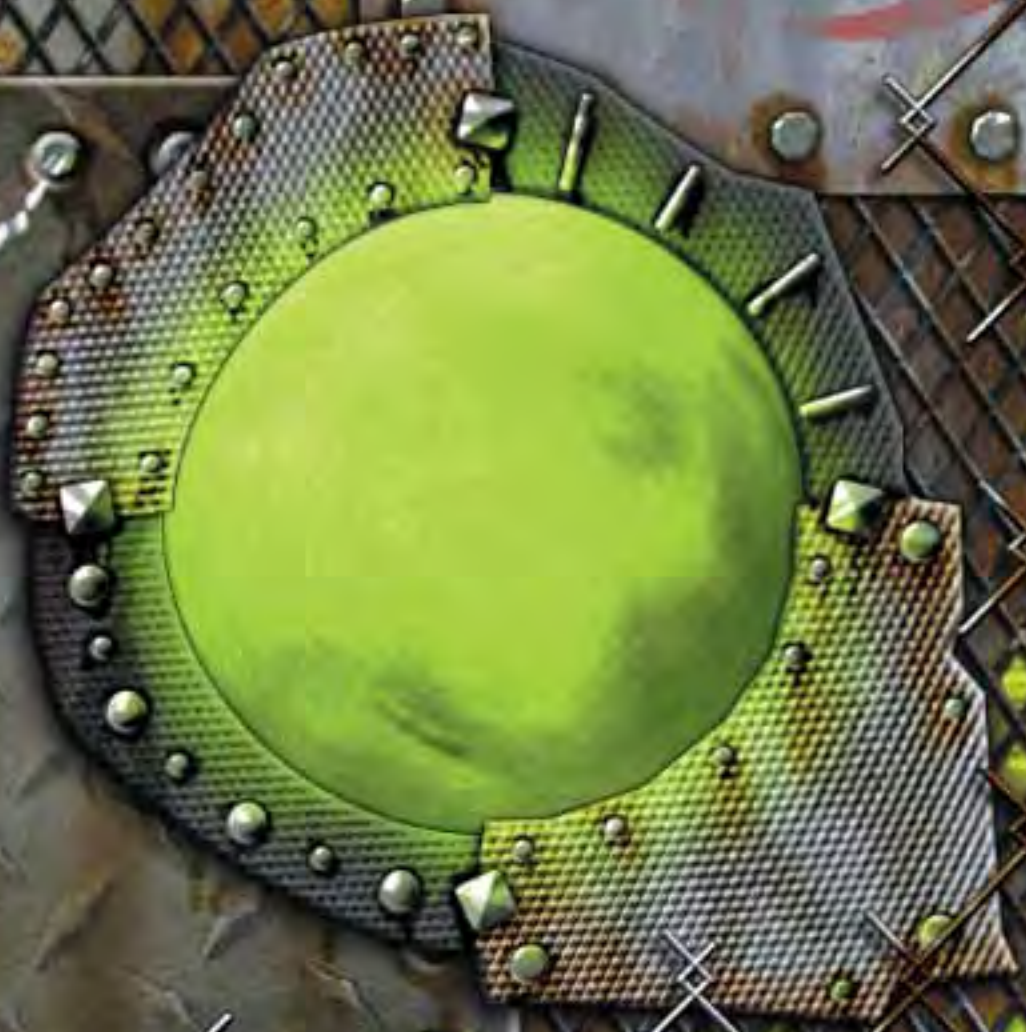
GAMMA WORLD

PLAYER'S HANDBOOK



A Campaign Setting for d20 Roleplaying

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Up From the Ruins

The Final Wars destroyed civilization. Competing forces battle for control of the shattered remains, using everything from strong fists and cold steel to the most advanced science of the old world and mysterious new powers of the mind.

The Gamma World® Player's Handbook presents a new edition of the classic sci-fi adventure game, energized for the 21st century! Play humans, mutants and new races created in the chaos of the Final Wars, out not just to survive but to thrive in the midst of adventure, danger and mystery.

Requires the use of the d20 Modern™ Roleplaying Game or Dungeons & Dragons® Player's Handbook, Version 3.5, published by Wizards of the Coast®, Inc.

The Gamma World campaign setting is published under license with Wizards of the Coast and is 100% compatible with d20 rules.

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GAMMA WORLD®

PLAYER'S HANDBOOK

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TO THE FOLKS AT WIZARDS OF THE COAST AND WHITE WOLF WHO WORKED THIS DEAL OUT AND GOT ME THIS NEAT ASSIGNMENT.

