: DR 15, 10 hit points: -15%; Can Be Hit (-4): -15%; Contest of ST to steal: -30%; 56 points).

Continued on next page . . .



Next turn, a single Zyrani flies out of one of the building the Plasma Hounds vanished into, glowing, zig-zagging drunkenly and shedding sparks, followed a second later by three Plasma Hounds discharging their energies at the being. Instantly, a dozen of the Zyrani around the PCs regain their equilibrium and open fire with their "scanning equipment," sending bolts of lightning and ruby light (lasers and particle beams) into the dodging Zyrani. Hit by at least ten beams, it disintegrates!

Meanwhile, pulsing Zyrani are flying in from surrounding buildings and carrying off stunned aliens, armed Spiral Guards are orbiting with weapons ready, other Zyrani are being trapped in sparking energy webs from short circuits, and Lightspiders are scampering about trying to fix things. Pandemonium reigns! Amid the too-rapid gibberish on the translators, heroes may catch the phrases "terrorist attack," "pulse bomb" and "tachyonic inversion."

The heroes may wish to help (if they can figure out how) by containing explosions in force fields or the like, or may remain bystanders, but either way the situation will soon be brought under control. (They could also flee – but beyond the complex is simply an empty plain of methane ice and barren rock stretching for hundreds of miles, while anyone trying to return through the stargate will discover it no longer exists.)

When the commotion dies down, the distraught Worldstalker expresses his regret at this terrible incident! It inquires if the party are injured, and offers to do what it can for them. As is apparent, the stargate is out of action. Pulsing with emotion, the Scientist-Commander lays blame for the attack:

"It was most likely the notorious Zero Cluster. Terrorist-fanatics, a band of xenophobic anti-scientific fundamentalists who hate the thought of government, expansion or progress. This deceitful, cowardly attack was doubtless intended to halt the project, and to prevent peaceful contact between our two worlds . . ."

As the Spiral Guards roam through the pyramids tightening security, Worldstalker consults with harried technicians and then reports: it will take at least 10 earth-days to get the gate repaired on this end – longer with proper safety testing. Until then, it says, they are guests by default, and will be extended every courtesy by the Loci, Zyrane's ruling government.

Fate of the Scientists

Following the attack, the humans will probably want to discuss the missing scientists with Worldstalker.

"Alas. Although the Plasma Hounds were less than gentle when they brought them through, your scientists were healed, protected from exposure to our atmosphere, and became honored guests. We developed these translators to speak with them, hoping to learn more of your Earth. But then, tragedy struck!"

"Terrorists! A band of fanatic cultists, most probably the same malcontents who assailed us this planetary rotation. They mounted an attack against the science facility in which your world-mates were being held. They took your scientists captive – possibly for torture, interrogation or most likely sacrifice to the twisted deity they worship. Then they destroyed the science institute! The World Police – our security forces – tell me their bomb contained a full ounce of antimatter! The destruction was total. There was nothing, nothing at all left. Not just the science facility, but much of the neighboring cluster was destroyed. Hundreds of Zyrani perished in the nuclear fire or were disrupted by the electromagnetic pulse! Our security forces are seeking these criminals, but have had little success. Perhaps investigation into this latest atrocity will yield some clues as to their location and the fate of their prisoners."

If the supers demonstrated unusual abilities or look like warriors, Worldstalker pauses for a few seconds, sparkling with agitation, and then adds:

“Would you would be willing to help us recover your scientists, and bring the terrorists to justice?”

Worldstalker is telling the truth – as it knows it. What really happened is more sinister, but was covered up by Worldstalker’s superiors, the Loci Inner Council (see *Zyrani Culture*, p. 127).

Guests of the Loci

The heroes will probably wish to track down the Zero Cluster and find the scientists. Worldstalker will tell them that Zyrane is a large planet, and the terrorists are a small group: they could be anywhere. If the supers will be patient, Worldstalker will put them in touch with the World Police, who will be happy to let them participate in the ongoing investigation of the Zero Cluster. Some of the heroes may be injured or exhausted from their encounter with the Plasma Hounds and their trip through the stargate. The alien tells them the Loci have been contacted, and a transport will arrive in about one Earth hour to take them to the Forever Cluster. There they can meet with members of the Loci government and World Police.

While they are waiting, Worldstalker will guide them around the stargate facility (what’s left of it). Inside the pyramidal buildings – made of high-pressure ice – they are shown powerful fusion reactors and complex computer systems, all formed from solid force-fields. Worldstalker explains in general terms some of the principals behind the stargate – its power requirements (27.2 gigawatts), its mode of operation (“macroscopic wormhole generation”) and its need for both a sending and receiving station. If anyone asks how the Zyrani set up the Antarctica station, Worldstalker describes how Zyrani radio astronomers picked up Earth’s radio signals, then sent a slower-than-light fusion-powered space probe to the Sol system. After a 20-year journey the probe landed in Antarctica. There it constructed the other half of the stargate using the Lightspider androids. The stargates on Zyrane and Earth were synchronized, creating an interstellar “wormhole” tunnel.

The Sky Boat

An hour later, the promised transport arrives. Coming into view is a streamlined vehicle the size of an executive jet, resembling two pyramids joined end to end. The craft flies on its side with no visible means of support. It drifts silently up to the humans and stops, hovering in place.

A hatch in its underside opens up, and an armed Zyrani disembarks, followed by a dozen others, who immediately fan out into the Gateway cluster. Worldstalker introduces Inspector Srizakk Lawbinder of the World Police Counter-Terror Squad (see sidebar, p. 101), in charge of the investigation and the PCs’ official liaison. Srizakk floats next to the PCs, spins once in salute, and its translator speaks:

“Welcome, Earthers. I am Srizakk, of the World Police. I will be working with you to locate your scientists and the terrorist fanatics. With your cooperation, I am confident we shall be successful. My officers have been directed to begin an immediate forensic investigation of this latest atrocity. While they do so, I have been ordered to urge you to accompany me to the Forever Cluster. The Loci wish to meet you to discuss this tragedy and formulate a strategy to deal with it. Enter the skyboat. Please do not be afraid of our technology, although I imagine it must seem amazing to beings such as yourselves.”

Assuming the PCs decide to come with Srizakk (there isn’t much else they can do at this point) they will be ushered into the cabin. Srizakk shows them how the Lightspiders have improvised a section of seats in the passenger cabin, and have

A Zyrani Armory (Continued)

4. *Photon Whip*: Laser-15 (2) (Continuous Beam +50%; Accuracy 8 +70%; Rapid Fire $\times 3$ +120%; Instantaneous +20%; Breakable: DR 15, 10 hit points: -15%; Can Be Hit (-4): -15%; Contest of ST to steal: -30%; 56 points).

5. *Electrosynaptic Disruptor*: Confuse-15(15) (Instantaneous +20%; Breakable: DR 15, 10 hit points: -15%; Can Be Hit (-4): -15%; Contest of ST to steal: -30%; 56 points).

6. *Heavy Graviton Amplifier*: Increase Density-15(18) (Instantaneous +20%; Breakable: DR 15, 15 hit points: -15%; Can Be Hit (0): -25%; Contest of ST to steal: -30%; 56 points).

PCs and Zyrani Weapons

PCs may want to use Zyrani weapons. All Zyrani weapons have electrical rather than physical triggers. A super could trigger a Zyrani weapon if he had the ability to generate a powerful electrical pulse (Surge or Lightning at Power 1+) and made a Skill-5 roll to control it without burning out the weapon. A gadgeteer may be able to modify a Zyrani weapon, installing a physical trigger – use the normal gadgeteering rules to do this. The relevant skills are Armourer/TL13 and Physics.

A Zyrani Glossary

Binding: Zyrani reproduction.

Cluster: a Zyrani social unit, similar to a corporation or commune.

Degaussed: demagnetized, i.e., executed.

Field Strength: Zyrani term for physical health.

Fleshling: a human or Outsider.

Ghost: a human or Outsider.

The Loci: the Zyrani’s ruling bureaucratic oligarchy.

Pulse: to speak.

Slave Tubes: a Loci slow torture in which offending Zyrani are placed in magnetic bottles, where their natural energy is siphoned off to feed the local power grid.

Spiral Guard: the elite forces of the World Police.

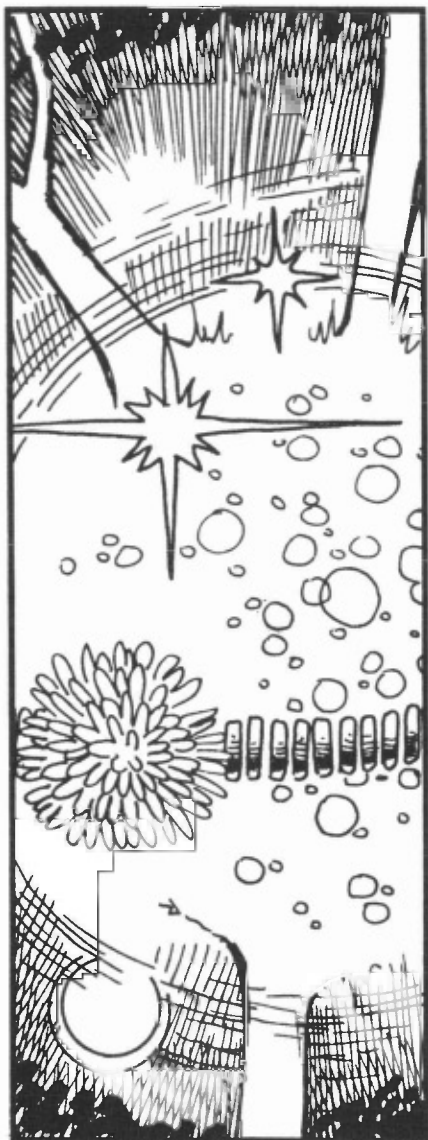
Trio: a Zyrani family: three adult members plus one or more children.

Tri-Zak: a flying tank.

World Police: the Zyrani government’s enforcement body.

Zak: a Zyrani mobile building.

Zero Cluster: originally a derisive term for the rebel movement which was adopted by the resistance themselves.



Forcefield Generator

These gadgets resemble strap-on glowing green sea-urchins with blunt spikes. When activated, the user is surrounded in a sparkling rainbow haze. The field provides extra hit points which will take any damage before the wearer does. If the field is turned off, it will regenerate its lost hit points, but not the wearer's own HT. Its Limited Uses allow it to operate for 1 hour per day, after which its batteries need 24 hours to recharge. For this reason, Zyrani with forcefield generators usually leave them turned off until danger threatens. Its statistics are:

50 Extra Hit Points (Breakable -10%; Can Be Hit at -2, -20%; Limited Use – once per day -40%; 75 points).

Fast Regeneration (Breakable -10%; Can Be Hit -20%; Limited Uses Once Per Day -40%; Does Not Regenerate Wearer's HT -15%; 10 points).

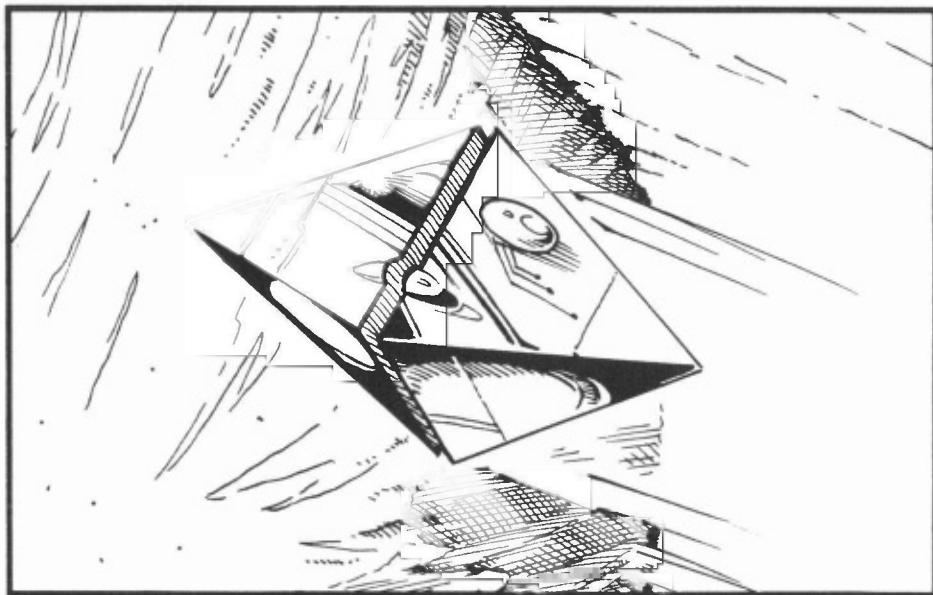
Total cost: 85 points.

modified a Zyrani viewscreen to detect visible light rather than radar images, so they can see outside. Srizakk heads for the control room, telling them to secure themselves for takeoff.

Seconds later, the skyboat lifts off vertically with a gentle hum, and begins rapidly accelerating. After the aircraft is airborne, another Zyrani who introduces itself as "Officer Indrak Warpdancer, your co-pilot" comes into the passenger cabin to see how the PCs are doing. If they are hungry or thirsty, Indrak tells them that human foodstuffs are being prepared at their destination, which they should reach in a few hours. To pass the time, Indrak offers to explain the skyboat's workings.

Indrak says the skyboat is a Police "M-Zak-3" flyer, the personal vessel of Inspector Srizakk, with enough endurance to fly anywhere on Zyrane. Made of ice – a reliable building material under Zyrane's cryogenic conditions – it is fusion powered, driven by reactionless thrusters, and uses anti-gravity generators to further improve its performance. It can travel at 900 mph, and fly at altitudes of up to 2,000 feet, and maneuver at up to 5 Gs. (It also has PD 4, DR 20, and 500 hit points, and requires Pilot (Contra-Grav)/TL13 to operate.)

If the PCs are interested, Indrak will show them the bridge. The pilot (a Zyrani it introduces as Mastigar Skyspiral) and Srizakk are seated in what looks like a sparkling wire cage, manipulating complex controls. No viewscreen or instrument displays are visible to human eyes – Indrak explains they emit radio, radar and magnetic wavelengths. Indrak offers to take interested PCs back to the engine room. Indrak explains that this room contains the 7-megawatt fusion power plant, contra-grav generators and reactionless thrusters, all of which resemble a collection of seven globular force-bubbles, joined by glowing tubes that expand and contract regularly.



Srizakk and Indrak will answer questions on the Zyrani's ecology and culture (see p. 127 for details) and the planet itself (p. 128), but Mastigar is too busy piloting to have time to talk. None of the police will say anything critical about the Loci, explaining only that the Loci government is an "bureaucratic meritocracy." The existence of the Shindaroth race (p. 126) on Zyrane will only be mentioned if the PCs specifically ask if the Zyrani have met other races. They will say only that barbaric primitives, the Outsiders, live in the crystree forests, and little is known about them.

If asked, Indrak will not comment on the terrorists, referring the PCs to Srizakk. Srizakk repeats what Worldstalker has already said, emphasizing that the

terrorists are a fanatical organization opposed to both interstellar contact and the Zyrani government. All he can add is that the scientists were kidnapped from Forever Cluster three Earth days ago by a team of a dozen terrorists disguised as life-support technicians. All witnesses were murdered, and the terrorists escaped in a stolen supersonic vehicle for parts unknown.

Several minutes into the flight, Srizakk will announce that it will take four hours to reach their destination, so the PCs should use the time to rest, relax and scan the scenery.

The Sky Boat skims a few hundred feet above the ground at between 700 and 900 mph. After two hours, as noon turns to late afternoon, Srizakk joins the characters to point out items of interest: "We now pass over the Glittering Hills, with their extensive iron deposits – even from up here you should be able to feel the attractive patterns of their magnetic fields! You can't? Well, then – off our left bow, sense the harmonious radio reflections being produced as the microwaves of our solar power satellites bounce off that antennae forest, a marvel of engineering designed to be both beautiful and functional. Most humans don't sense radio waves? What limited beings you Earthers are." It should become apparent that Zyrani and human standards of natural beauty are not compatible – and that Srizakk doesn't think much of humans . . .

However, the travelers can see one feature of interest. Coming up to the north-east is a circular crater nearly two miles across. As the skyboat gets closer, the supers see that around the rim are grounded pyramid-shaped buildings, some almost intact, others in rubble. Anyone with the ability to detect radiation will sense that the center of the crater is slightly radioactive, although the outskirts are no longer dangerous.

Srizakk: "The once proud Terminal Cluster, one of the largest and most prosperous dwelling regions on Zyrane. It was destroyed by the terrorists in an act of wanton brutality when we refused to give in to their demands. Over 15,000 Zyrani were degaussed in the radioactive holocaust when the terrorist plasma bombs were detonated."

After the Terminal Cluster is behind them, Srizakk suggests the PCs get some rest. Most of the rest of the flight will be over the Great Methane Ocean. Soon they will arrive in the Zyrani capital.

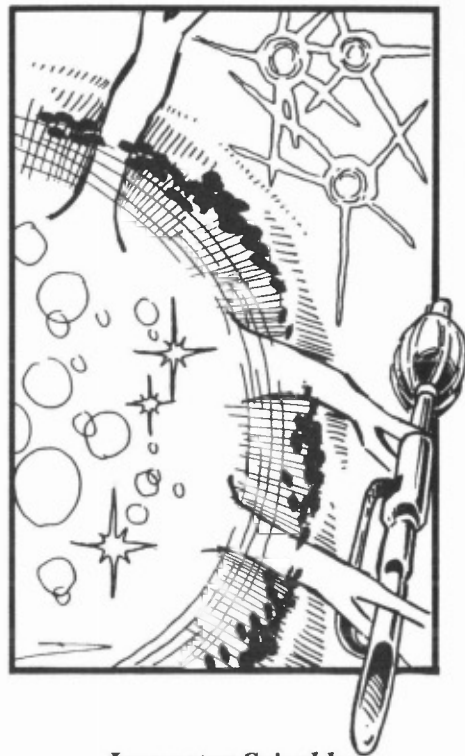
The Forever Cluster

After two hours of flight over an alien ocean, land is visible again, and Indrak tells the passengers they are nearing the Forever Cluster. In the distance, the PCs can see what seems to be a swarm of hundreds of birds. As they get nearer, the perspective becomes clearer: the "birds" turn out to be huge steel-gray floating pyramids, thousands of them, each hundreds of feet tall, hovering high above an icy plain.

Srizakk proudly explains that this is the Forever Cluster, home to 248,436 Zyrani. As Mastigar pilots the sky boat towards the largest of the pyramids, a huge edifice nearly 100 yards across on each side, Srizakk tells them that they approach the Central Planning Zak, containing the offices of Cluster Organizer Ordraz, an influential member of the Loci Inner Circle.

Cluster Organizer Ordraz

The sky boat flies into a portal at the base of the pyramid, and emerges in a cavernous hangar bay, filled with other Zyrani vehicles and lit by harsh blue lights rich in ultraviolet that cut through the orange fog of the atmosphere. Exiting the skyboat, they are greeted by a Zyrani who introduces itself as Guestmaster Azog, and tells the heroes that the Cluster Organizer is expecting them in the Assembly Chamber. Srizakk excuses itself: it has business at World Police HQ.



Inspector Srizakk

Looks like a typical Zyrani.

ST 9, DX 13, IQ 13, HT 11/21.

Basic Speed 6; Move 6 (12 flying).

Dodge 10 (apply targeting modifiers to hit when flying).

PD 4, DR 5.

Damage: Thrust 1d-2, Swing 1d-1.

Advantages: Absolute Timing; Legal Enforcement Powers; Patron (World Police).

Disadvantages: Duty to the World Police; Sadistic; -1 Reputation.

Super Advantages: Broadcast x4; Doesn't Breathe; DR 5; 10 Extra Hit Points; 4 Extra Arms (Extra Flexibility, arranged radially); Fast Regeneration; Flight (5' ceiling; Immunity to Poison; Magnetic Sense, 16-hex range; PD 4; Radar Sense 25-hex radius; Radio Hearing; 360-Degree Vision.

Super Disadvantage: 5 levels of Vulnerability to Surge or Dampen.

Psionics: Mind Shield-14(25).

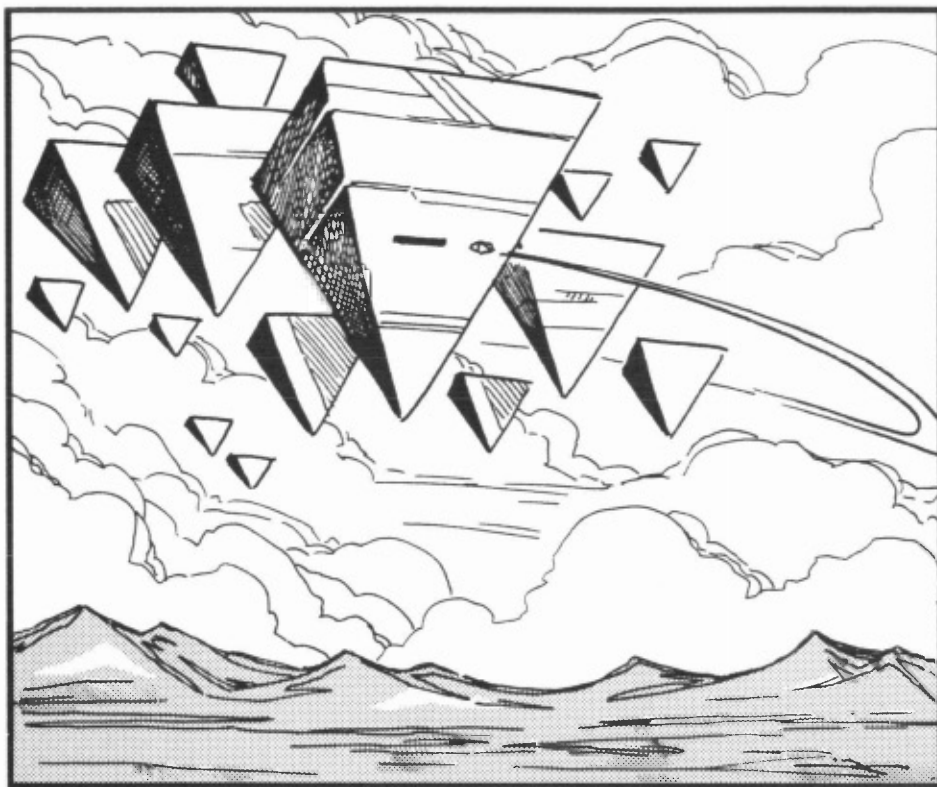
Super-Powers: Surge-13(5) (Instantaneous, Touch Only).

Quirks: Precise speech; Ruthless; Secret xenophobe.

Skills: Area Knowledge (Zyrane)-14; Brawling-14; Criminology-13; Electronics Operations (Security)-12; Forensics-12; Law (Zyrani)-12.

Super Weapons and Equipment: Photon Whip (see sidebar, p. 99) at skill 15; Translator; Force-Field Generator (see sidebar, p. 100).

Srizakk is a typical senior officer in the World Police, a sadistic, treacherous master of lies and deceit. It is proud to have been given the job of guarding these horrible aliens, and hopes it will be assigned the job of disposing of them as well.



If the PCs Read Srizakk's Mind

The “terrorists” are real – freedom fighters struggling to overthrow the tyrannical government which Srizakk and the World Police support. But it was the World Police who are responsible for the abduction of the Karlsen-Lawrence expedition, as part of a sinister plot to conquer Earth! The reason the PCs are being treated well is that the World Police have heard descriptions of human “supers” from the scientists. Now that beings of that sort have appeared the Loci have decided to react cautiously. By being hospitable – and perhaps duping the PCs into fighting the rebels – Srizakk and its masters intend to gain more information about human paranormals prior to their planned invasion of Earth.

Because Srizakk and its two minions are aware of these plans, a very skilled telepath could penetrate the Zyrani's natural Power 20 Mind Shield and discover Srizakk's secrets. If any supers penetrate the deception early in the adventure and reveal their knowledge to the police officers, Srizakk and Mastigar will try to kill them. The third officer's reaction will be very different: Indrak is secretly a rebel spy (see p. 104), and will attempt to aid the PCs and convince them to join the rebellion!

Azog guides the humans out of the hanger deck to a spiralling metal rampway that leads to an upper level of the pyramid. Designed only to provide a surface that the Zyrani magnetic levitation powers will work against, the slick metal of the ramp is slippery and hard to climb (DX rolls to avoid an embarrassing slide down for those who can't fly).

The rampway leads up to the next level, where the earthlings will find themselves in a maze of corridors and rooms filled with hundreds of Zyrani engaged in inexplicable tasks. Azog guides them past two World Police officer guards into a square chamber nearly 50 yards across. In the middle of the hall two dozen Zyrani orbit a central figure in an intricate three-dimensional dance-like pattern, like a swarm of giant fireflies practicing ballet. As the heroes enter, the dance slowly ends and the dancers drift out

of the room, giving the supers a clear view of the figure in the center – a rather large Zyrani, close to four feet across, flanked by two armed Zyrani (World Police bodyguards). The translator booms out its voice:

“Greetings, humanoids of Earth. I am Cluster Organizer Ordraz, representing the Loci Inner Circle. We are here to discuss peace, harmony, and how we may cooperate to destroy the nefarious terrorists who blight our world.”

Ordraz will answer any reasonable questions about the Zyrani world, people, culture, and society (see *The Zyrani* on p. 126) although like Srizakk, it will cast the Loci in a good light. Ordraz will respond favorably to overtures of diplomatic relations, trade or commerce with Earth although it will dismiss details with “those are matters for the experts to discuss later, surely?” Ordraz will also express curiosity about the heroes and Earth, albeit in a somewhat laconic manner.

Questions it will ask include:

Are any of you related or bonded to the missing scientists?

Do you have suggestions for the investigation?

Are you representatives of Earth's government or military?

Are there other intelligent races on Earth? Have Earth-beings met any alien races besides ourselves?

Do you like dancing? If so, would you demonstrate?

If any of the visitors exhibit strange powers or obvious physical differences from normal humans, Ordraz will ask who *designed* their “mutations” and if other such beings on Earth have these abilities? The implication is that the Zyrani have the ability to genetically engineer super-powers. If any of the PCs catch Ordraz on this point, it will admit that this is true: the Plasma Hounds and Lightspiders are artificial beings they have created.

If the PCs decide to dance and make a successful skill roll, Ordraz will express appreciation, and may refer to it as a “ghost dance.” If questioned, he will say that humans appear somewhat ethereal to Zyrani. If they ask about “ghosts,” the expression does not refer to anything supernatural, but rather to legendary “fleshy” beings with some Zyrani legends suggest may have been responsible for

their creation. Unfortunately, no firm evidence exists one way or another for this – it's an old belief, only backed up by the divergence of the Zyrani and other life.

After Ordraz has chatted with them for some time (while attempting to reveal as little as possible) a Zyrani will enter the room and rapidly pulse a message to Ordraz. The PCs get the sense of it – there has been good news. The World Police forensic team has been rounding up suspects who may have been involved in the terrorist bombing, and have found one of the conspirators already. The suspect is being held in the Forever Cluster Central Police Zak, where Inspector Srizakk is now interrogating them.

Ordraz asks if the humans might like to see the prisoner.

Rhapsody of Pain

If they take Ordraz's suggestion, the PCs will be escorted by two World Police (officers Indrak and Mastigar, the skyboat pilots) to a group of floaters (see sidebar, p. 107), which will convey them across the pyramid city to the Police Zak and the waiting Inspector Srizakk.

It is quite dark out, and the orange fog has turned a burnt umber with the setting suns. Lifting off, they fly pass a few civilian floaters flitting back and forth, but by and large there is little traffic – if they ask, the supers will be told that Zyrani, like humans, are diurnal, and activity ceases towards nightfall.

The Central Police Zak is a windowless gray ice pyramid floating 50 yards off the ground, half a mile away from the Central Planning Zak. The entrance is on the first floor hangar deck. The floater docks and they are ushered out. Indrak stays with the floater, while Mastigar guides them up a ramp and through a large chamber filled with World Police officers manning communication consoles, through a passageway into what Mastigar says is the Interrogation Room.

Srizakk is standing next to a single free-standing control console that faces a row of three man-high tubes, each wide enough for a Zyrani to fit inside. Two are empty: the third is filled with a hellish blue-green web of lightning, in the midst of which an unfamiliar Zyrani writhes in terrible anguish, sparks flying from its body.

As the PCs enter they hear a terrible popping and crackling noise like frying bacon. The translators render it as: "Ahhhh! No, no, stop – told you, told you – my name is Bazog – don't know the answers, stop, stop, stop!"

The heroes will probably object to this kind of treatment for a prisoner. If they do, Srizakk turns off the device, but protests that Bazog has "only been in the tube for a few hours" and that "any means are justified when dealing with terrorist saboteurs." It turns to the prisoner and says:

"You've only been there three hours! Stop whining and tell your story for these aliens, you piece of reactor-waste, or I'll triple the Magno-Stimulator's voltage!"

"No, no! I am – Bazog – work in Gateway Cluster – computer programmer – I am a Zero Cluster agent – I confess to terrorist crimes – The Zero Command – a coded message, always in code, never know where it's coming from – orders to forge identity pass –

World Police Officer

Typical Zyrani in appearance.

ST 9, DX 12, IQ 12, HT 10/20.

Basic Speed 5.5; Move 5 (10 flying).

Dodge 9 (use targeting modifiers to hit when flying).

PD 4, DR 5.

Damage: Thrust 1d-2; Swing 1d-1.

Advantage: Legal Enforcement Powers.

Disadvantages: Duty to World Police;

Bully; -2 Reputation.

Super Advantages: Broadcast x4; Doesn't Breathe; DR 5; 4 Extra Arms (Extra Flexibility, arranged radially); 10 Extra Hit Points; Fast Regeneration; Flight (5' ceiling); Immunity to Poison; Magnetic Sense, 16-hex range; Radar Sense, 25-hex radius; PD 4; Radio Hearing; 360-Degree Vision.

Super Disadvantage: 5 levels of Vulnerability to Surge or Dampen.

Psionics: Mind Shield-14(25).

Super-Powers: Surge-12(5) (Instantaneous, Touch Only).

Quirks: Addresses non-energy beings as "fleshling"; Changes color when emotionally disturbed; Hums and buzzes menacingly; Spins in place.

Skills: Brawling-11; Criminology-10; Electronics Operation (Communications, Sensors or Security)-10; Law (Zyrani)-9.

Super Weapons and Equipment: Any one Zyrani weapon at skill 15 (see sidebar, pp. 98-99).

Use these statistics for Srizakk's underlings (such as Mastigar) or any other members of the World Police who are encountered by the PCs. Don't use them for Indrak – its statistics are on p. 104.



Cluster Organizer Ordraz

Large (4-foot diameter) Zyrani.
ST 10, DX 11, IQ 14, HT 11/21.
Basic Speed 5.25; Move 5 (10 flying).
Dodge 9 (apply targeting modifiers to hit while flying).
PD 4, DR 5.
Damage: *Thrust* 1d-2; *Swing* 1d.
Advantages: Charisma +3; Status 6.
Disadvantages: Greed; Gluttony; Lecherous; Overweight.

Super Advantages: Broadcast x4; Doesn't Breathe; DR 5; Fast Regeneration; 4 Extra Arms (Extra Flexibility, arranged radially); 10 Extra Hit Points; Fast Regeneration; Flight (5' ceiling); Immunity to Poison; Magnetic Sense, 16-hex range; Radar Sense, 25-hex radius; PD 4; Radio Hearing; 360-Degree Vision.

Psionics: Mind Shield-14(25).

Super-Powers: Surge-12(5) (Instantaneous, Touch Only).

Quirks: Dance connoisseur; Rotates very slowly while speaking.

Skills: Administration-16; Bard-14; Leadership-15; Politics-15; Savior-Faire-14.

Super Weapons and Equipment: Translator, Zyrani force-field generator (see sidebar, p. 100).

Ordraz is the political head of the Loci. Although a lazy Zyrani who is overly addicted to sensual pleasures, Ordraz is a good administrator and careful politician. It rose to its present position by making sure it had compromising information about everyone around it. Ordraz is uncertain whether war with Earth is a good idea – it seems a lot of work – but is sure that it will make Commander Drazidor's faction happy and keep the populace's mind off their own troubles.

Ordraz is never without two World Police guards.

Indrak

Typical Zyrani; his body has a slightly more violet glow than most.

ST 9, DX 12, IQ 12, HT 13/23.

Basic Speed 6.25; Move 6 (12 flying).

Dodge 10 (apply targeting modifiers to hit when flying).

PD 4, DR 5.

Damage: *Thrust* 1d-2; *Swing* 1d-1.

Advantages: Legal Enforcement Powers; Strong Will +2.

Disadvantages: Secret (Double Agent for the Zero Cluster); Sense of Duty to Zero Cluster.

Super Advantages: Doesn't Breathe; DR 5; 4 Extra Arms (Extra Flexibility, arranged radially); 10 Extra Hit Points; Broadcast x4; Flight (5' ceiling); Immunity to Poison; Magnetic Sense, 16-hex range; Radar Sense, 25-hex range; PD 4; Radio Hearing; 360-Degree Vision.

Continued on next page . . .

give to fusion-mechanic called Rastag – Rastag was the only one, no others in the bomb plot I knew – no, not the tube! – it was Rastag – planted the pulse-bomb, we didn't want to hurt anyone, just seal the gate – don't know anything about Fleshlings – don't know where Zero Fastness is, not high enough rank – please don't use the tube again – Rastag set the bomb, not me – the Fastness is a secret, I don't know where – don't have the Fleshlings – don't know any other Zero Cluster bases – please, not the tube again – stop – my name is Bazog – I work in the Gateway Cluster, I am a Zero Cluster agent . . .”

The supers may want to try telepathy (on Bazog or other Zyrani). This will likely prove futile, since Zyrani have exceptionally powerful natural mind shields (skill 14, power 20). But even under more gentle questioning, it is obvious that this poor creature's mind has been thoroughly broken by its torture. Srizakk will not apologize, claiming that it has lost fellow Officers to the terrorists, and in Srizakk's mind beings such as Bazog merit neither pity nor mercy. Srizakk has two World Police agents lead the saboteur away to a holding cell (“to await justice”), then tells the PCs that the World Police interrogated several other suspicious individuals who worked in Gateway Cluster, but this Bazog was the only guilty suspect. Although the terrorist's mind unfortunately snapped under brain-scan, the stress-monitors say it was telling the truth: it has no idea who its superiors are, where the human hostage is being held, or where the Zero Cluster's bases are located.

Morosely, Srizakk remarks that the terrorists use a cell structure, where each member only knows a few other contacts. With the bomber Rastag slain by the Spiral Guards after it activated the bomb, there are no more immediate leads. However, the net is widening, and they hope to gain more information by tomorrow morning: Srizakk has heard rumors that there may be guerrilla nests in the Skyfall Mountains, and perhaps the PCs will be gracious enough to accompany the World Police on a sweep of that region. For now, they should return to the Central Planning Zak: food and quarters should be ready now.

The Human Quarters

When the Terrans return to the Central Planning Zak it will be late evening. Guestmaster Azog (who obviously has sources in Srizakk's organization) suggests that since night is falling they go to their quarters and relax, since tomorrow will be a busy day, especially if they accepted Srizakk's proposition of a hunting expedition among what Azog calls the “lawless mining clusters of the Skyfall wilderness.” Azog says it will wake the PCs at sunrise. Azog listens sympathetically to any protests the PCs may make about Srizakk, and says that it will arrange for Ordraz to issue a reprimand and look into the matter. But Azog states that though the Inspector can be excessive in its zeal, its record in service to the Loci is unblemished, and if any being can find the terrorists and the scientists, Srizakk will.

Azog says that Lightspiders have constructed quarters designed for human habitation and wonders if they approve. The three adjoining apartments are in an isolated wing on the third level of the pyramid. Each is accessed by a force-field airlock that maintains an Earth-normal environment. The rooms are triangular, 5 yards on a side, heated to a “warm” -30 degrees and lit by overhead light-globes (a bit strong in ultraviolet). The chambers have soft polymer floors, but are unfurnished save for a water heater (turning solid water ice into drinkable liquid water) and an organic food processor that produces bland synthesized nutrient bars. The machines are portable (20 pounds each). For waste elimination, each room also has a disposal shaft (1' across) that disintegrates whatever is placed within with a blue flash (objects with DR 50 or more won't be disintegrated and will jam the device). The rooms have view-screen windows that let their occupants watch the

city, although little can be seen in the orange fog: distant hovering pyramids, a Zyrani-filled floater whizzing by, billowing red and purple clouds, and so on.

Each room is also secretly bugged. Roll vs. Electronics Operations (Security)-5 to find them if anyone searches: one light globe is a complex bioscanner/audio surveillance device designed to monitor the PCs' conversations and analyze their metabolisms and powers. The globes have DR 5 and 1 hit point.

Indrak Warpdancer

After this busy day, the Terrans should be relaxing in their room in the Central Planning Zak, or waiting for Ordraz to address their complaints about Srizakk. Suddenly, the force-lock cycles, and floating in the room is one of Srizakk's police officers. They may be able to recognize individual Zyrani now – on an IQ roll, they realize it is the police co-pilot Indrak.

Indrak is armed with a glowing globular gadget that might be a weapon, but it isn't pointing at the PCs. Instead, Indrak sweeps it across the room. If they haven't disabled the bugging devices, sparks will fly out from the light globes as Indrak's device neutralizes them. Gibberish floods the translators, then sorts itself into a voice:

"Rotate slowly fleshlings, I mean no harm – I was merely checking for and disabling the surveillance devices planted in the room! But listen fast! I am no Police lackey, but a secret member of the Zero Cluster resistance forces – not a terrorist or xenophobic cultist, but a freedom fighter opposing the most static-riddled of tyrannies!"

"False signals have been sent. Your scientists are prisoners of the Loci, not the Zero Cluster! You must tune yourself to me if you would save them and yourselves!"

If the PCs listen to Indrak, see below. If the characters seem reluctant to trust the Zyrani, or begin to attack, Indrak will quickly drop its device and say:

"Do not fight me! Time is short, but I must pulse quickly if you are to know enough to act and trust. Listen, or you will all share poor Bazog's fate!"

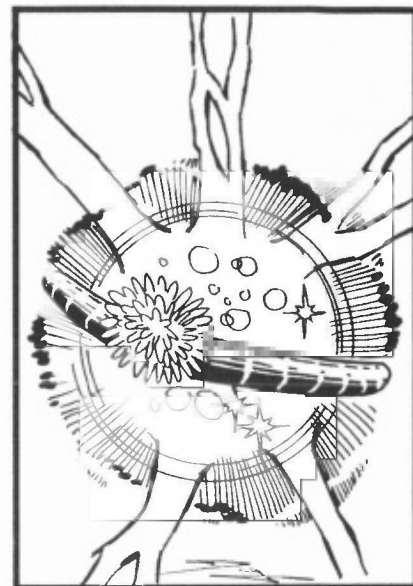
If the PCs don't believe Indrak, or don't want to listen, see the *Skeptical Supers* sidebar (p. 105). Otherwise, Indrak will continue its story.