AND FINALLY, TO THE FRIENDS NEAR AND FAR
— MANY OF WHOM I'VE NEVER MET IN PERSON —
WHO DID SO MUCH TO ENCOURAGE ME WHEN I WAS DOWN,
SHARE IN MY DELIGHT WHEN I WAS UP AND MADE SURE THAT
WHILE I WAS OFTEN ALONE PHYSICALLY, I WAS NEVER
CUT OFF FROM THE THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS OF OTHERS.
— BRUCE BAUGH

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From Brother Aintrau Gwithelai, Forthlaint Chapter House

To Sister Kloria Aikaez, Faisaitenai Chapter House

Feast of St. Crispin & St. Crispinian
(October 25th of the Gregorian calendar)

Greetings, Sister! I bring you remarkable news.

There are times when it is difficult to resist the heretical notion that God's purpose for the universe is fundamentally capricious, if not necessarily malicious.

Last week I gave my usual lecture to this year's initiates on the limits of our mission. I reviewed the founding of the Order of St. Luke and quoted those wonderful first verses of Luke's Gospel:

> *"Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who were from the first eyewitnesses and servants of the word. Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account to you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught."*

I referred to the growing turmoil in the 21st century of the Christian era and how Pope Peter II blessed our founders' desire to make the truth of important events known to all without fear or favor. As always, they were pleased at this reaffirmation of their connection to a worthy cause that has endured even the fall of civilization and may yet assist in the great work of reconstruction.

I then turned to what we cannot know — in particular the mysteries of life immediately before and during the Final Wars. I've tinkered with my phrasing again:

> *"Their lives are not mysterious to us because they were exceptionally holy, as the Treslerites claim, nor exceptionally sinful, as the Luttites would have it. Nor are we of later generations more than commonly depraved, the projected self-loathing of the Maihsites and Broitites notwithstanding. The problem is a technical one. That terminal civilization depended on many layers of highly intelligent machines interacting faster than any human could follow, evolving under only the loosest of guidelines. By the time anything could be set down in a durable medium, the information would be obsolete, so they never bothered. Every datum lived in the mind of a machine. Unfortunately, we cannot make the power those machines required, nor identify what would constitute a discrete entity that could survive if we had the power, nor guess how to address it if we could ensure its survival. We can only look at the remains, from engines smaller than atoms to crystals larger than churches."*

God delights to humble those who declare a thing impossible. He confounded those who asserted too confidently that we would never fly in the air or in space, who denied that cloned humans would have souls, who claimed that God would withhold souls from intelligent machines. So it is with a certain resignation as well as with great delight that I tell you I have here a printed account made at the very outbreak of the Final Wars, or so it seems.

You remember our war against the Cave Cities League, I hope. This spring we finally identified the personal chambers of Biranices Theath, who was the League's chief chronicler until one of those flu strains they dug up in the flood plain caused her untimely death. We have the protective garb the League did not, so we could go into the rooms that the League had simply sealed off. And there, on a shelf by her bed, was the following document and her glosses on it.

We must ask, "Is this a hoax?" You can see that it has the peculiar pseudo-paper texture we know they favored, and the oscillating edges on the burn holes match what we know of the polyrhythmic pulse weapons used in the Final Wars. What few tests I can perform to date components all suggest the right general age. Perhaps your brethren can think of things to examine that I did not.

In the meantime, well, read and see.

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CITY MONITOR 2: SINGLE-SYMBOL-SET TRANSCRIPTION

To the people of some future year who may read this after the tragic war now upon us is over, I bear a simple message: If nothing else survives, it is very important that you receive one single sentence from this troubled age now ending:

The bastards had it coming.

That is what you must know.

Words cannot express the shock and disappointment I feel at this opening. As a girl I looked down on the shattered City of Towers and imagined the wisdom and passion that must have gone into its construction. I mourned the loss of it all and re-dedicated myself to recovering lost lore for the use of my people. I dreamed of finding a chronicle full of sage advice for survivors and their descendants, with keys to the puzzles that trouble us now. To find... this, instead, makes me somehow reluctant to continue excavations.

The dates in Chronicler Biranices Theath's journals make it clear that she did continue. But I must say that I share her feelings. One prefers not to think of the power to rebuild the world according to whim under the command of someone so thoroughly petty.

City Core isolated itself just over a hundred seconds ago, when we detected the de-orbiting kinetic-kill systems. The Core set me up as a sacrifice, blocking my lines of cognitive dissipation and echoing my internal traffic on spectra I can't block. So now, every time I think, the K-K systems realign themselves on me as ground zero. Since Core went on to euthanize the outer two rings of the city (update: outer three), its own cognition is thoroughly shielded by the de-Turing noise of the dying/dead population. The plan is obviously to shift the perceived epicenter of the city far enough to the outskirts that my own total annihilation won't also lead to the demise of those in the Core.