Indrak's Tale

"Once (says Indrak) Zyrane was peaceful and prosperous, its people living together in harmony. A few of the eldest Zyrani remember the days when the Loci was simply a global arbitration court elected to resolve disputes among rival clusters. But 50 stellar rotations ago the heavy metals that we Zyrani feed upon began to run out. While some clusters pulsed of conservation or prospecting the distant asteroids, others took their neighbours' wealth by force. The Loci were voted sweeping regulatory and police powers to curb the violence and coordinate a rationing plan while an all-out effort for mining the asteroids was launched. Their powers were temporary, to be reviewed every five years."

"At first the Loci acted honorably, but gradually they became too accustomed to wielding their powers, and abuses occurred. When a cluster-vote dissolved the Loci, they refused to step down, and claimed only they were wise enough to lead our world. An ill-planned revolt gave the leaders an excuse to transform the World Police into a global army. They arrested or executed all dissidents. Faced with degaussing, the remaining cluster leaders voted the Loci Inner Council unlimited powers."

"The Inner Circle are a power-mad troika. Cluster Organizer Ordraz, who you met, is the Loci's chief executive. The cruel Commander Drazidor (sidebar, p. 118) leads the World Police. Most hated of all is the Patternmaster Shakari (side-



Indrak (Continued)

Super Disadvantage: 5 levels of Vulnerability to Surge or Dampen.

Psionics: Mind Shield-14(25).

Super-Powers: Surge-12(5) (Instantaneous, Touch Only).

Quirks: Addresses non-energy beings as "fleshling"; Changes color when disturbed; Seeks bonding with Riftfinder.

Super Weapons and Equipment: Ball lightning launcher (skill 15; see sidebar, p. 98).

Skills: Brawling-13; Criminology-10; Electronics Operation (Sensors)-10; Electronics Operations (Security)-13; Fast Talk-11; Law (Zyrani)-9; Piloting (Contra Grav)-14; Stealth-11; Tactics-10.

Indrak Warpdancer is a dedicated Zero-Cluster agent. When Indrak learned about the arrival of the humans, it resolved to do what it could to save them – also hoping that its action would win the approval of the Zero-Cluster scientist Riftfinder, who it hopes to bind with.

Skeptical Supers

Indrak will tell them its story if they give it a chance. If they listen to it, see *Indrak's Tale* in the main text. If the PCs decide not to trust Indrak and call their hosts, they've made a big mistake! Srizakk realizes that it now has the excuse to do what Drazidor advised: kill the Earth supers! Srizakk comes to their quarters with twice as many officers as there are PCs. Facing Indrak, it will say "Traitor, I am grateful for your treachery, for I will no longer have to see these disgusting fleshlings. Humans, your usefulness is thankfully at an end. Ordraz will agree that Indrak tainted your minds, and a flawed tool has no value. Officers, kill them!" If the PCs defeat Srizakk and get away, see *Escape From the Loci* on p. 107.



Zero Cluster Guerrilla

Zyrani of widely varied appearances.
ST 9, DX 12, IQ 12, HT 10/20.
Basic Speed 5.25; Move 5 (10 flying).
Dodge 9 (apply targeting modifiers to hit while flying).

PD 4, DR 5.

Damage: *Thrust* 1d-2; *Swing* 1d-1.

Advantage: +1 Reputation among the common people.

Disadvantages: Duty to the Resistance; Enemy (the Loci); Sense of Duty to Comrades.

Super Advantages: Doesn't Breathe; DR 5; 4 Extra Arms (Extra Flexibility, arranged radially); Broadcast $\times 4$; Fast Regeneration; Flight (5' ceiling); Immunity to Poison; Magnetic Sense, 16-hex range; Radar Sense, 25-hex radius; PD 4; Radio Hearing; 360-Degree Vision.

Super Disadvantage: 5 levels of Vulnerability to Surge or Dampen.

Psionics: Mind Shield-14(25).

Super-Powers: Surge-12(5) (Instantaneous, Touch Only).

Quirks: Addresses non-energy beings as "fleshling" or "ghost"; Changes color when emotionally disturbed; Talks endlessly about "Zyrani liberation" and "freedom from oppression for all clusters."

Skills: Brawling-12; Camouflage-12; Electronics Operation (Communications, Sensors or Security)-10; Fast Talk-10; Piloting (Contra-Grav)-10; Tactics-9; Stealth-12.

Super Weapons and Equipment: One Zyrani weapon at skill 15 (see sidebar, pp. 98-99).

Use these statistics for any Zyrani guerrilla fighters or technicians save Indrak (p. 104) and Tazagul (p. 108). The guerrilla leader Melquitz also has the skills Leadership-12, Politics-13, and Strategy-14.

bar, p. 119), of the Advanced Science Cluster. Clusters groan under the weight of taxes designed to support the fat bureaucrats who serve them, and freedom of speech is strictly curtailed.

"The situation is explosive. The average Zyrani hates and fears the Loci's restrictions on freedom. To retain their grip on power the Loci created and orbited their ultimate weapon, the terrible Doomsday Web. With the help of this weapon, all resistance has been ruthlessly crushed and dissidents degaussed or sent to the slave tubes – or worse, the hybrid labs. You have seen the Plasma Hounds: these were Zyrani who were transformed into terrible mutant monsters through Shakari's experiments on dissidents and political prisoners."

"The Loci's attempts at solving our economic crisis have met with failure. Their bureaucracy gobbles more metals than ever before. The situation seemed hopeless. Then Zyrani radio-astronomers detected electromagnetic signals that indicated intelligent life coming from Sol. The Advanced Science Cluster forced a dissident scientist, Tazagul Rifffinder, to translate its work on teleportation physics into a stargate machine. The stargate requires a portal at both ends. A robot probe was sent to Sol System, carrying energy robots – the Lightspiders – that built another gate, and Plasma Hounds to protect them. But then the star gate was discovered by Earth people."

"Plasma Hounds captured the expedition and brought them through the gate. The Loci interrogated their captives, and discovered that Earth was ripe for the picking. The Inner Circle is even now planning an invasion of Earth!"

"Their plan is simple, fleshlings. They intend to bring through several hundred soldiers to establish a bridgehead on your world's barren polar continent, then construct a fortress. It will be protected by a field that inhibits nuclear detonations. From this citadel, the Spiral Guards will strike, using their Tri-Zak armored flyers to bombard your clusters into submission. Earthbeings will be reduced to slaves laboring for the glory of the Loci, your planet strip-mined for metals."

"But know, humans, that despite the power of the Loci, some few Zyrani remain free, hidden in the mountains or crystal jungles – and some of us are hidden within the Loci, even in the ranks of the World Police. I am one of them, a secret member of the Zero Cluster resistance forces. The Loci call us terrorists, but we are freedom fighters. The Loci have told you that we captured your scientists. They lie – receive the truth!"

"Your world-mates are in the hands of the Advanced Science Cluster, caged like animals, doubtless being interrogated regarding Earth's defenses, especially the existence of you 'supers.' That they have heard of Earth's paranormals is their one reason for the cautious treatment of you."

"Through my position as Srizakk's aide, I was able to make fleeting contact with the human captives before they were transferred to a more secure facility – where, I am not sure. The being I met, a human called Karlsen, convinced me that

the Zero Cluster should try to stop the invasion of Earth. I reported this to the Zero Cluster leaders, and they arranged for the Stargate to be sabotaged. Unfortunately – or maybe fortunately – we struck just after you came through, and we failed to totally destroy the gateway. Now you are here.”

“Even now the Loci decide what to do with you. Organizer Ordraz would seek to dupe you into attacking our camps in the Skyfall Mountains so that they may learn how well you Earth warriors fight. Srizakk and its master Drazidor feel you are too great a threat to let live, and would rather see you in the labs of the Patternmaster – or dead. Only their debate spares you. You must come with me to the mountains, the headquarters of the Zero Cluster. We will help you find your scientists, and maybe find a way to warn Earth. Hurry, I fear discovery. Pulse quickly, fleshlings, or meet disaster. Now is not the time to learn caution! Srizakk and its masters plot your deaths!”

Escape from the Loci

Indrak suggests that the heroes sneak down to the hangar deck and steal the skyboat. It will disable the transponders in the skyboat to prevent the World Police tracking them, and will then guide them to the Zero Cluster’s hidden headquarters. One complication is food and water: Indrak advises them to bring the food machines from their room, since the Zero Cluster isn’t used to human guests.

Getting to the skyboat is easy, since Indrak has sabotaged the security systems and distracted the guards. There are only two World Police officers on guard duty in the hangar (sidebar, p. 103). If the PCs can disable them instantly, they won’t be able to raise an alarm. Otherwise, they will radio for help, and in 10 seconds, six Spiral Guards (sidebar, p. 113) will arrive to attempt to arrest the PCs, with an additional four guards (roll 1-3) or police officers (roll 4-6) arriving every further ten seconds. If the characters remain for more than five minutes, a Tri-Zak armored flyer (sidebar, p. 107) will arrive outside the pyramid, and the PCs will be in real trouble . . . If the PCs can escape before the Tri-Zak arrives, the sky boat can easily outdistance any other vehicles in the hangar. Once they are seated aboard, Indrak will pilot them on a hair-raising flight at top speed, flying low to avoid radar detection. They’ve escaped!

As they fly through the night, Indrak says that the resistance’s base is not within Skyfall Mountains: Srizakk’s guess was good, but that was an old training camp, now abandoned. The actual citadel is hidden within an extinct volcano off the south-eastern coast of the Sea of Anger, 3,150 miles north-east of the Forever Cluster (see map, p. 128).

After a four-hour flight skimming over the icy barrens and the methane ocean, the heroes will see their destination looming before them: a 6,000-foot volcanic cone. The sky boat hovers over the rim, then maneuvers into a hidden set of force-field doors. With a faint tingling sensation, the sky boat penetrates the force-field, and sets down in a cavern full of armed Zyrani – the Zero Fastness.

Council of War

As they climb out of the boat, Indrak and the PCs are greeted warmly by the throngs of Zero Cluster fighters: they pulse and buzz happily, and the translator picks up phrases like “Indrak, hurray! You found the ghosts!,” “down with the Loci tyrants!”, “we’re saved!”, and “Now Riftfinder’s plan has a chance!” After extricating themselves from the crowd, Indrak guides the visitors through a series of passages to what seems to be a briefing room. In the center is a large globe of the planet, and PCs may note with surprise that it is one they can read – it’s a relief map that Zyrani can view with their radar, but because of this, its features are quite clear (the GM may want to show the players the map on p. 128). Behind the globe



Zyrani Vehicles

Besides the sky boat (p. 99), two types of Zyrani vehicles may be encountered.

Floaters

These are saucer-shaped red-glowing solid energy platforms about 35’ across. Their upper body is flat and featureless save for a single raised control panel; their underside undulates and flickers with patterns of blue-violet energy. A floater can carry up to 1,000 lbs., usually about 4 Zyrani. Floaters have an acceleration and deceleration of 20 mph and a maximum speed of 200 mph; they maneuver at 5 Gs, and have PD 5, DR 40. They can take 100 hit points before being disabled. Their internal power pack lasts for up to 12 hours. The skill used to operate them is Pilot (Contra-Grav)/TL13.

Tri-Zak Armored Flyers

These are light TL13 grav tanks, the iron fist of the Loci. If the PCs attack the Stargate where the Loci is massing its forces, or if Earth is invaded, the heroes may have to face these war machines. Otherwise, leave them offstage as a threat – they are deadly!

A TriZak is a dodecahedron of violet metal, with two rotating turrets, one on an upper face and one on a lower. It is crewed by three Spiral Guards. Its flies at 200 mph, with 5G maneuverability. Its sensors can spot a floater at 10 miles, a Zyrani or large chunk of metal (e.g., a car) at 1 mile and have been modified to spot humans at 100 yards.

It has PD 8, DR 1,000 armor, and has 1,000 hit points. Each turret is armed with a *matter disruptor* – a lethal TL13+ energy weapon designed to send a needle-thin beam of subatomic disintegration through the strongest armor. The beam does 6d×3 (20) impaling damage – that is, DR protects with ½20 normal value! SS 0, Acc 15, ½D 2 miles, Max 5 miles, RoF 3~. Its targeting system (B138) is /10. Typical Gunner skill is 15.

The GM should take care in using Tri-Zaks, since they can quickly destroy most supers. However, a Tri-Zak isn’t invincible. The turret hatch locking system (-8 to hit) is only DR 100 – and 20 HT will blow the door open. Or a hero can wrench it open on a ST-20 roll, or, if insubstantial or able to teleport, just appear inside. Once in, the crew are vulnerable, and 50 hits of damage wrecks the controls. If the PCs capture an intact Tri-Zak, the skill required to fly it is Pilot (Contra-Grav)/TL13; its main weapons require Gunner/TL13 skill.



Tazagul Riftfinder

Typical Zyrani; aura has lots of bright sparks.

ST 8, DX 12, IQ 15, HT 12/22.

Basic Speed 6; Move 6 (12 flying).

Dodge 10 (apply targeting modifiers to hit when flying).

PD 4, DR 5.

Damage: Thrust 1d-3; Swing 1d-2.

Advantage: Mathematical Ability.

Disadvantages: Duty to the Resistance; Enemy (the Loci); Sense of Duty to all Zyrani; Truthfulness.

Super Advantages: Broadcast x4; Doesn't Breathe; DR 5; 4 Extra Arms (Extra Flexibility, arranged radially); 10 Extra Hit Points; Fast Regeneration; Flight (5' ceiling); Immunity to Poison; Magnetic Sense, 16-hex range; Radar Sense, 25-hex range; PD 4; Radio Hearing; 360-Degree Vision.

Super Disadvantage: 5 levels of Vulnerability to Surge or Dampen.

Psionics: Mind Shield-14(25).

Super-Powers: Surge-12(5) (Instantaneous, Touch Only).

Quirks: Buzzes and sputters happily; Fascinated by concept of teleportation; Friendly and open; Loves to explain work.

Skills: Administration-14; Diplomacy-14; Electronics (Matter Transmitters)-23; Nuclear Physics-20; Chemistry-19; Electronics Operation (Matter Transmitters)-16; Leadership-15; Mathematics-21; Nuclear Physics-17; Research-14; Politics-14; Physics-20.

Super Weapons and Equipment: Translocator.

are three Zyrani the PCs haven't met. Indrak apologizes for the lack of chairs or other human furniture, but asks that the visitors sit or stand comfortably.

Indrak pulses the sad news that Bazog had been taken and cracked under interrogation, but the good news of the PCs' escape and powers. It introduces the heroes to the leaders of the resistance council: Melquitz the Contemplator, the resistance's political strategist, and the scientist Tazagul Riftfinder, who had been forced to develop the Loci's stargate, but who later escaped to the Zero Cluster. Melquitz rises off the ground and addresses the PCs:

"My human friends, Indrak has told you of the truth behind the Loci

Tyranny. Now, after years of struggle, a people's army has been established, ready to lead a revolution against the oligarchy. But only one thing stands in the way of freedom: The power behind the Loci, the Doomsday Web."

"My friends, we have pulsed to you of the destruction of Terminal Cluster. This is the agency – a network of orbital anti-proton beam platforms that can combine their energies to deliver devastating streams of antimatter particles to destroy targets anywhere on the planet's surface or in space. If it can be knocked out, the people would rise to overthrow their hated oppressors without fear their clusters would be destroyed in retribution. So far, all attempts at sabotage of the Web of the Loci have failed. Now time is running out. If the Loci succeed in looting your world, their strength will grow many times, and their tyranny may indeed be forever. We have only a short time before the stargate is repaired, and they likely suspect that you heroes would attack there. Comrades, our spies tell us the stargate is now surrounded by thousands of Spiral Guard soldiers and scores of Tri-Zak armored flyers massed for the invasion of Earth. Faced with these odds, a second attempt to destroy it would be nothing but utter folly. But there may be another way. Riftfinder?"

Riftfinder's Proposition

Riftfinder speaks up, saying it has been working on experiments to develop a smaller gate system of its own, so that the Zero Cluster can interfere with the Loci's gate. Unfortunately, it believes its own stargate will not be fully operational for two more weeks, and this may be too late to save Earth or Zyrane. However, it has an idea that may do both:

"The orbiting Doomsday Web which Melquitz pulsed of is controlled from a single location, the Web Fortress, mobile citadel of Shakari the Patternmaster, an evil genius who is the greatest scientist of the Loci. It was the Patternmaster that forced me to build the stargate and who created the Plasma Hounds and Doomsday Web. And I believe it is the Patternmaster who holds your scientists, deep within in the bowels of the Web Fortress."

"Automated security around the Web Fortress is heavy enough that any attack made by the resistance would be suicide. All the Web's operators are fanatically loyal and immune to subversion, and a massive belt of automatic sensors and robot weapons prevents any chance of sneaking in. But there is one way we can

capture it – if you heroes will help. You have noticed that we Zyrani have difficulty seeing you. You seem transparent, almost ghostlike. I believe that this does not just apply to us, but even more so to our machines: fleshy beings like you humans are totally invisible to almost all Zyrane security sensors!”

Riftfinder floats to the ground, and Melquitz addresses them once more:

“My friends, the Loci are probably aware of this, but with their busy preparations for the invasion of Earth I don’t think they will have converted the Web Fortress defenses – only those of the Stargate, where they expect you to strike. But if our talented Riftfinder is right, and we can test the theory with our own scanners, it should be possible for you humans to slip right past the automatic weapons of the Web Fortress, to free the scientists and destroy the Web control rooms. And this, my human friends, would be the signal for the revolution to begin!”

Will they help? The fate of two worlds may be in the supers’ hands! How can any heroes fail to rise to the occasion? If the characters discuss the situation with the resistance leaders, Riftfinder will be confident the PCs can succeed in infiltrating the Web Fortress. Melquitz and Indrak will be less sure.

Melquitz and Indrak tell the humans that there are rumored to be automated defenses – plasma cannons and lethal force fields – but these are geared to sensors designed to detect Zyrani rather than humans. But besides those, the resistance also knows the Web Fortress is garrisoned with at least 25 warriors and six plasma hounds, not to mention whatever new devilry has been spawned from the Patternmaster’s lab.

Somewhat skeptically, Melquitz will ask the characters if they think they could defeat 20 to 30 Zyrani warriors and a half a dozen plasma hounds. After their initial encounter with the plasma hounds and their escape from the Central Planning Zak, the supers should have some idea of Zyrani capabilities. Unless they are supremely powerful (or Overconfident) they will probably agree with Melquitz that the base may be too tough for them to crack alone – and since the automated weapons are geared to detect and attack Zyrani, the Zero Cluster won’t be able to help them. Unless the PCs make encouraging noises, Riftfinder will spin very slowly, flickering with depression. It had thought its plan was a very good idea.

But Indrak will have another suggestion. The Outsiders or “forest demons,” might help. They are a native race of “basically human” (and thus invisible to scanners) primitives whom the Zyrani had traditionally oppressed but who have fared even worse under the cruel oligarchy of the Loci.

Melquitz will be skeptical, telling the humans that Indrak’s suggestion is poorly thought-out: the Outsiders dislike all Zyrani (who they attack on sight) and would never cooperate with the resistance.

Indrak counters that they might trust fellow fleshlings like the heroes and they truly hate the Loci, who hunt them like animals and use them in their experiments. Indrak will ask the PCs to support its plan. If they could convince them to send some warriors to join in the attack – and more important, to agree to take part in the mass rising which will follow a successful assault – the resistance’s chances of victory will be considerably improved. If the supers are reluctant to go, Indrak plays its trump card. He has heard rumors in the World Police that the Outsiders have been fighting back with much greater vigor against Loci patrols, and some have even been using captured Zyrani weapons. They have a new leader, a “prophet from beyond the stars” – could that be one of your missing scientists, it wonders, who has evaded the Loci?

If the PCs agree to support Indrak’s plan, it and Riftfinder will be pleased, and Melquitz will agree that it might work. If the heroes don’t want to follow this lead and think they can attack or infiltrate the station without help, they should begin preparations for the raid. Go directly to the *Caught in the Web* episode (p. 115),

Destroying the Doomsday Web

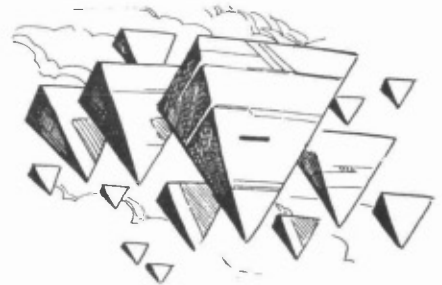
Supers capable of reaching orbit may wish to destroy the Doomsday Web satellites rather than go to all the bother of invading the Web Fortress. The Zero Cluster will recommend against this. Overconfident characters may wish to try anyway.

Each satellite has PD 6, DR 500 armor, 1,000 hit points, and is armed with a RoF 3–antimatter particle beam. When it strikes, it creates an explosion doing 6d×10,000 damage. It has Accuracy 18, ½D 150 miles, Max 450 miles. The computer fire control system (controlled by the Web Fortress) has skill 18 and a targeting system that divides range/speed modifiers by 20.

Each satellite has a radar/infrared/magnetic sensor suite that can pick up a human at about 20 miles (farther away if he gives away his position by firing) or spot a vehicle-sized target or group of Zyrani moving over the ground from orbit.

The satellites are programmed to fire automatically against missiles, spacecraft (or individuals) attempting interception when such objects come within a ten-mile range or begin firing at them. For close-in defense, each satellite is also guarded by four Plasma Hounds trained for zero-gee operations.

There are 20 Doomsday Web satellites, in orbits ranging from 100 to 300 miles up. Good luck.



World Police Military Strength

The World Police are 200,000 strong. Of these, 50,000 are elite Spiral Guards, and the rest are ordinary police officers. The police are supported by 2,000 Tri-Zak armored flyers, 5,000 Plasma Hounds and 100 Web Guardians, plus the orbiting Doomsday Web satellites.

In an all-out invasion of Earth, about half the Spiral Guards, Web Guardians and Plasma Hounds and a quarter of the World Police would be committed to the invasion force, along with ⅔ of the Tri-Zak flyers.

On Zyrane, most Loci forces on the planet are deployed in Local Police Zaks. If the PCs decide to make trouble on their own, it will be the Local Police Zak that responds and tries to arrest them.

Sparkling Rain

Outsider Psimaster, age 26, 5'10" long, 155 lbs., with red and purple wings.

ST 11, DX 12, IQ 13, HT 13.

Basic Speed 6.25; Move 6 (12 flying).

Dodge 8 (apply targeting modifiers to hit while flying); Parry (spear) 10.

Damage: *Thrust* 1d-1; *Swing* 1d+1; *Bite* 1d-1 cutting.

Advantage: Status 1.

Disadvantages: Bloodlust; Impetuous; Overconfident.

Super Advantages: PD 2; DR 5; Extra Flexibility; Flight (Winged); Nictating Membrane; Teeth (bite for cutting damage in close combat).

Super Disadvantage: 2 levels Vulnerability to Fire/Heat.

Psionics: ESP Power 1; Healing Power 5; Psychokinesis Power 12; Telepathy Power 13 (no concentration); Healing-10; Mental Blow-15; Mind Shield-12; PK Shield-14; Telekinesis-17; Telesend-14; Telereceive-14.

Quirks: Inquisitive; Loves war-dances; Optimistic; Proud of Telepathic talent.

Skills: Dancing-14; Spear-14; Spear Throwing-14; Survival-12; Tracking-9.

Weapons: Crystree spear (1d+2 (2) impaling damage); Cryswood hand-crossbow (1d+1 (2) imp., 4 turns to load, SS 10, Acc 2, ½D 90, Max 120, 6 lbs., ST 11); six bolts.

Sparkling Rain is a young Psimaster with a grudge against the Loci, thanks to her favorite drone's death. She's just completed training with her mentor and is tired of hiding in the jungle while the Spiral Guard bombs the forest. She's eager for a showdown with the "Fire Globes" and will urge aggressive action. Even if the PCs don't impress the Outsiders, she'll still want to go with them.

The Outsiders' Weapons

The Outsiders use seemingly-primitive weapons which are nevertheless more effective than the human visitors will first believe. Their spears and crossbow bolts are tipped with the wood of the crystree, which makes them stronger and sharper than anything Earth's primitives ever had.

Crystree weapons penetrate their targets as though those targets had only half normal DR. This is indicated by the (2) after the damage for these weapons. In other words, impaling damage of 1d+2 (2) means that the target's damage is *halved*, and then 1d+2 damage is rolled against the remaining DR.

As described in *GURPS Ultra-Tech*, some futuristic weapons reduce DR by even more. The Tri-Zaks described on p. 107 have a weapon system which does 6d×3 (20) impaling damage – that is, DR protects with ½ normal value!

assuming it takes place just as the humans are planning their assault rather than while they are returning from the jungle. The Outsiders and their Star Prophet can always figure in a later adventure, or be used if the PCs are defeated but escape to fight another day.

The Crystal Jungle

Refer to the map on p. 128 to plan the course of the trip. Indrak believes the Outsiders are in the jungle's heart near the Purple Mountains, and suggests the PCs circle that area until they find them. Since the jungle is thousands of miles away, Indrak recommends using a Zyrani floater (Tazagul will modify the controls for human operation) to get there, then spend two or three days searching on foot. If they don't find anything, they should return, and they can try the plan without the Outsiders.

Into the Jungle

From beyond its borders the Great Crystal Jungle is a vast glittering aquamarine jewel. When they enter the forest, the PCs can see the glittering lights are individual trees, whose crystalline structure reflects and refracts the light. A single crystree is about a yard in diameter and stands some 100 yards tall, with a wide chandelier-like canopy of feathery growths that form a regular snowflake pattern. Some branches bear fruit – mauve icicles whose transparent heart holds orange jewels – crystree seeds, scattered explosively when the fruit shatters or ripens.

Throughout the Great Forest, the ground is rough and hilly, split with canyons through which flow methane rivers. The vegetation is less dense than an Earth forest, growing in dense clumps clustered about geothermal vents separated by patches of sparse growth, barren ice and outcroppings of rock. Except for patches of ice and snow, the ground under the trees is covered with spotty red and purple sludge – a methane-based analogue to lichen or algae.

When the PCs move away from their transport, they will begin to notice animal life in the jungle. The largest beings are dog-sized creatures resembling small silver manta rays with eight segmented legs and sieve-like mouths; they move with glacial slowness across the jungle floor, feeding on roots and seeds. Crawling through the trees are arboreal leaf-eaters akin to eyeless indigo eels. Concealed on branches and leaves rest small glow-in-the-dark creatures who look like three-legged silver feathers with insectoid heads and waving antennae. Strangest of all are the living bladders the size of pancakes that drift from branch to branch, violet tentacles curling and uncurling in constant search for leaf-creatures or baby tree-eels. None of these creatures are dangerous to humans – the snake-eels are playful if fed a handful of crystree seeds.

The Battle

Two days into the jungle, the heroes will hear crashing and grunting noises – the sounds of battle! The PCs have stumbled onto a fight between a Web Guardian (see sidebar) and an Outsider Psimaster named Sparkling Rain (sidebar).

When she encountered the Guardian, Sparkling Rain was hunting for a missing Drone, her lover Delicate Emerald who had vanished while gathering crystree seeds after their tryst. This particular Web Guardian had been sent by the Patternmaster Shakari to investigate rumors that a "Star Prophet" had been stirring up the Outsiders. During its hunt for the prophet, the Web Guardian encountered and devoured the life force of Delicate Emerald, but was surprised during its feeding by a vengeful Sparkling Rain.

The fight is taking place in a clearing eight yards wide, about 20 yards from the PCs present position. The Web Guardian is invisible; if any character has the



See Invisible advantage (or Radar Sense, etc.) they will be able to detect both combatants. Otherwise, the PCs will see only Sparkling Rain, a strange hybrid of squid, insect and dragon (see the complete description of Psimasters on p. 126) locked in mortal combat with *something* that isn't there. Behind it, a similar but wingless creature (a Drone with bright emerald skin) lies motionless on the ground, either dead or unconscious. Next to it is a broken spear made of crystree wood.

If the PCs watch, they will see strange sucker-shaped wounds are opening on the dragon-like creature's body, with an unhealthy-looking pale fire flickering around each of them. Its unseen foe is obviously winning: Even as the PCs watch, one of the Outsider's beautiful purple wings is suddenly torn, as if by invisible tentacles, and it lets out a long undulating scream!

And with that scream comes a *telepathic* cry for help! A cry so strong that anyone, even a non-telepath, who is within 16 yards (including all the PCs) will recognize the sense of it, for is clear enough to transcend language:

"Nest-mates, your sister cries for aid! A Web Guardian has me in its grip, and the dread changeling seeks the Star-Prophet's life! To my shame I cannot hold for long! My strength fails, my drone is dead, my soul melts like ice! If anyone hears my call, help me now!"

The heroes will probably intervene after the distress call. If they are still uncertain, the Web Guardian will grip the Outsider by the throat and begin questioning it. The translators will pick up the menacing whisper from thin air:

"No one can hear you, little cousin, and I still thirst for life. Where is the Star Prophet hiding? Tell me now or your death will be long and painful."

In answer Sparkling Rain attempts a Mental Blow, which her foe shrugs off. If the PCs don't rescue her, have the monster notice the newcomers with its super-senses, contemptuously fling the injured Outsider aside and attack the PCs.

The Web Guardian has lost 4 ST from Sparkling Rain's psionic attacks, and Sparkling Rain has lost 10 HT and 1 ST. Once the PCs enter the fight, the Web Guardian will stop fighting the Outsider and engage the heroes, hissing "Ahhh,

Web Guardian

Invisible slave of the Loci.

ST 15, DX 15, IQ 13, HT 13/23.

Basic Speed 7; Move 7 (28 flying).

Dodge 9 (apply targeting modifiers to hit while flying).

PD 2, DR 20 (plus Absorption, below).

Damage: *Thrust* 1d+1, *Swing* 2d+1, *Bite* 1d+1 cutting.

Advantage: Alertness +5.

Disadvantages: Bloodlust; Overconfidence; Sadism; Duty to the Loci.

Super Advantages: 5d Absorption of all energy attacks to ST; Broadcast; 4 levels; Doesn't Breathe; Doesn't Eat or Drink; DR 20; 10 Extra Hit Points; Instant Regeneration (only if killed sentient victim via Drain Life within last minute; -50%); +2 Passive Defense; Tentacles have Extra Flexibility; Flight (Winged -25%); Invisibility; Invisibility to Machines; Magnetic Sense (16-hex range); Radio Hearing; See Invisible; Super Flight (1 level); Teeth.

Super Disadvantage: 1 level of Vulnerability to heat and fire; 2 levels of Vulnerability to Surge or Dampen; 2 levels of Vulnerability to Telepathic attacks; Dependency: Feeds on life-force from solid creatures (not Zyrani). It must kill one per week or lose 1 HT per six hours a feeding is delayed.

Super-Powers: Drain Life-15(15) (Bought as Dehydrate with same effects; like Dehydrate it has no effect on robots and non-living creatures, but leaves sucker-shaped burns on victims; Instantaneous +20%; linked to Drain Super Ability +10%; Touch Only -20%); Drain Super Ability-13 (15) (Instantaneous +20%; Linked to Drain Life +10%; Touch Only -20%); Sense Super-Power-13 (12) (Instantaneous +20%);

Quirks: Refers to Outsiders as "little cousins"; Speaks in menacing whisper; Talks of "endless thirst for life."

Skills: Brawling-15; Stealth-13; Tracking-12.

Total Points: 850

Created by the Patternmaster using mutated Outsider prisoners, the Web Guardians are eerie vampires that can suck a living being's powers and life force away. If a character can see invisible objects, a web guardian appears as the spectral outline of a Outsider Psimaster, flickering with emerald-green energies.

Envious Moon

Outsider Psimaster; 6' long, 150 lbs., with iridescent blue wings.

ST 9, DX 11, IQ 14, HT 11.

Basic Speed 5.5; Move 5 (10 flying).

Dodge 7 (apply targeting modifiers to hit while flying); Parry (spear) 10.

PD 2, DR 5.

Damage: Thrust 1d-2, Swing 1d-1, Bite 1d-2 cutting.

Advantage: Status 1.

Disadvantages: Intolerant of Zyrani; Odious Personal Habit (Arrogant and Sarcastic).

Super Advantages: DR 5; Extra Flexibility; Flight (Winged); Nictating Membrane; PD 2; Teeth (cutting damage in close combat).

Super Disadvantage: 2 levels Vulnerability to Fire/Heat.

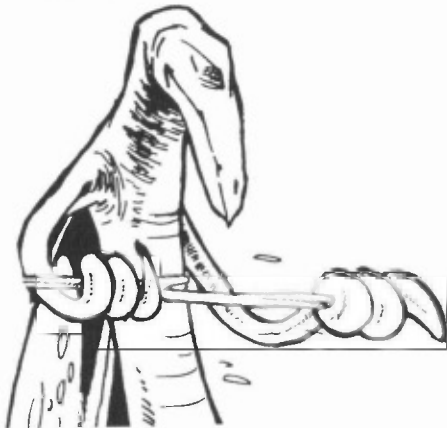
Psonics: Cryokinesis power 30 (no concentration); Healing power 9; Autoteleport-14; Cryokinesis-18; Healing-14.

Quirks: Calls non-psi "drones" and expects them to be servile; Insults Zyrani fighting prowess; Sneaky in battle.

Weapons: Crystree spear (1d+1 (2) impaling damage); Cryswood hand-crossbow (1d (2) imp., 4 turns to load, SS 10, Acc 2, ½D 90, Max 120, 6 lbs., ST 9); six bolts.

Skills: Brawling-12; Crossbow-10; Spear-12; Spear Throwing-12; Stealth-13; Survival-13; Tactics-10; Tracking-12; Traps-12.

An experienced Psimaster and warrior, Envious Moon doesn't like any Zyrani and sees little reason for his people to bleed for the Zero Cluster. Still, he's willing to go on the PCs' mission to demonstrate the innate superiority of his kind to the Fire Globes. He reacts at +3 to anyone with psi powers, but at -3 to humans with other super-abilities – which he calls the result of "disgusting Zyrani hybridization experiments" unless proven otherwise. Once he reaches the Zero Cluster stronghold, he'll enjoy harassing Zero Cluster members with comments like "we fighting Psimasters are happy to win your war for you."



more succulent life to feed upon, and how polite of it to come to me!" It will enter the fight with confidence, but if it seems to be losing, it will attempt to escape to report the heroes' presence in the forest to its master ("Such power! Master Shakari must learn of these creatures!").

If captured, the Guardian will refuse to reveal any useful information, but the PCs may be able to tear some from it through telepathy. Aside from its mission, they can confirm that Shakari is holding the scientists in the Web Fortress, and has personally supervised mutation experiments on at least one of them. The Web Guardian is aware that two of its brethren are stationed in the Web Fortress, but otherwise knows no details about security: it is a roving assassin, not a fortress guard.

Sparkling Rain

After the fight the PCs will find that Delicate Emerald is dead (it has the same wounds that Sparkling Rain bears, only more serious) but Sparkling Rain should have survived. She is upset over the drone's fate, but if the PCs defeat the Web Guardian, Sparkling Rain will be grateful to them (a minimum Good reaction). If they delayed intervening until the Guardian attacked them, she will be less friendly, but will still recognize the heroes as kin to her Star Prophet (see p. 113) and be willing to help them. If the PCs offer medical attention, she will be friendlier. She refuses treatment, but will use her Healing powers to fix her damaged wing, and will offer to heal injuries suffered by the PCs as best she can.

When the PCs explain their mission, Sparkling Rain will show no surprise at the existence of humans, but will listen eagerly to their story and tell the PCs what the Guardian was and how she came to fight it (see p. 111). She tells them how the "Fire Globes" (Zyrani warriors) have raided the Shindaroth (the Outsiders' name for themselves) to take subjects for their evil sorcerous experiments who were twisted into vampiric Web Guardians.

Sparkling Rain is close-mouthed on the subject of the Star Prophet, saying only that the PCs will be allowed to see her if her fellow Psimasters give permission. For now, she says, she will take them to the Nest of the Gulathra tribe, as her guests. There they may receive further healing if needful, and all will be made clear. Since she is still weak, she asks them to help her bear Delicate Emerald's body back to the nest.

The Gulathra

The Gulathra tribe's nest is 20 miles away. Their first sight of it is a camouflaged cave-mouth in an overgrown hillside. Guarding the cave mouth is the Psimaster Envious Moon (sidebar). He will challenge the PCs, but Sparkling Rain will give the proper responses, and the PCs will be led into a damp, cool earthen burrow. The tunnel soon widens into a natural cave-complex with a bewildering maze of passages. A faint rosy illumination is provided every dozen feet, radiating from wooden cages that contain luminescent beetle-like creatures the size of canaries.

In a large inner chamber furnished with crystal matting and carved ice sculptures of animals and plants, the characters are met by three more Psimasters and a swarm of Drones (p. 113). Sparkling Rain makes a ritual spiral gesture with her tentacles, then introduces the leading Psimaster. He is Six Smoking Blades, the Nest Master, chief of the Gulathra.

The Nest Master solemnly thanks the PCs for aiding Sparkling Rain and offers to use its superior Healing powers to treat any injuries she could not fix, while the drones swarm around the humans and the Psimasters. They lick solicitously at any wounds with soft wet tongues, and cluck at the body of Delicate Emerald, which two of them bear away. The Psimasters favor the remaining

Drones with caresses of their tentacles, and they respond with a pathetic eagerness to please, serving food to the Psimasters (resembling crystallized oranges, poisonous to humans) and offering bowls of ice-cold methane, which Sparkling Rain happily washes herself with. After this service, the heroes are shepherded by Six Smoking Blades and Sparkling Rain into a smaller side cavern, to an entrance guarded by huge carved ice statues of Psimaster warriors.



The Star Prophet

Peering into the orange fog, the heroes confront a startling sight – a human woman! She is about 30 years old, with no hair or eyebrows, and is dressed only in a ragged Save the Whales t-shirt. There is no sign of a life-support belt despite the lethal atmosphere and freezing temperature. She is floating cross-legged three feet off the ground! At her feet – actually washing them with their tongues – are two deferential Drones. Slung over her back is an Outsider crossbow; propped on the wall is a hunting spear. Around her neck hangs a Zyrani translator.

She winks at the PCs, then addresses them:

“Hi, guys! In the name of the Shindaroth and the Gulathra, I bid you greetings. Sparkling Rain, I share your loss at the death of Delicate Emerald. My fellow Terrans, I am Dr. Katherine Lawrence” – she pauses for a second, sucking in the methane air, and laughs – “the Star Prophet.”

After the PCs introduce themselves, Katherine Lawrence (see sidebar, p. 115) will tell the heroes what really happened to the scientists after they were captured.

“They subjected us to a lot of physical tests. At first it seemed they were merely trying to speak with us and make food and air for us, but after the translators were perfected – with my help, damn them! – it was obvious the Fire Globes had other

Typical Outsider Drone

Wingless cross between a squid, a snake and a dragon. 7+ feet long, any color.

ST 13, DX 14, IQ 8, HT 10.

Basic Speed 6; Move 6.

Dodge 7.

PD 1, DR 3.

Damage: *Thrust* 1d, *Swing* 2d-1.

Advantage: Eidetic Memory 1.

Disadvantages: Combat Paralysis; Compulsion (Serve and Obey Psimasters).

Super Advantages: DR 3; Extra Flexibility; Nictating Membrane; PD 1.

Super Disadvantage: 2 levels of Vulnerability to Heat and Fire.