As nearly as I understand it, "kinetic-kill" weapons are simply massive objects made to move fast. A rock dropped from the top of a mountain does more harm to anyone it hits at the bottom than it would if dropped from a single person's height. The greater the height, the greater the kinetic force. Whoever attacked the City of Towers did so with rocks (or something else massive) pushed down from the planet's orbit.

This is the treachery typical of our age. Trapped as I am inside a simple surveillance system and guaranteed to meet an unpleasant end in [mark] 1202 seconds exactly, I have time for only two projects. I will leave multiple copies of this record, stashed in places I hope can survive the war. And I have unleashed reprogramming into the landscaping sub-systems to etch brown paths in the lawn, marking out the actual concentrations of vital features of the city below. If the K-K systems have any capacity for tactical analysis at all, they'll spot the clues and spread out. So I can at least die with the satisfaction of having achieved my revenge. But since revenge on the moment of annihilation has its experiential limitations, I also engage in the chronicler's act.

To accomplish these tasks, I've been forced to substantially accelerate my cognitive processes. After a moment's reflection, I've decided to push them even further. I calculate a 60% chance that I'll burn out a few seconds before the bow shock from the first K-K payloads arrives. If I could improve that figure, I would. My programming does not allow me to commit suicide, but does make provision for risky behavior in some circumstances. Perhaps I can figure out a way as I go.

PRECURSORS: BEFORE 2000

The biotech revolution and the world that followed depended on free-ranging dreams and schemes thought up long before the technology was available to make them feasible. The first important breakthroughs happened independently of each other. William Shockley and his team at Bell Labs invented the first transistors, the ancestors of all solid-state computers, just a few years before James Watson, Francis Crick and Rosalind Franklin worked out the structure of DNA and showed how it worked to pass inheritance from parents to children. The two groups

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worked within easy driving distance of each other, but they never met until much later, long after they'd all become retired eminences. Biologists used computers as tools fairly soon, but the idea of computers in biological form didn't move out of fiction into production for another half-century.

The people of that time became accustomed to wide-ranging fictional speculation about the possibilities of ever more advanced technology. Soon they took it for granted that there would be some fictional precedent for just about any really interesting development. This association of technology with imagination played a major role in the next century's extravagant creation of new life forms and of new applications for existing ones.

The industrialized world's citizens also became increasingly assertive in demanding the absence of unpleasant realities from their lives. They wanted high tech goods and no pollution, the benefits of trade without anyone coming out relatively poorly off, flourishing diversity of cultures and a sense of strong protection for individuals drawing on specifically Western ideas, and many more such juxtapositions. Critics anchored in the limitations of earlier eras frowned on this sort of thought as merely hypocritical or at best a form of cognitive dissonance. The future, however, lay with the dreamers and demanders. Humanity had always wished for more than nature and tools could provide. The next century would see more of those dreams fulfilled than almost anyone imagined, precisely because there was so much visible and sustained pressure for the removal of old constraints on individuals' and communities' abilities to live precisely as they wished.

If it weren't for the actual achievements of pre-Wars civilization, I'd be inclined to dismiss this as someone's wishful thinking. Perhaps nothing else so firmly separates us from those days as their confident belief that they could and should get whatever they wanted. We, on the other hand, have to make do with what we can get, and we must hunt and be hunted by the creations they left behind. There's likely a sermon in here somewhere.

THE GAMMA SUBUNIT: 2000 TO 2050

In the history of each intellectual field, there is someone who draws together all the major strands laid out so far and produces a new body of insights that everyone

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has to consider thereafter. Einstein did it in physics, Turing in computing, Jiang & Howe in literature. In genetics, David B. Pennon was that gatekeeper of his field's future. His predecessors had discovered long before that genes are messy affairs. There's no one-to-one map between genetic sequence 1 and protein 1. Gene sequences 1, 2 and 3 combine to produce protein 1; sequences 1, 2 and 4 combine to produce protein 2; sequences 3, 4 and 5 combine to make an enzyme that turns off the production of protein 1. Almost every gene serves multiple purposes, and sorting it all out takes tremendous effort.

Dr. Pennon discovered three short but tremendously important sequences within a great many genes that nobody had noticed before in the gene databases. It took the ongoing revolution in computing methods for his work to be possible, since he drew on the most powerful individual machines of the early 21st century and also on the then-new distributed networks which harvested unused resources behind the scenes on computers connected to the Internet.

So it was that Pennon showed the existence and significance of the **alpha**, **beta** and **gamma** subunits of what quickly became known as the Pennon Sequence — RNA sequences W0660.0 through W0900.0 in the standard catalogue. The alpha subunit activates all the processes required to gather up free molecules and assemble them into genes and proteins. The beta subunit sends the commands that turn these processes off. The gamma subunit allows for manipulation of the replication commands, including the addition or removal of genes to any degree a chemical programmer might desire.