Quirks: Extremely servile; Licks Psimasters and humans.

Skills: Any two of Agronomy-14, Armory-14, Carpentry-15, Cooking-15, Pottery-14, Sex Appeal-12, Survival-14, Woodworking-14.

This is a typical Outsider worker. It won't fight, but will do anything else requested of it by the Psimasters.

Spiral Guard Warrior

Typica Zyrani, often with a very bright glow indicating good health.

ST 11, DX 12, IQ 12, HT 13/23.

Basic Speed 6.25; Move 6 (12 flying).

Dodge 10 (apply targeting modifiers to hit when flying).

PD 4, DR 5.

Damage: *Thrust* 1d-1; *Swing* 1d+1.

Advantage: Combat Reflexes.

Disadvantages: Duty to the Loci; Fanaticism; Overconfidence; -1 Reputation.

Super Advantages: Broadcast x4; Doesn't Breathe; DR 5; 4 Extra Arms (Extra Flexibility, arranged radially); 10 Extra Hit Points; Fast Regeneration; Flight (5' ceiling); Immunity to Poison; Magnetic Sense, 16-hex range; PD 4; Radio Hearing; 360-Degree Vision.

Super Disadvantage: 5 levels Vulnerability to Surge or Dampen.

Psonics: Mind Shield-14(25).

Super-Powers: Surge-12(5) (Instantaneous, Touch Only).

Quirks: Addresses non-energy beings as “ghost”; Glows red in battle; Crackles softly and nastily; doesn't spin.

Skills: Brawling-12; Electronics Operation (Communications or Sensors)-11; Piloting (Contra Grav)-11.

Super Weapons and Equipment: One Zyrani weapon (used at skill-15, see sidebar, pp. 98-99); Zyrani force-field generator (see sidebar, p. 100).

Spiral Guards are elite World Police officers selected for their fanatical devotion to the Loci. They are used as SWAT officers, assault troops, riot police, and guards for sensitive installations. They undergo intensive training and have very good morale.

Six Smoking Blades

Outsider Psimaster, 5'11" long, 145 lbs., with amber wings.

ST 10, DX 12, IQ 14, HT 12.

Basic Speed 6; Move 6 (12 flying).

Dodge 8 (apply targeting modifiers to hit when flying); Parry (spear) 10.

PD 2, DR 10.

Damage: Thrust 1d-2, Swing 1d, Bite 1d-1 cutting.

Advantages: Intuition; Status 2; Unfazeable.

Disadvantage: Sense of Duty to the Tribe.

Super Advantages: DR 10; Extra Flexibility; Flight (Winged); Nictating Membrane; PD 2; Teeth (cutting damage in close combat).

Super Disadvantage: 2 levels Vulnerability to heat and fire.

Psonics: ESP power 10; Healing power 15; Telepathy power 12; Danger Sense-13; Emotion Sense-14; Healing-17; Mental Blow-14; Mind Shield-12; Mind Wipe-14; Precognition-15; Psi Sense-13; Sleep-14; Telesend-14; Telereceive-14.

Quirks: Deep voice; Very patient.

Skills: Bard-13; Brawling-12; Crossbow-11; History (Shindaroth)-13; Leadership-15; Musician-13; Spear-13; Spear Throwing-12; Stealth-11; Survival-14; Tactics-13; Teaching-15; Theology (Shindaroth)-11; Tracking-13.

Weapons: Crystree Spear (1d+1 (2) imp. damage); Cryswood hand-crossbow (1d (2) imp., 4 turns to load, SS 10, Acc 2, ½D 90, Max 120, 6 lbs., ST 10); six bolts.

Equipment: Drum (hide with crystree sticks); Oracle bones (used for fortune telling).

The Nest Master (chief) of the tribe, this wise old Psimaster is determined to do the right thing to help his people. He has considerable affection for the young Sparkling Rain and would be very angry if anything happened to her. The oracle bones and his own intuition told him to trust the Star Prophet: he hopes they won't betray him.



designs. They asked us questions about Earth's technology. And when Eric mentioned the supers, they were really interested . . . When we became suspicious and refused to cooperate, they caged us like animals. We were interrogated as to Earth's technology, resources, and its military and paranormal defenders.

"Since I'd led the passive resistance, I was singled out for the first experiments: a painful series of injections that altered my metabolism so I could survive unprotected on Zyrane. They separated me from the others and took me by floater platform to the edge of the Crystal Forest to test my adaptation. I survived. My captors were very pleased. They told me I was to be the prototype for the human slave-workers they would bring back to Zyrane after the Loci conquered Earth. They told me only one step remained – the brain-conditioning."

"No way, I thought – not my brain! I decided to kill myself. I waited until we were hundreds of feet in the air, when they wouldn't be alert, and then I leapt off the floater. They failed to catch me, and I laughed. But as I fell toward the shimmering forests, I was filled with fear and realized I didn't want to die. I prayed for something to save me, and I am sure I screamed. I was half a mile up, and I fell relatively slowly in Zyrane's light gravity and thick atmosphere. I had plenty of time to watch my death coming."

"Imagine my surprise when I didn't die! Instead of gaining speed, my fall gradually slowed. I found myself floating a dozen feet above the crystrees. I could levitate."

"I think my fear and will to live during the long fall had triggered some latent gene for psychic powers. As you doubtless guessed, for I'm sure many of you had similar experiences when you discovered your own paranormal abilities."

"My fall had convinced my Zyrani captors that I had died, but I soon saw that I was not alone. Hovering below and watching me through a break in the crystrees was a group of Shindaroth – of Psimasters. The shock of seeing them broke my concentration, and I ignominiously fell into their tentacles."

"The Psimasters were amazed at this strange being who had fallen from the sky. It turned out I resembled some being from their myth-cycles, the Star Prophet who will guide them against their enemies, and I've tried not to abuse the role. The Shindaroth have fed me, healed me, and taught me about my powers, which are similar to theirs. In return, I've tried to help them when and where I can, giving them little things like the crossbows they now use."

"But I've told you my story. Now tell me yours."

Katherine and Six Smoking Blades will listen to the heroes' appeal for help. Although they hate the Loci, the Shindaroth are reluctant to work with the Zyrani, who have often hunted them down and abused them. Katherine now believes her duty lies with the Shindaroth, but she is worried about the other scientists, especially one of her students, a young woman named Lynn Bellmon, who had gone on a hunger-strike rather than cooperate with the Zyrani at the time of her escape. If the supers can persuade Lawrence to speak for them, she will agree to send a party of three of their greatest Psimasters to join the PCs in the assault. As Six Smoking Blades puts it:

"If you, the Star Prophet and our Psi-Warriors succeed, it will be a sign from the World-Worm that this Zyrani Resistance is trustworthy. The Shindaroth will fight against the tyrants, and persuade the other tribes to ally with this Zero Cluster. If we all die, we will know that it was not meant to be, and the Shindaroth will fight the Fire-Globes in our way in our own time."

The party will consist of Six Smoking Blades himself, Envious Moon, and the healed – and very eager – Sparkling Rain. Even if the visitors fail to make a good impression, Katherine will still be interested in helping them rescue Lynn Bellmon, but only Sparkling Rain will accompany her, and she'll be more interesting in protecting Katherine than in helping out the PCs.

Back to the Fastness

After the PCs have met the Star Prophet, the GM should make the journey back to the Fastness and over the Sea of Anger uneventful until they get within a few miles of the Fastness.

Caught in the Web

While the PCs are over the Sea of Anger a few miles from the island Fastness of the resistance, they suddenly see blindingly-intense beams of blue-white lightning stabbing down from the sky, accompanied by the sound of rolling thunder. The beams do not seem to be directed solely against the island; they are striking randomly across the entire archipelago. The barrage ends after 30 seconds, but glowing lights and flashes on the horizon suggest that other regions may be feeling its wrath.

When they reach the island, they find it marked with glowing radioactive craters. The Zero Cluster base is being evacuated, with camouflaged floaters preparing to lift off and Zyrani scuttling back and forth. Indrak and Tazagul Riftfinder are nowhere to be seen, but Melquitz is directing operations. Worriedly, the Zyrani leader tells them that something must have alarmed the Loci: they have been striking with the Doomsday Web at suspected guerrilla bases all across the planet! Many innocent civilians suspected of being sympathizers have been killed, but there have been few guerrilla casualties, save for a training camp in the Skyfall Mountains which was totally obliterated.

The underground Fastness escaped a direct hit, but Melquitz says that radiation from the near-miss damaged the control systems for the magnetic bottle in the resistance's hidden antimatter reactor. It is overloading – only minutes remain before the base will be destroyed in a massive explosion, and already radiation and magnetic flux are making the base dangerous for both humans and Zyrani alike. By now, most of the base has been evacuated, with the guerrillas dispersing to hidden safehouses along the coast. But the resistance's science lab was closest to the reactor, and a few Zyrani have been trapped by rubble and radiation leaks, including the physicist Tazagul Riftfinder, who went back to save its experimental micro star-gate prototype, and Indrak, who went to look for Tazagul!

Will the heroes brave radiation and falling rubble to rescue Riftfinder and the others?

Riftfinder's Lab

Refer to the map on the next page. The PCs have six minutes to shut down the reactor or evacuate everyone.

Magnetic Portals: All doors are seemingly “open” holes in the walls. A door is screened by a powerful magnetic field that blocks a Zyrani's electromagnetic senses and acts as a solid wall. If a human passes through a Zyrani door, his hair will stand on end, and he'll feel a powerful static charge, but his movement won't be impeded.

1. **Jammed Doors.** The emergency doors have buckled, jamming shut. The doors are solid cerametal, and are DR 25, HT 100.

2. **Malfunctioning Magnetic Door.** This door is malfunctioning, and its static fields are dangerously intense. Any human or Zyrani passing through will suffer a Power 10/Skill 15 Surge and take 5d of damage from the intense oscillating magnetic field. DR protects at half normal value!

3. **Reactor Monitoring Room.** Indrak is trapped here behind the malfunctioning door. If rescued, Indrak will be able to tell the PCs that the reactor is nearly critical, and estimate how long they have left. If Tazagul hasn't been rescued yet, Indrak will implore them to help find Riftfinder.

Dr. Katherine Lawrence

Age 45, 5'7", 125 lbs., no hair, gray eyes with nictating membranes, lean, athletic body – looks thirtyish.

ST 10, DX 12, IQ 15, HT 12.

Basic Speed 6; Move 6.

Dodge 6, Parry (spear) 8.

PD 0, DR 0.

Damage: Thrust 1d-2, Swing 1d.

Advantages: Attractive; Charisma +3; Language Talent +3; Luck; Wealth (Comfortable).

Disadvantages: Overconfidence; Sense of Duty to Outsiders; Stubbornness; Weirdness Magnet.

Super Advantage: Nictating Membranes.

Psionics: Psychokinesis power 10; Telepathy power 5; Levitation-12, PK Shield-12.

Quirks: Admires primitive lifestyles; Prefers to be called “Kat”; Claims cold air is good for you; Believes learning languages is fun; Likes meditation.

Skills: Animal Handling-13; Armoury/TL3-12; Boating-13; Climbing-15; Cooking-14; Crossbow-13; Demolition-13; Driving-12; Karate-12; Leadership-14; Linguistics-17; Piloting (Light Aircraft)-12; Savoir-Faire-13; Skiing-15; Spear-12; Spear Throwing-12; Strategy-14; Survival (Arctic)-17; Swimming-12; Teaching-14; Writing-14.

Languages: Bengali-14; English-15; French-16; Inuit-17; Latin-15; Nahuatl-15; Navaho-16; Portuguese-16; Romany-15; Spanish-16.

Weapons: Crystree spear (1d+1 (2) impaling damage; Cryswood hand-crossbow (1d+1 (2) imp., 2 turns to load, SS 10, Acc 2, ½D 90, Max 120, 6 lbs., ST 10); six bolts.

Super Weapons and Equipment: Translator.

Dr. Lawrence is a former 60s activist turned linguistic anthropologist. She bullied and charmed her way into the expedition to see Antarctica (“I've been everywhere else”). At present, she's having the time of her life, and her only regret is that Bellmon and the other scientists are in danger. Her “mutation” actually consists of a symbiotic colony of microscopic robots implanted in her body. This altered her metabolism so that her body can withstand -100° temperatures, and she can now “breathe” hydrocarbon air and obtain oxides from Zyrane life forms – in other words, she is biologically similar to an Outsider. A side effect was the loss of all body and head hair. Her ability isn't considered an advantage, since she can no longer survive in a Terrestrial environment.

Riftfinder's Lab

Magnetic portal



Rock Fall



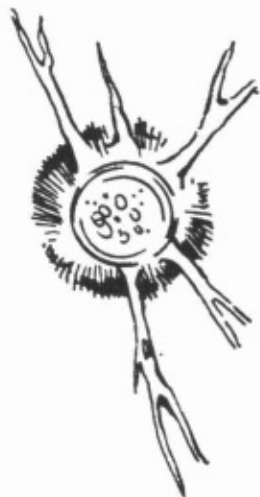
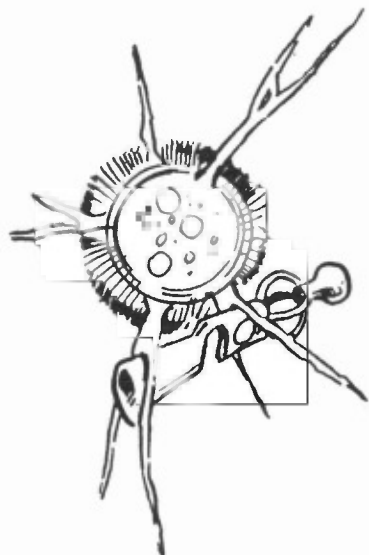
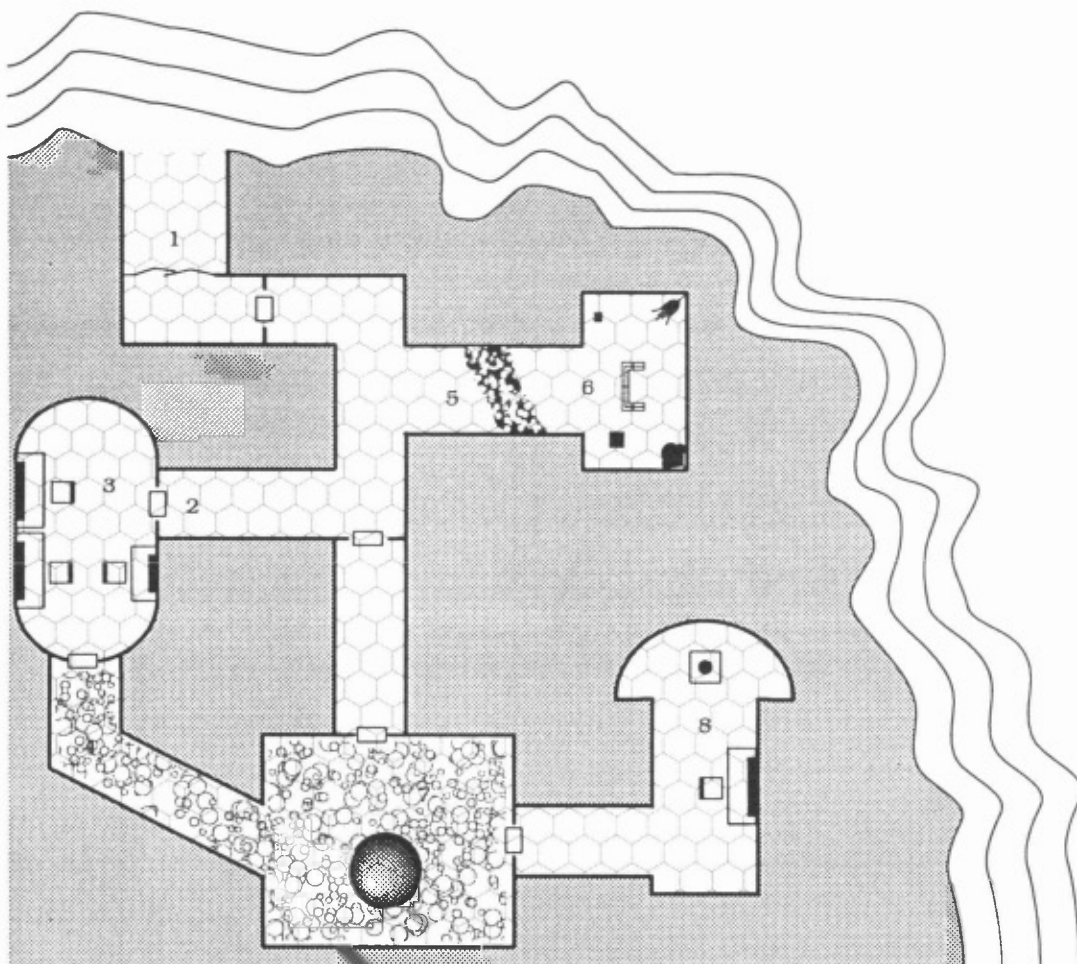
Radioactive gas



Reactor



Hillside



4. *Radiation Leak.* This corridor is full of pink gas – dangerous radioactive coolant that has leaked from a ruptured magnetic tube. The magnetic door is holding the gases in the room, but anyone entering the room will take 1d-1 damage per turn. DR protects at only $\frac{1}{10}$ normal! This is the leak that has trapped Riftfinder.

5. *Rockslide.* There are 1 yard (3 feet) of loose rock and heavy rubble here. The PCs will have to either blast through it, or use powers such as Meld Stone, Insubstantiality or Teleport to get past it. Each foot of rubble has DR 5 and 30 hit points.

6. *Machine Shop.* A large room filled with exotic Zyrani tools. One Zyrani, a rebel technician named Spinar, is trapped here, pulsing for help.

7. *Reactor Chamber.* This contains the power plant, a black metal sphere with a glowing blue crack in one side. The room is filled with pink reactor coolant gas. Anyone entering the room will take 2d-2 damage per turn. DR protects at only $\frac{1}{10}$ normal!

Six minutes after the PCs arrive on the scene, the reactor sphere will implode. The controls are totally useless – the only way to save the rebel stronghold is to find a way to remove the reactor (it weighs 6,000 pounds and requires a ST-50 roll just to pry it loose!) and take it far enough away that its explosion will not harm the base – into the nearby ocean, for instance. Any of the technicians in the base can tell the supers that a safe distance would be 2 miles. See *The Reactor Implosion* on p. 117.

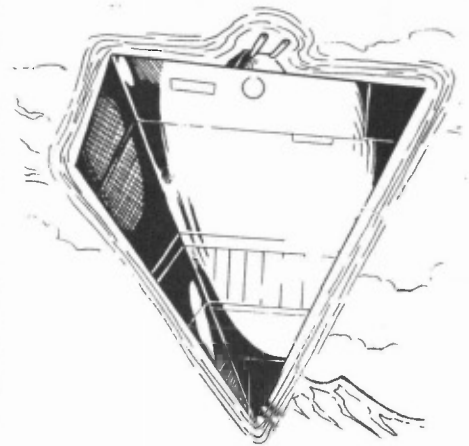
8. *Stargate Laboratory.* The entire room is pulsing with a weird blue glow. The glow is coming from a sphere on a pedestal in the center of the room. Tazagul Riftfinder, trapped in the room, is struggling with the controls. If the characters

arrive, Riftfinder will explain that the secondary radiation from the Doomsday Web's strike not only disrupted the power plant, but also interfered with its experiment – it had been trying to find a way to duplicate the stargate effect to reach Earth. But now something has gone wrong!

Within a few seconds of Riftfinder's explanation, a group of four Zyrani soldiers – Spiral Guards (see sidebar, p. 113) – will materialize in the lab just as the gate control panel explodes in a blinding flash of overstressed circuits. The Spiral Guards are heavily armed, each carrying two different Zyrani weapons. After they appear, they pause, as if puzzled or confused.

What has happened is that Riftfinder's experiments have coincided with an attempt of Worldstalker's science team to use the damaged Loci stargate and send a new scouting team through to Earth. By bypassing several safety systems, the Loci scientists got the stargate working earlier than expected. But Riftfinder's own experiments – and the Doomsday Web strike – intercepted the transference. Instead of sending the first combat team to Earth, they were sent to the stargate Laboratory!

The commandoes expected to be the first members of a wave of skirmishers arriving in Antarctica. They will be confused for at least one turn (roll IQ for them to recover from surprise). If the PCs can capture the warriors, they will be disoriented enough that an interrogation will reveal Worldstalker's invasion plans.



Web Fortress Security

If intruders don't attack, the guards may conclude they are escaped experimental subjects. They'll ask them to surrender, use only non-lethal weapons like the graviton amplifier, and try to take them alive for questioning. If the PCs display dangerous abilities, the guards will shoot to kill. Remember all Zyrani can communicate by radio, and will act intelligently under Drazidor's orders. If the PCs can somehow jam Zyrani broadcasts, the guards will operate independently, defending their assigned stations and acting against obvious foes.

Alerts

If the intruders are detected by sensors, the control room will be alerted, and a general alarm sounded. If guards or technicians in the fortress encounter intruders, they will shout for help – and since Zyrani communicate by radio, it will also alert everyone in the fortress.

In an alert the barracks at 8 will be awakened and issued weapons from the armoury at 9. Four guards will head for the Power Room at 4, four will reinforce the security chamber outside the Web Control Room at 18, and four will move to take positions watching the doors at 1, the Hanger Bay Entrance. It will take each group about 10 seconds to get up and arm themselves, and a few more seconds to move into position – although if the characters are moving through the fortress, they may run into one or more squads enroute to their posts.

Second, once an alarm sounds, the Plasma Hounds from the kennel at 14 will be unhooked from their power sockets, so that they will be ready to respond to intruders. Commander Drazidor will send them against whatever threat seems most dangerous. If the position of the intruders is not known, he will hold them in reserve until they can be pinpointed.



The Reactor Implosion

Should the humans fail to save the base but get out before the reactor goes off, they will find Melquitz and the other survivors are six miles from the island, aboard hovering floaters. The Zyrani will buzz and spin with pleasure if the PCs were able to rescue any of the trapped comrades from the wreck, but will be dispirited if none were saved.

The reactor will implode within six minutes of the humans' arrival at the fortress. If this happens inside the mountain, the earth will shake, and there will be a tremendous rumbling noise. In less than a second, the mountain will shatter, a fireball spilling from within its guts. The island will be engulfed in a huge mushroom cloud shot with lines of white, red and orange fire. Everything within a half-mile radius will be destroyed, with radiation and blast damage (20d) over a two-mile radius. Roll 1d for anyone within 3 miles: on a roll of 6, they are struck by debris, taking 3d crushing damage. After the explosion, the island will be *gone*, leaving only a small circular atoll.

Removing the reactor at least a half-mile from the fortress will allow the rebel base to survive. The explosion will take place wherever they put it. If dropped in

World Police Commander

Drazidor

Typical Zyrani, slightly undersized (2½-foot diameter) with reddish aura.

ST 11, DX 12, IQ 13, HT 12/22.

Basic Speed 6; Move 6 (12 flying).

Dodge 10 (apply targeting modifiers to hit when flying).

PD 4, DR 5.

Damage: *Thrust* 1d-1; *Swing* 1d+1.

Advantages: Legal Enforcement Powers; Military Rank 7.

Disadvantages: Bad Temper; Overconfidence; -3 Reputation as "Butcher of Terminal Cluster."

Super Advantages: Broadcast ×4; Doesn't Breathe; DR 5; 4 Extra Arms (Extra Flexibility, arranged radially); 10 Extra Hit Points; Fast Regeneration; Flight (5' ceiling); Immunity to Poison; Magnetic Sense, 16-hex range; PD 4; Radar Sense, 25-hex range; Radio Hearing; 360-Degree Vision.

Super Disadvantage: 5 levels of Vulnerability to Surge or Dampen.

Psionics: Mind Shield-14(25).

Super-Powers: Surge-12(5) (Instantaneous, Touch Only).

Quirks: Speaks very slowly; Laces conversation with gruesome anecdotes about previous campaigns against the rebels.

Skills: Administration-12; Area Knowledge (Zyrane)-13; Brawling-13; Electronics Operation (Communication)-12; Leadership-13; Politics-13; Strategy-12; Piloting (Contra-Grav)-12; Tactics-12.

Super Weapons and Equipment: Deathwand: Lightning-20(12) (Instantaneous; Rapid Fire×2; Breakable: DR 15, 10 hit points; Can Be Hit (-4); Contest of ST to Steal); Zyrani force-field generator (see sidebar, p. 100).

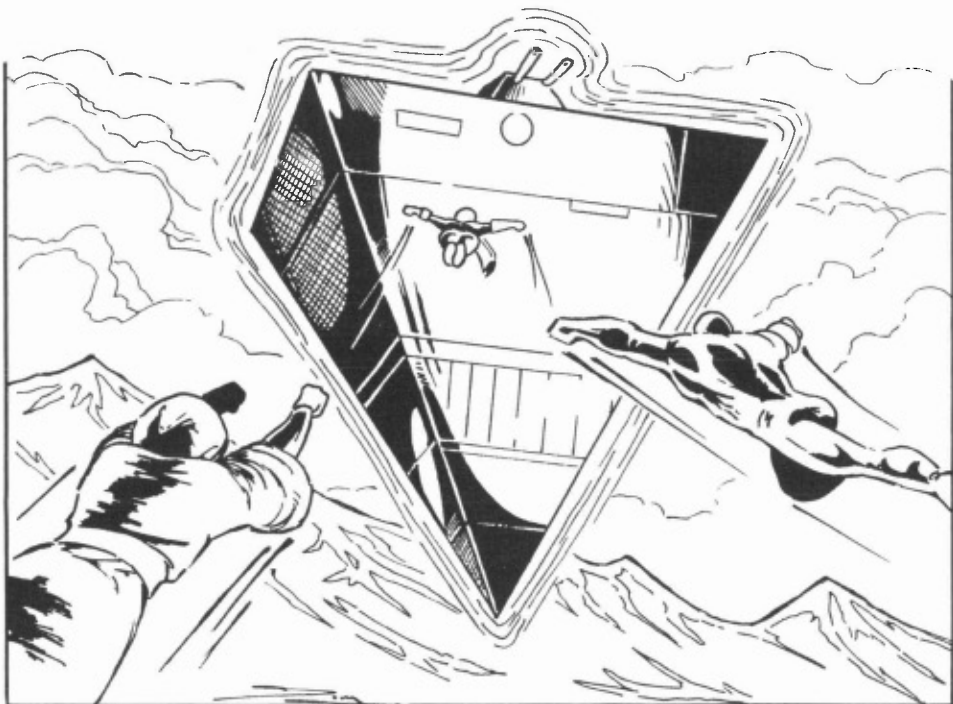
The head of the World Police, Drazidor is a member of the Loci Inner Circle and an associate of Cluster Organizer Ordraz. He is an unimaginative officer who has risen to his present position by toadying to his superiors, having absolutely no conscience, and toeing the party line. When fighting dissidents, he believes in maximum force to cow the opposition into surrender. He was personally responsible for the bombing of Terminal Cluster – the ruined cluster whose destruction Srizakk blamed on the rebels – killing thousands of innocent citizens in order to destroy a rebel cadre that was hiding among them.

Commander Drazidor is armed with a Deathwand, a high-energy ion-beam projector that fires bolts of blue-white lightning. He has twice used it on underlings who questioned his orders.

the ocean, the mushroom cloud and fireball will be followed by churning seas – if they can get at least two miles away they won't be in any danger. The area of effect is the same, but there will be no debris, and anyone two miles or more away will be unharmed.

If the PCs failed to save the base, Melquitz will tell the characters that they are evacuating to the reserve headquarters, Vagabond Cluster. This is a 20-zak manufacturing center on the Sea of Anger's coast whose Organizer, Keldrak, is a guerrilla sympathizer. After a low-flying journey along the coast, the evacuees will be greeted by Keldrak and 30 other Zyrani. Melquitz will explain the disaster to them, and they will crackle with shock and anger. Keldrak will offer sanctuary within Vagabond's warehouses while the PCs and the rebels plan their next move.

If the PCs saved the base, or at least rescued some of the trapped Zyrani from the implosion, the resistance fighters will be effusively grateful to the heroes and confident in the humans' ability to carry off the final attack. The evacuation will be called off, and the Zyrani technicians will begin the work of decontaminating the base.



Night of the Ghosts

The next day is a whirlwind of activity. The rebels will be busy – either turning Keldrak's warehouses into a command post, or repairing their old base. Melquitz, Katherine and the Outsiders (and Riftfinder and Indrak if they survived) will insist on hearing exactly what the PCs' plans are. Melquitz will insist the timetable must be moved up – with human scientists still in their possession, it will only be a matter of time before the Loci discover the fact that humans are semi-invisible to their sensors. They should act now to exploit the weakness in the Web Fortress. Right now the populace is teetering between fear of the Web and anger at the reckless attacks. Now is the time to strike!

Pooling resistance information and the knowledge of Dr. Lawrence, the characters will be given all available data on the Web Fortress. It is an upside-down pyramid made of almost invulnerable superdense metal rather than ice. About 75 feet wide and 50 feet high, it hovers 500 feet off the ground. A large double

energy-cannon turret is mounted on its flat top. There is a large circular hatch near the apex used for vehicle entrance. The fortress is surrounded by the glowing aura of a force-field of some kind which they believe is designed to injure or kill energy-based lifeforms like the Zyrani. Someone who considers the possibility and makes a Physics roll may correctly guess it could also short out electronic devices and battlesuits!).

Keldrak and Riftfinder (if still alive) mutter and hum together, then say their calculations suggest the fortress sensors can detect a Zyrani within about 2 miles – and a floater or other aircraft, or any radio or radar broadcasts, at 20 miles. They don't believe they can detect a human or Outsider until the PCs are at the hatch! (Again, a PC who considers the idea may deduce that Battlesuited characters or PCs with force fields of their own may be detected – a successful Physics roll suggests that the scanners will pinpoint them within 100 yards!)

For security reasons, only top-ranking Advanced Science Cluster and World Police personnel are allowed to visit the Web Fortress, and all visits are arranged in advance. Visitors always enter in open-topped floaters, and must use codes when coming into sensor range to confirm their visits. Unfortunately the resistance – especially since Indrak's flight – has no access to these codes, so unless the PCs have sneaky ideas or powers (e.g., Teleportation or Insubstantiality) a direct assault relying on the weakness of the Zyrani sensors to detect humans and Outsiders seems like the best bet. No one in the resistance knows anything about its internal layout, and Dr. Lawrence does not remember much of the fortress – she was held in a cell block, and was usually stunned unconscious before being moved.

One problem is altitude – the fortress is 500 feet off the ground. The PCs should come up with some way of reaching the fortress without using a floater, which would be detected and destroyed. Outsiders can fly, and if the PCs can also fly or teleport, that will work. If not, they had better improvise. A trick to lure the fortress to a lower altitude? Balloons? Parachutes? If their imagination fails and they have Deni along, she will recall her Airborne training and suggest hang-gliders (which will take the Zyrani and Outsiders about two days to build), launched from a distant floater hovering at high altitude out of sensor range.

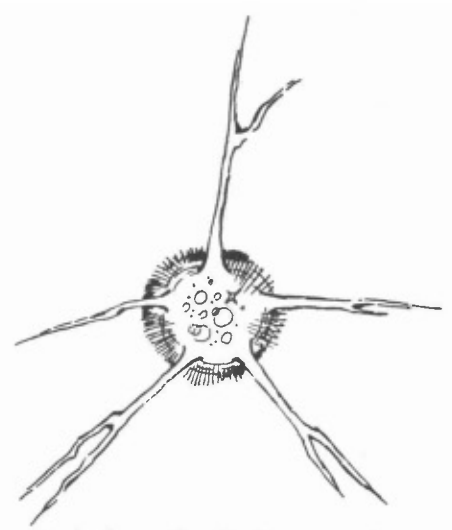
The Web Fortress

A monument to the paranoia of its builders, this giant inverted pyramid currently floats over the hills a thousand miles south of the Crystal Forest. The GM will have to decide whether the PCs will be limited to a direct assault, or whether a ruse (e.g., “prisoners for the Web Fortress labs” is cunning enough to take in Fortress Commander Drazidor (sidebar, p. 118).

Sensors: The resistance's estimates are correct. Normal humans are invisible to the Zyrani sensors! However, the sensors can detect a human in a full suit of powered metal armor (e.g., a battlesuit) or using an electromagnetic force field at a range of 100 yards.

Armor: Outside walls are PD 8, DR 1,500 and HT 500 per hex – two feet of solid force-field reinforced nanocrystal.

Weaponry: The Web Fortress is armed with a turret-mounted double “nova gun” capable of vomiting a fireball of anti-matter plasma. Fire damage is 6d×100. RoF is 2. The beam fires aimed shots (one turn to aim before firing each shot) only at Accuracy 15; its targeting system divides range/speed modifiers by 5, and it is fired by the Spiral Guards in the Web Control Room (Gunner 15). The fusion beam has ½D 2,000, Max. 4,000. The nova turret cannot depress to hit a target within 50 yards of the fortress. The gun has the same armor as the fortress and HT 500.



Shakari the Patternmaster

Typical Zyrani; energy arms have an orange tinge.

ST 9, DX 12, IQ 15, HT 12/22.

Basic Speed 6; Move 6 (12 flying).

Dodge 10 (apply targeting modifiers to hit when flying).

PD 4, DR 5.

Damage: *Thrust* 1d-2; *Swing* 1d-1.

Advantage: Status 3.

Disadvantages: Megalomania (“I am the greatest scientist on Zyrane); Overconfident; -3 Reputation; Sadistic.

Super Advantages: Broadcast ×4; Doesn't Breathe; DR 5; 4 Extra Arms (Extra Flexibility, arranged radially); 10 Extra Hit Points; Fast Regeneration; Flight (5' ceiling); Immunity to Poison; Magnetic Sense, 16-hex range; PD 4; Radar Sense, 25-hex range; Radio Hearing; 360-Degree Vision.

Super Disadvantage: 5 levels of Vulnerability to Surge or Dampen.

Psionics: Mind Shield-14(25).

Super-Powers: Surge-12 (Instantaneous; Touch Only).

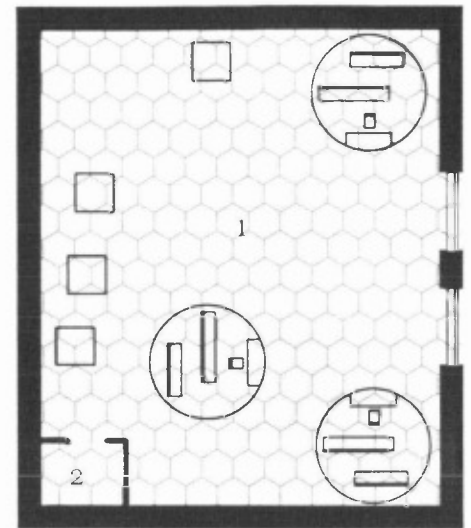
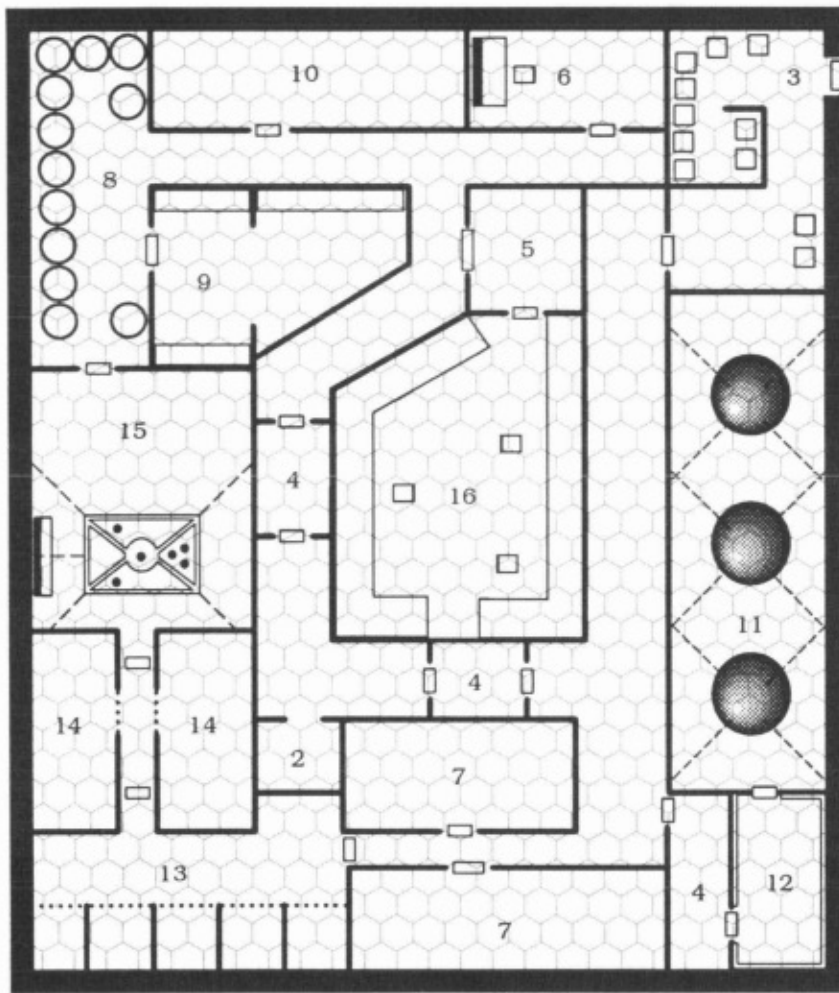
Quirks: Buzzes and sputters maniacally; Hates and fears Riftfinder; Loves experimenting on enemies; Calls his experiments “children”; Very optimistic.

Skills: Administration-14; Biochemistry-20; Chemistry-20; Electronics Operation (Medical)-14; Leadership-14; Mathematics-18; Nuclear Physics-17; Research-14; Politics-14; Physics-20.

Super Weapons and Equipment: Electrosynaptic disruptor (with skill-15, sidebar, p. 99); Zyrani force-field generator (sidebar, p. 100).

Shakari is the chief scientist of the Loci's pampered Advanced Science Cluster. A brilliant experimental researcher who happens to be a disgusting sadist, the Patternmaster's greatest accomplishment was the creation of the “Mutation Chamber” which enables normal creatures to be turned into monstrous superbeings. The Web Guardians and Plasma Hounds were its most successful creations. Since the stargate was opened, the Patternmaster has been gleefully experimenting on the captive human scientists, eager to find a use for this fascinating carbon-based raw material.

The Web Fortress



Lower Level

1 hex = 1 yard

Upper Level



Magnetic portal



Electrified bars



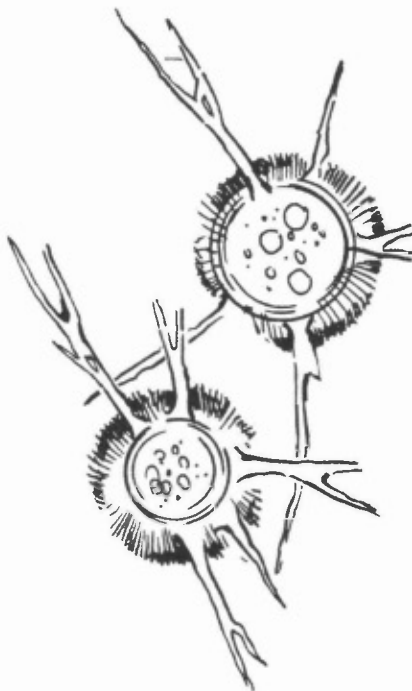
Console and chair



Reactor



Energy cable



Degaussing Field: This field is 20 yards thick and surrounds the fortress. If a Zyrani or Plasma Hound passes through the degaussing field they must make a HT roll at -5 (+1 per 20 DR). If they fail the roll, they take 3d electrical damage (DR doesn't protect) and are stunned and rooted to the spot. A roll is allowed each turn to escape, or someone can attempt to knock them back out of the field. The degaussing will only cause a slight shock to a human. A robot or character with electronic equipment, e.g., a battlesuit or radio, will suffer the effects of a skill-15, power 10 Surge, and a PC who happened to be a creature of living energy might suffer the same effects as a Zyrani.

Entrance: The hangar-bay hatch (1, below) is the obvious entrance. A Vision-5 roll from someone closely observing the fort from the east side (or using telescopic vision) will also notice a small maintenance hatch (3, below).

Interior Details of the Web Fortress

Interior Rooms and Walls: These are made of DR 60, HT 15 high-pressure ice. Magnetized metal strips are impregnated in many floors and walls for the Zyrani to levitate against.

Magnetic Portals: All doors are "open" holes in the walls. A door is screened by a powerful magnetic field that blocks a Zyrani's electromagnetic senses and acts as a solid screen and wall. If a human passes through a Zyrani door his hair

will stand on end, and he'll feel a powerful static charge, but his movement and vision won't be impeded.

Control Panels: These have DR 5, HT 20 per hex. As with other Zyrani panels, the readouts use magnetic and radio signals. A human could only perceive them with Magnetic Sense, Radio Hearing or Spectrum Vision.

1. Hanger Bay

The doors to the Web Fortress are DR 100, HT 200. Breaching them sets off sensors embedded in the material and sounds the alarm, but if the PCs enter without forcing them open (e.g., by going Insubstantial, or teleporting through) they can be opened manually via a control panel located just inside. The chamber inside contains three parked Zyrani floaters (marked as circles) and four empty (DR 30, HT 15) packing crates made of ice (marked as squares).

2. Access Shaft

This shaft allows access between the pyramid levels. The walls are magnetized to allow Zyrani to float up or down. Characters must climb or fly the 10 yards between the levels.

3. Maintenance Hatch

Accessed by a simple magnetic portal on the east of the pyramid. A Lockpicking/TL13 roll is required to open it without setting off an alarm. The hatch leads into a room packed with crates containing machine parts, spare power cells, and the like.

4. Disruptor Globe

There are three disruptor globes in the base, and at this short range, their scanners *can* detect humans! A second after spotting someone, the globe pops down from the ceiling, and swivels to aim at the nearest intruder. Roll one die if humans or Outsiders are the targets. On a 1-3, a globe thinks a human or Outsider is a sensor glitch: it takes a turn to recheck its sensors – roll again next turn. On a 4-6, it fires immediately. Once one globe has fired at a human or Outsider, all globes in the base will recognize humans and Outsiders as enemies, and they will not hesitate. Each globe fires a 6d microwave laser beam (treat as a Disruptor, see B209) with skill-15. The disruptor globe can also be fired at: it has DR 20, HT 10. The Disruptor globes are programmed to recognize energy signatures of base personnel and will not fire on them.

5. Antechamber

This chamber is located outside the Web Control Room. It is normally empty, but in an alert, guards from 8 will be stationed here to protect the control center.

6. World Police Commander Drazidor's Office

A Zyrani office, with computer console and recharging facility. It is empty, since Drazidor is spending most of his time in the Control Room.

7. Scientist's Quarters

Living quarters for the Pattern Master and his scientists. At present these chambers are deserted, as the scientists are busy in the Laboratory, working round the clock to complete their sinister experiments (see 15, below).

8. Guards Barracks

Living quarters for 12 Spiral Guards (sidebar, p. 113). There are 12 objects that resemble empty circular bathtubs. The simple on/off controls release power-

Mutant Scientist

Hideously disfigured human beings seemingly made of molten metal, their faces twisted in a perpetual rictus of pain as their bones continue to melt and reform . . .

ST 40, DX 13, IQ 7, HT 12/20.

Basic Speed 6.25; Move 5 (reduced by Body of Metal).

Dodge 9.

PD 4, DR 12.

Damage: Thrust 4d+1, Swing 7d-1.

Advantages: none.

Disadvantages: Appearance (Hideous); Bad Temper; Mute, Paranoia; On the Edge, Terminally Ill.

Super Advantages: Body of Fire, level 10 (always on -40%); Body of Metal, level 12 (PD 4, DR 12; always on -20%); Fast Regeneration.

Super Disadvantages: None.

Quirks: Gibbers mindlessly.

Skills: Sadly, none remain.

Total Points: 265

The PCs may open one of the cages of the "failed experiments" – Holger Karlsen and Max Slater. Anyone seeing the mutant scientists must make a Fright Check. They will attack, hoping to be put out of their misery.



Zyrani Scientist

Typical Zyrani.

ST 9, DX 11, IQ 14, HT 9/19.

Basic Speed 5; Move 5 (10 flying).

Dodge 9 (apply targeting modifiers to hit when flying).

PD 4, DR 5.

Damage: *Thrust* 1d-2; *Swing* 1d-1.

Advantage: Status 1.

Disadvantage: Duty to the Patternmaster.

Super Advantages: Broadcast x4; Doesn't Breathe DR 5; 4 Extra Arms (Extra Flexibility, arranged radially); 10 Extra Hit Points; Fast Regeneration; Flight (5' ceiling); Immunity to Poison; Magnetic Sense, 16-hex range; PD 4; Radar Sense, 25-hex range; Radio Hearing; 360-Degree Vision.

Super Disadvantage: 5 levels of Vulnerability to Surge or Dampen.

Psionics: Mind Shield-14(25).

Super-Powers: Surge-12(5) (Instantaneous; Touch Only).

Quirk: Always agree with the Patternmaster, in chorus.

Skills: Biochemistry-15; Chemistry-15; Electronics Operation (Medical)-14; Mathematics-16; Nuclear Physics-15; Research-13; Physics-15.

Super Weapons and Equipment: None.

The Patternmaster's scientists fear what will happen if their masters are defeated and they are brought to justice for their experiments. They will try to flee rather than surrender, fighting (they may use discarded weapons at DX-5 or IQ-5) if they are cornered.



ful static charges which Zyrani find pleasurable. Unless there has been an alert, the guards will be off-duty and either dormant or interfacing; as a result, they count as Mentally Stunned if the PCs enter. If they are not alerted, they won't have their weapons at hand – these are stored in the Armoury (room 9).

9. The Armoury

This room contains Zyrani weapon racks: 3 ferrous pellet accelerators, 2 photon whips, 2 plasma bolt projectors, 2 heavy graviton amplifiers, 1 electrosynaptic disruptor, and 1 ball lightning launcher. If the troops from 8 have time to arm themselves, distribute the weapons among the squads.

10. The Plasma Kennels

This stark chamber is the barracks for the Plasma Hounds. The wall is lined with electric sockets from which the creatures feed while they rest. Four Plasma Hounds are feeding, accompanied by a Spiral Guard handler with a Graviton Amplifier.

11. Power Plant

This long chamber contains three huge spheres of metal, suspended in mid-air by a gravitic field. Eight finger-wide beams of blindingly intense energy connect the spheres with the ceiling, floor, and each wall. These beams channel gigawatts of power to the installation, and anyone passing through them or thrown into them will suffer 6d×100 damage. The sphere is a powerful matter-antimatter reactor. The reactor casing is especially tough: DR 100, with 250 hit points. If the casing is breached, the antimatter reactor will start to leak gamma radiation (1d damage per turn in the room, armor protects at 1/20 normal DR) and will explode in 1d minutes, destroying the installation and everything else within a radius of 50 miles. Destroying the power plant is a very final way to disable the Doomsday Web!

This chamber is defended by four Spiral Guards. To prevent damage to the reactor, they carry light weapons: two are armed with electrosynaptic disruptors, and two have heavy graviton amplifiers.

12. Power Plant Monitoring Chamber

All four walls are covered with Zyrani control panels and view screens. From here, the antimatter power plant can be shut down (this takes 30 seconds). Once properly shut down, it will not go critical if it is damaged. The Zyrani technicians will try to shut down the plant if they receive word from the control room that the Web is likely to fall into enemy hands.

There are two Zyrani scientists here (sidebar). Both are stooges of the Patternmaster, and are loyal, but not very brave.

13. The Cages

This room seems unguarded, but is actually warded by a Web Guardian (sidebar, p. 111), an invisible watcher hovering in the corner of the chamber. If the PCs fail to notice it, it may wait until they are dealing with the prisoners before striking.

The room contains five cages. Two hold Zyrani prisoners, while three others hold five of the human scientists: Dr. Washington and Dana Wu, Peter Kerenski, and Dr. Sprecht and Eric Overbee. All still wear silvery life-support units; a food and water dispenser is in each cage.

The cages have electrified bars (DR 10, HT 20; bars do 1d electrical damage per turn if touched and require a HT roll at -1 per hit taken past DR or victim is stunned for 20-HT turns). The scientists are weakened by their ordeal, but happy



to see the heroes. They don't know the Web Guardian is there, and their joy may turn to horror if it suddenly attacks a PCs while the heroes are trying to free them. They can tell a chilling story of capture, deprivation and interrogation, with three of their number (Max Slater, Dr. Karlsen and just recently Lynn Bellmon) dragged off for experiments from which they never returned.

Seeing the heroes gives them new hope, and the scientists will gladly do whatever the PCs tell them in order to have a chance of escape. The average scientist has ST 10, DX 11, IQ 12, HT 11, but each has lost 1d+1 HT and Fatigue from their ordeal.

The imprisoned Zyrani are Alakish're and Sadrefiz, two dissidents who were caught running an illegal broadcast station. For their statistics, use *Zero Cluster Guerrilla* (see sidebar p. 106) with no weapon skills. Slated to be transformed into Plasma Hounds, they will be glad to help the PCs and may be useful for operating Zyrani control panels and equipment.

14. The Failed Experiments

These cages hold two "failed experiments," humans who were the victims of the Patternmaster's hideous research. They are now reduced to gibbering, subsentient monsters, half energy, half flesh. The sight of these creatures is terrifying, and the GM should have everyone who sees them make a Fright Check!

The monsters were once Dr. Holger Karlsen and Max Slater. The referee may allow heroes (especially genius gadgeteers) to try to reverse the process, perhaps using the Central Laboratory or their own inventions. Alternatively, the kindest thing may be to put them out their misery.

The monsters' statistics and reactions are detailed in the sidebar on p. 121.

15. The Central Laboratory

The Patternmaster is attempting to duplicate the terrible mutation process that turned Outsiders into Web Guardians, by transforming their human prisoners into Zyrani/human hybrids brainwashed to obey the Loci. When the PCs burst into the Lab, they will confront an awful sight: a young woman is floating in a bizarre machine. Suspended in a cocoon of flickering blue lightning, she is being bombarded by incandescent ruby and cyan rays, writhing and screaming as the alien energies course through her glowing body. The cocoon is connected by energy-cables to the floor and ceiling, and to a control console.

Operating the controls are two Zyrani scientists (sidebar, p. 122), and the mad Shakari the Patternmaster (sidebar, p. 119), cackling in insane glee. With them are

Lynn Bellmon

Female form shaped out of bluish-green spiral patterns of energy.

ST 10, DX 13, IQ 13, HT 11/16.

Basic Speed 6; Move 6 (12 flying).

Dodge 6 (apply targeting modifiers to hit while flying); Parry (Karate) 8.

PD 0, DR 5.

Damage: Thrust 1d-2; Swing 1d; Lightning 5d.

Advantages: Appearance (Attractive); Status 1; Wealth (Comfortable).

Disadvantages: Addiction (draining lives, highly addictive, illegal, -15 points); Afraid of Insects*; Curious; Delusion ("I am a ghost in Hell, Zyrani are devils"); Impulsive; Squeamishness; Truthfulness. * to Bellmon, the Outsiders look like bugs – big ones!

Super Advantages: Absorption of Energy, 5 levels; Broadcast, 2 levels; Doesn't Eat or Drink; DR 5; 5 Extra Hit Points; Instant Regeneration (only if killed sentient victim via Drain Life within last minute, -50%); Flight; Insubstantiality (always on, -50%); Magnetic Sense, 4-hex range, 3 levels; Radio Hearing; Spectrum Vision; Vacuum Support.

Super Disadvantages: Dependency (Feeds on life-force from sentient beings, must drain one being to 0 HT); 2 levels Vulnerability to Surge or Dampen.

Psionics: Mind Shield-13(17).

Super-Powers: Drain Life-13(15) (Bought as Dehydrate. Like Dehydrate it has no effect on robots and non-living creatures; Affects Substantial +40%; Instantaneous +20%; linked to Drain Super Ability +10%; Costs 4 Fatigue -20%; Touch Only -20%; Drain Super Ability-13(15) (Affects Substantial +40%; Instantaneous +20%; Linked to Drain Life +10%; Costs 4 Fatigue -20%; Touch Only -20%; Lightning-12(5) (Affects Substantial +40%; +4 Accuracy +40%; Instantaneous +20%; Costs 2 Fatigue -10%; Full Power Only -10%; Uncontrollable -30%; Sense Super-Power(13) (Instantaneous +20%).

Quirks: Collects expensive fashions, wears punk clothing; Compasses point at her; Easily bored; Optimistic.

Skills: Animal Handling-10; Cooking-12; Driving-11; Karate-12; Linguistics-11; Piloting (Light Aircraft)-13; Research-11; Riding-11; Savoir-Faire-13; Skiing-10; Survival (Arctic)-11; Swimming-12; Sports (Tennis)-11; Writing-12.

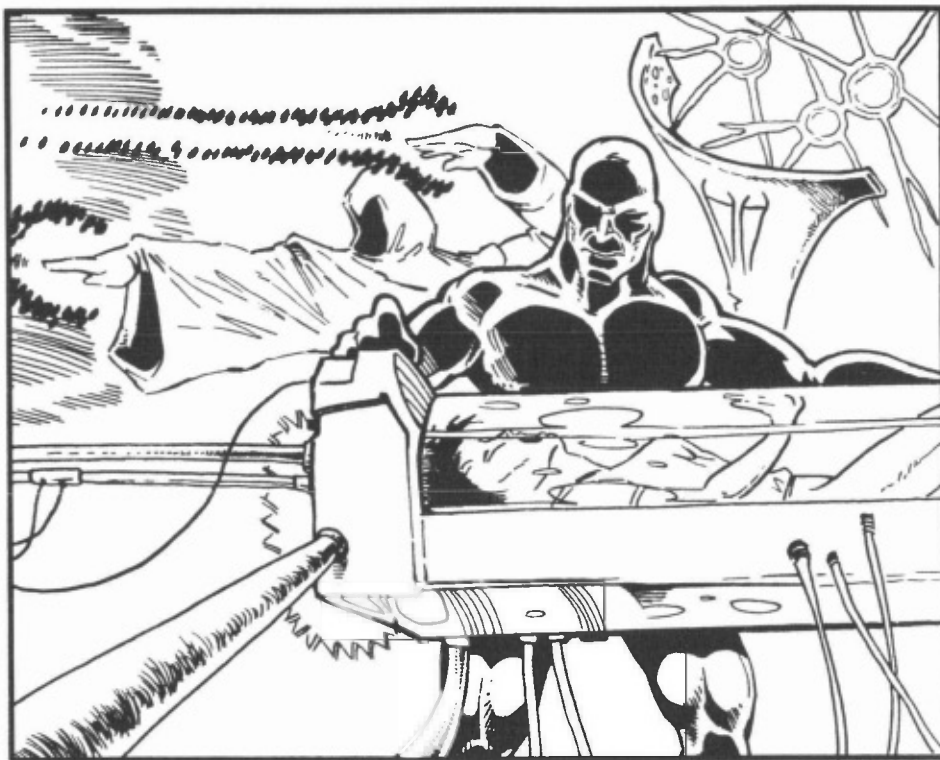
Languages: English-13; French-11; Inuit-10.

Total Points: 822

Continued on next page . . .

Lynn Bellmon (Continued)

Bellmon's family is old, politically connected and disgustingly rich. She was educated at an exclusive religious school, then sent to university where she studied linguistics under Dr. Lawrence. For this expedition, she wangled a position as Dr. Lawrence's research assistant and co-pilot. If Bellmon survives, the PCs may wish to take her under their wing to teach her to use her new powers. Bellmon is a cheerful, optimistic person who is constantly searching for new things to do. With her thesis advisor "gone native," Bellmon will decide she doesn't want to bother finishing college. She will be interested in becoming a super crimefighter on Earth. Her vampiric nature is not immediately obvious, but within a week she will begin to feel a craving for life energy . . .



three Lightspiders, scurrying about repairing short-circuits and the like, plus two Plasma Hounds (sidebar, p. 94).

The woman is Lynn Bellmon, Katherine Lawrence's missing student. If the PCs turn off or destroy the machine (it has DR 5 and HT 20), they will free her. But the young student has already undergone a partial mutation (see sidebar, p. 123), and she is out of her mind from the pain of the transformation. Bellmon will use her mutant powers to attempt to slaughter friend and foe alike. The rescuers will have to subdue her, or quiet her insane rage. Use the normal rules for calming down Berserk characters (p. B31) – once they do this, she will be a useful ally. She will always destruct Outsiders, however. She has a fear of bugs, and thinks they look like giant insects. This won't please Katherine.

16. The Control Room

The heart of the Web Fortress, the chamber is dominated by two sweeping banks of security and communications consoles. Floating above the consoles is a five-foot wide floating globe whose surface crawls with energy. This is a flat magnetic map of the planet. The security consoles can be used to deactivate the automatic defenses and control communications. If the PCs figure out how to use the controls (requiring a Zyrani advisor or someone with Spectrum Vision, Magnetic Sense or Radio Hearing and an Electronics Operations (Security)/TL13 skill roll), they can turn off the defenses and summon the Zyrani freedom fighters to reinforce them. More importantly, the communications console (Electronics Operations/(Communications)/TL13) can be used to take control of the Web and target any area on the map. If the control room is undamaged, they can use of the Web to aid the resistance.

Manning the consoles are three Spiral Guards (sidebar, p. 113, plus Gunnery-15). One has a photon whip, the other two carry electrosynaptic disruptors. Behind them floats the supreme commander of the fortress and head of the World Police, Commander Drazidor (sidebar, p. 118).

Victory!

By seizing the Web and defeating Commander Drazidor, the heroes have already insured victory for the freedom fighters. Without the fear of the Web, the Zyrani guerrillas can overthrow the Loci and capture villains such as Ordraz. The Terrans can listen to radio reports from within the control room as resistance forces sweep out of the hills and attack Loci strongholds. The radio waves overflow with frantic demands of local Cluster Organizers for Web support which never comes. There are triumphant signals as the people rise up and occupy broadcast stations, blockade World Police zaks and storm the prison mines and government buildings. If the earthlings want to help, they can help wreck vehicle columns, capture enemy generals or the like – this is beyond the scope of the adventure, however, and should be improvised by the GM based on the PCs' abilities.

Within 20 hours, it's all over. The Locus have been overthrown, and the cause of freedom has triumphed.

Resolutions

The heroes will be honored by the victorious resistance forces with speeches and pledges of eternal friendship. (The GM may wish to come up with some odd Zyrani cultural events for them to attend.) Indrak will propose to Riftfinder and a technician named Keldrak to form a Binding Trio, and they will accept and invite the humans to the mating dance. If Dr. Lawrence survived, she will want to stay with her Shindaroth, aiding Melquitz's new government and Six Smoking Blades in his dealings with other Outsider tribes. The remaining scientists will want to bury their dead and return home. The PCs can expect a warm welcome at the university if they handled themselves well, but Bellmon will have to deal with her condition, her vampiric powers, and the reaction of her wealthy parents.

If any of the Loci leadership escaped (e.g., those not in the Web Fortress) they may plot revenge against Earth and the heroes – this could lead to further adventures, if the GM desires.

Finally, even with the Loci replaced by Melquitz's Zero Cluster government, Zyrane's nearly depleted resources remain a problem. If the GM thinks PCs would be interested, Melquitz will ask for suggestions. Workable solutions could include the United Nations leasing mining rights on Mercury or the Asteroid Belt, supers with FTL travel ability locating an uninhabited resource-rich world for the Zyrani to mine using the stargate, or even PC gadgeteers aiding the Zyrani in developing cheap transmutation.

If there is to be interaction between Zyrane and Earth, the GM should consider the effects on human society. Will Zyrani technology be traded to Earth? To prevent Earth suddenly being catapulted into the interstellar age the GM may rule that Zyrani force-field based technology is too incomprehensible for humanity to master. In this case, Melquitz's enlightened government will keep itself secret and distant from Earth, perhaps making a few private deals with the PCs, then closing the stargate after the humans return home in order to avoid interference in our "developing" culture.

On the other hand, if a space-faring campaign is appealing, Earth and Zyrane could become partners in a new age of technological advancement and interstellar exploration. Many further adventures could be set around the problems of getting humans to accept the Zyrani. In some campaigns (such as the *I.S.T.* background) relations with space-travelling aliens have already been established and there will be established procedures for dealing with new races and assimilating their technology. In other campaigns, the aliens' anti-gravity, force-field and antimatter technology could be a mixed blessing, opening the solar system to humanity and providing theoretically unlimited energy, but also causing immense economic and

The Price of Failure

If the humans are taken captive by the Zyrani before they are contacted by the Zero Cluster rebels, the GM can easily have Indrak – in his World Police identity – help them escape.

If the PCs are captured later in the adventure, the best thing to do is to place them in the clutches of the Patternmaster. The Loci scientists can place the heroes in death traps (rooms that slowly flood with liquid methane, electrified mazes filled with android monsters, etc.) in order to study their powers. The goal is to prepare weapons for use against Earth's remaining superheroes. Any survivors, or any characters who the Zyrani know have powers that would let them escape easily, such as teleporters, will be placed in power-restraining cells. Then genetic modification rays similar to those used on Bellmon will be used on them, perhaps giving them new electromagnetic-based powers similar to the Plasma Hounds, or the Web Guardians.

If the characters manage to escape during this process (perhaps with new powers) they may be able to stop the invasion. They could do so by sabotaging the Doomsday Web or the stargate (before the troops passed through) or by capturing (or killing) Drazidor, Ordraz and Shakari. The loss of the entire Inner Council may disorganize the Loci enough to cancel the attack.

Should they fail to escape, control-implants will be placed in their minds, brainwashing them into serving the Loci as super-powered shock troopers. Give each person a Will-8 roll to resist. Success means he was unaffected. He can try to escape, or use Acting skill (or a default) to pass himself off as a loyal zombie. But (unless rescued) any successfully brainwashed supers will be on the wrong side of an invasion of Earth!

If the invasion goes ahead, the GM should describe the actions of brainwashed characters. They will be leading armored spearheads of Tri-Zaks to obliterate the defending Earth armies, kidnapping Terran leaders and so on, as well as battling Earth's remaining supers. At a dramatic moment (e.g., before harming an innocent child, kidnapping the president, wrecking the Statue of Liberty, etc.) one or more supers should be allowed extra Will rolls to overcome the Loci's conditioning and break free. Alternatively, the brainwashed heroes could be rescued by other Earth supers and the implants removed surgically (a Surgery-4 roll). Once they are free of control, the heroes can join the war against the aliens.

social upheaval – to say nothing of the obvious dangers of it falling into the hands of supervillains or unscrupulous governments!

The Natives of Zyrane

Two races inhabit Zyrane – the Shindaroth (see the sidebar) and the Zyranis.

The Shindaroth

The Shindaroth are a caste species. The ruling caste is the sterile, highly intelligent and psychically powerful Psimasters, while under them are the much more common Drones. Psimasters resemble a hybrid of dragon, squid and insect. They have draconic heads with glittering compound eyes. Their serpentine bodies are six feet long with smooth red and orange banded skin, and four glistening tentacle arms, two pairs of beetle-like wings and long forked tails. Drones are wingless and slightly larger.

Advantages and Disadvantages

Psimasters have the advantage of PD 2, DR 5 armor, Flight (Winged, -25%, 30 points), Extra Flexibility, Nictating Membranes and Status 1. They have the racial disadvantages of Laziness, Sense of Duty to Tribe, and 2 levels of Vulnerability to Fire/Heat. All Psimasters will have at least one psionic power, but this varies by individual. It costs 60 points to play a Psimaster.

Drones have the advantage of +2 ST, Eidetic Memory 1, Extra Flexibility, Nictating Membranes and PD 1, DR 3 armor, and the disadvantages of -2 IQ, Compulsion: Serve and Obey the Psimasters, and Vulnerability to Fire/Heat. It costs 54 points to play a drone.

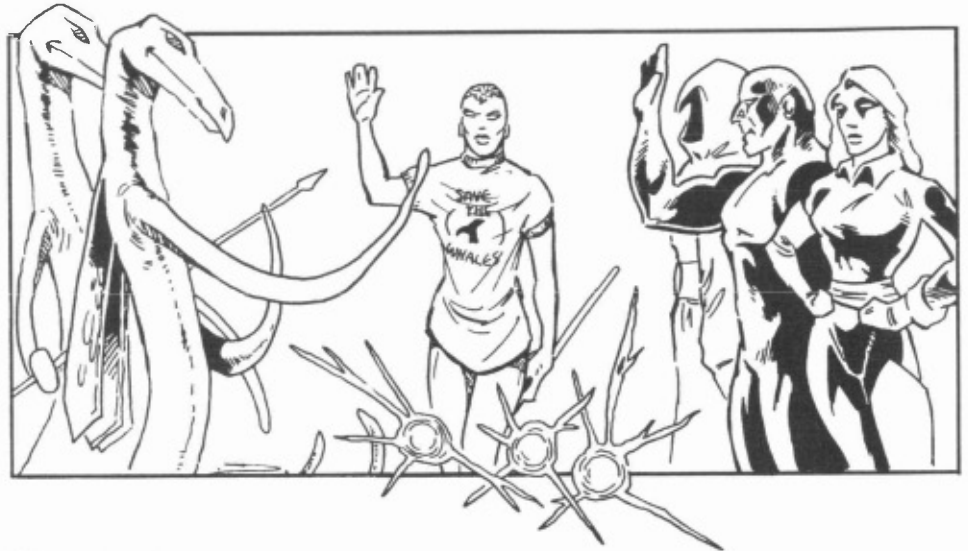
Psychology

The Psimasters are a warrior aristocracy. They do not believe in doing physical labor of any sort. They expect their drones to perform acts as simple as dressing or washing them and serving food. However, they gladly do their “aristocratic” duties – hunting, the protection of the tribe and the healing of the sick (Drones and Psimasters both). In contrast, Drones are tireless workers. They aren’t mindless, but do lack individual initiative. They have emotions, and are happiest when they receive well-earned praise from the Psimasters.

Names

Psimaster names are usually ritual in nature and so have been translated directly. Typical names include Six Smoking Blades, Glittering Shadow, Leaping Flower and Angry Mist. Most Drones have no names, but some are given pet names (e.g., Delicate Emerald).

Continued on next page . . .



The Zyranis

Zyranis are attractive creatures. Within a sparkling blue spherical energy-shell two to four feet across, streams of red and orange fire form a complex spiral pattern. The heart of a Zyranis is a pulsing blue-violet glow, and from this heart radiates five “tentacles” of solid energy each the length of a human arm. Anyone touching a Zyranis feels a strong electrostatic charge; they are also mildly radioactive.

Zyranis are “solid” creatures and can touch and be touched by humans, although they are composed of force fields rather than normal matter. Their “blood,” “heart” and “brain” are a complex network of magnetic, plasmatic and gravitic force-fields. Due to their physiology all possess a powerful mind shield, and no Zyranis are telepaths. Zyranis do not bleed and they heal rapidly, but a strong enough physical blow can disrupt the delicate alignment of internal forces, resulting in death or unconsciousness. If a Zyranis is reduced to 0 or negative HT, it starts to flash and spark; when it fails its consciousness roll and passes out, its color dulls and it floats to the ground. A dead Zyranis bursts in a brilliant flash of light, leaving no body.

Zyranis ride planetary lines of magnetic force, limiting their flight to a few feet off the ground. Their primary senses are radio, magnetic and electrical. They are blind to the normal visual spectrum. They lack senses of hearing or smell. They most clearly perceive ferrous metals and electrical power sources. To a Zyranis, a human is a transparent ghost-image – all Zyranis have a -4 penalty to spot humans who aren’t in metal armor or carrying electrical gadgets. They communicate by radio. A Zyranis translator detects sound waves and converts them into electromagnetic impulses on the frequency audible to Zyranis and vice versa.

Advantages and Disadvantages

Zyranis get -1 ST and +1 IQ. They have the racial advantages of Broadcast, level 4 (12 points), Doesn’t Breathe (20 points), DR 5 (15 points), 4 Extra Arms – Extra Flexibility, arranged radially (50 points), 10 Extra Hit Points (50 points), Fast Regeneration (50 points), Flight (5’ ceiling, -25%, 30 points), High Tech

Level (100 points), Immunity to Poison (15 points), Magnetic Sense, 16-hex range (25 points), Mind Shield power 25 (50 points), Radar Sense, 25-hex range (75 points), Passive Defense 4 (100 points), Radio Hearing (10 points) and 360-Degree Vision (25 points). They have the racial disadvantages of Deafness (-20 points), 5 levels of Vulnerability to Surge or Dampen (-25 points) and No Sense of Smell/Taste (-5 points). All Zyrani have the racial super-power of Surge-12 (5) (Instantaneous +20%; Touch Only -20%, 20 points). It costs 597 points to be a Zyrani, but since many of these points are in sensory advantages, they are less fearsome than that point total would indicate.

Names

Zyrani names are radio signals, which translate into single multi-syllable words ending in harsh consonants, usually g, k, r, or z – e.g., Azog, Qizakk, Jizador or Tergaviz. Notable personages will often acquire a nickname, e.g., Azog Starfinder (a radio astronomer) or Quizakk the Composer.

Psychology

Zyrani thought-processes are closely akin to humans, perhaps because they were originally built by a humanoid race – see *Ecology*. They are slightly more social than humans: few Zyrani are individualistic, and they always prefer to live and work in large communal groups. Most Zyrani are happiest when they are in motion: even static *situations* upset them, leading to a constant search for new challenges and regular social turmoil.

Ecology

The Zyrani didn't evolve on Zyrane. This is why they are so alien in comparison to the rest of the planet's ecosystem. They were created by an ancient race – perhaps the *GURPS Space* Precursors or the Seeders of the *I.S.T.* world. Originally intended as self-replicating exploration robots, a team of Zyrani was abandoned in the Eta Cassiopeia system by their builders tens of thousands of years ago. Eventually, they realized their builders weren't coming back, and developed a civilization and culture of their own.

Zyrani feed on pure energy. They are diurnal, powered by sunlight (or high UV sun-lamps), and rest at night for about the same length of time a human sleeps to conserve energy. They must also absorb heavy metal salts and minerals about once per month in order to maintain their metabolic processes.

To reproduce, *three* Zyrani meet and bind their energies together, forming a single larger “composite” Zyrani. The bonding produces continual sparks and flashes of energy; otherwise, the composite Zyrani will be inert and incapable of action or communication for about 20 days. They then separate into the trio of adult Zyrani (all exhausted, with ST 1) and one young Zyrani child. Raising the child is the responsibility of all three trio members.

Zyrani reach maturity 17 years after birth, and most decide to become part of a reproductive trio by age 34. At TL13, the average lifespan is 300 years.

Culture

Zyrani are very social beings. Most live in *Zaks*, pyramid-shaped fusion-powered flying buildings. Residential *Zaks* typically house 20 to 100 Zyrani, many of whom are family trios with one or more children. *Zaks* are formed into *clusters* of a dozen to several hundred *Zaks*. A cluster is a cross between a town, a commune and a private corporation, always with a specific purpose. Clusters are run on socialist lines, with all wealth owned by the cluster rather than the individual. Competition between rival commercial clusters is common, but there are no Zyrani nations: the supreme body is the *Loci*, a monolithic bureaucracy whose tyrannical Inner Circle oversees Zyrane's political and economic affairs.

The Shindaroth (Continued)

Ecology

The Shindaroth are methane-based cryogenic life forms whose metabolism uses lipids (fats) rather than proteins. Most cryogenic life is very slow, but the Shindaroth's nervous system is an efficient low-temperature superconductor, making them as fast or faster than humans. Shindaroth breathe hydrocarbons in the air (converting them into carbohydrates and organic polymers) and eat oxides in the plant and animal life they prey upon: In other words, they eat their air and breathe their food.

Shindaroth are bisexual, but the Psimaster caste is sterile, and only matings between male and female Drones can produce children. 95% of children are Drones, but one in 20 will be born a Psimaster. Psimasters, although sterile, are not sexless, and often take favored Drones as concubines. Both castes reach maturity 12 years after birth, and live about 60 years.

Culture

Shindaroth society is at an advanced tribe-village level. Individual tribes consist of a half-dozen adult Psimasters and nearly a hundred Drones. The Psimasters are the decision makers, hunters, inventors and warriors. They undergo rigorous training to develop their psi powers, with special stress laid on precognition and healing powers. The Drones are responsible for labor, the gathering and preparation of edible plants, crafts, and breeding. Drones don't form emotional attachments with their mates, but mothers do care for their children. Psimasters usually choose a few Drones as personal servants, and these are treated affectionately, like cherished house pets. The Drones return this affection: after all, that's what they've been bred to do.

Shindaroth society is TL1, with simple agriculture and crafts supplemented by hunting and gathering. Tribes are separated by several hundred miles, and rarely come into contact with each other: relations are usually peaceful, but sometimes one tribe will be forced by a quake or other disaster to leave its warrens and find a new home. If it enters another tribe's territory and negotiations break down, battles are sometimes fought. Religion is a complex polytheistic mish-mash of tribal hero-myths, psionic super-beings, fickle demons (the Zyrani often filling that role) and precognitive, world-saving prophets.

Zyrane Planetary Record Sheet

One hex = 350 miles

Planet Type: Hostile terrestrial
Diameter: 5,005 miles
Gravity: .53 G
Density: 4.6
Composition: Medium-Iron
Axial Tilt: 25
Seasonal Variation: Earthlike
Length of Day: 12 hours
Length of Year: 324 days

Atmosphere

Pressure: 1.7
Type and Composition: 72% Nitrogen,
23% Methane, 5% Other
Climate: Frozen
Temperature at 30° latitude: Low: -120,
Average -100, High -80
Surface Liquid Methane: 45%
Humidity: 48%
Primary Terrain: Icy plains, mountains

Mineral Resources

Gems/Crystals: Plentiful
Rare/Special Minerals: Scarce
Radioactives: Scarce
Heavy Metals: Scarce
Industrial Metals: Scarce
Light Metals: Scarce
Organics: Plentiful

Moons

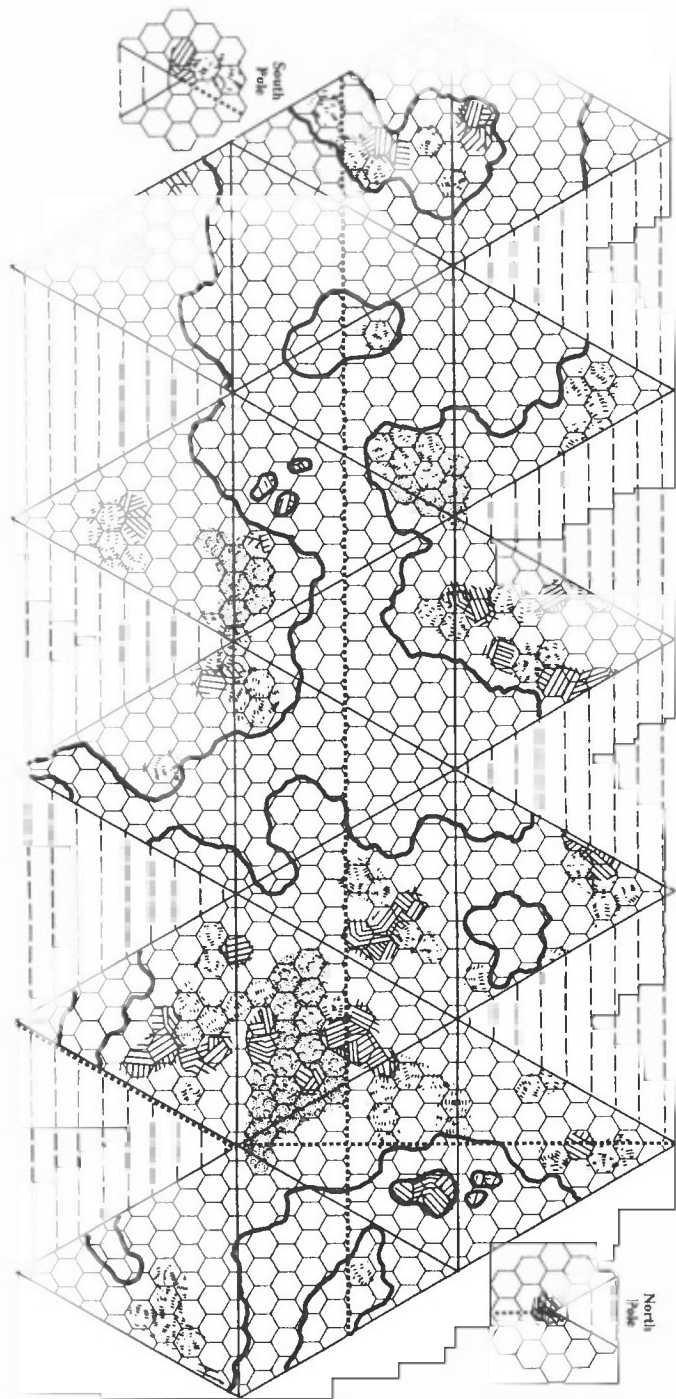
Two large moons, Adrik and Raz

Biosphere

Dominant life-form: Zyrani
Other significant life-forms: Shindaroth,
complex methane-hydrocarbon
ecology in oceans and crystree forests

Civilization

Population: 237,281,000 Zyrani (PR 8),
est. 200,000 Shindaroth (PR 5)
Tech Level: TL13 (Zyrani), TL1
(Shindaroth)
Control Rating: 5 (Zyrani), 2 (Shindaroth)
Society: Bureaucratic oligarchy supervis-
ing corporate communes (Zyrani);
caste-based tribalism (Shindaroth)
Starports: Class III in orbit
Installations: Stargate in Gateway Clus-
ter, Doomsday Web antiparticle beam
system in orbit
Economic/Production: Full industrial
economy, with extensive robotic man-
ufacturing and antimatter power gener-
ators



Map Key

- (1) Gateway Cluster, (2) Terminal Cluster, (3) Forever Cluster,
(4) Sea of Anger, (5) Skyfall Mountains, (6) Great Crystal
Jungle, (7) Web Fortress, (8) Purple Mountains

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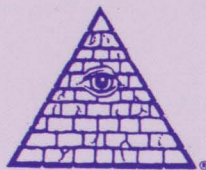


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