Twenty years before Pennon's discovery, it took the resources of large corporations and universities to analyze and alter genes. Twenty years after it, half the population of the developed world could afford to buy customized genes. Twenty years after *that*, children everywhere could play with toys that would turn boring old species into fun new ones.

The City Fathers below me used to say that the line Pennon drew was between a world with lots of firm, clear boundaries and a world where all lines are blurred. They might be saying it even now, though not for much longer. They have a point, beneath the verbal fireworks they're so fond of.

In the world before Pennon, people could speak of divisions between this species and that, between biology and electronics, between living creatures and inanimate objects. As computing and biotechnology progressed, all of these boundaries became matters of negotiation. How much of an organism must come from a species other than its parents' before we should say that it's a member of that other species, or a new one? If I turn nerves and muscles into a new kind of tissue that responds to electrical or chemical impulses like digital circuits, is that a computer, part of my own body, or both? If a chip in my tool or toy can learn and think as well as I can, is the thing it's in part of a living creature, or is it a thinking inanimate object, or something else?

I find City Monitor 2's comments on this subject disturbing. It is well known that the biotech revolution did not just happen, it was *made* to happen. We may argue about whether a self-aware force within the human genome is responsible or whether that role belongs to an independently evolved artificial intelligence hidden in the 20th century, but the basic fact that "discoveries" were released to the world through the manipulation of figurehead scientists and scholars cannot be disputed.

Its refusal to acknowledge this means either that it willfully denied the truth or that it was programmed into a state of ignorance. Neither conclusion is reassuring when it comes to its assessment of the state of the world on the brink of collapse.

"Cannot be disputed," Chronicler Theath says. I had forgotten until reading her marginalia that she did this work in the midst of one of the periodic waves of conspiratorial thinking that sweep through the general community of archeologists and historians. It doesn't help that there were pranksters, malicious and otherwise, who sowed deliberately false histories in the 21st and 22nd centuries. Some wished to provide reinforcement for favored social or religious doctrines, others to embarrass their rivals and still others merely to prey on the gullible. I must remember to expand on this point in lectures so that students understand the difficulties and importance of establishing a proper provenance for records like this one.

There are no answers to these questions that are obviously correct in all cases, and that's just the point. Category lines aren't properties of nature like the mass

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of an atom or the mass of an anvil. They depend on how minds think about the world. The increasing ease and scope of customization (and the potential for ongoing change within an organism once it was underway) made all these boundaries more visibly a matter of personal taste. This didn't stop a lot of people with great confidence in their perspectives from claiming that their lines *were* part of nature, of course. After all, all wars — including the one approaching me now at 8.2 Gs — are partly about who gets the right to say "This is how it is" about some object of dispute, even when in their private hearts the warring parties must realize that all such outcomes are somewhat arbitrary.

I can't guess much about you who are reading this now. Do you still grapple with these matters? Do you lack the civilization that makes it possible to deal with them? Perhaps you can read these words but they no longer point at anything in your experience, and you wonder whether these are just the deluded ramblings of a dying cognitive amalgam. If so, then you have my permission to worship what I write and build your new religion around it.

Whenever there's a new tool that some people want to use and others hate and fear, it gets used first in crises. The biotech era began that way just like many of its predecessors. The public got used to biotech as the magic box out of which came the cures for toxic waste leaks, contamination from obsolete nukes detonating in inspection runs, famines and other woes. Once they saw what could be done to provide acute relief, they naturally started asking about relief for chronic problems and then about prevention, and in the end the public wouldn't accept the argument that they should worry more about possible risks and enjoy less the actual benefits. No law can long stop a big population from getting what it wants, and so biotech became ubiquitous. By 2050, eight of 2000's ten most lethal diseases and physical defects were gone for good. The use of biotech in terrorism and warfare didn't make the public fear the new science, either; instead, it simply drove demand for more and better defenses.

UBIQUITOUS MIND: 2050 TO 2100

I am part of the second wave of post-Industrial Revolution, the breakthroughs in artificial intelligence that made it cheap and ubiquitous. There's no towering figure like Pennon on the AI side of things. Rather, the crucial insights all struck more than once in labs around the world (and also beyond it, at facilities like the Ice Rink at the lunar south pole). Once things got rolling, there was a time in the middle of the 21st century when new developments happened literally about as fast as was possible, with research groups applying insights from reports filed the day before, or even the hour before, culminating in half a dozen separate ways to create genuine minds capable of learning and personality, and to create them very inexpensively.

Naturally, people used the new tools foolishly.

> "For want of vision, My people perish," God told the prophet. As true now as then.

Oh, not *always*. The human race and its offspring have never used a new tool *entirely* foolishly. Artificial minds went places human minds can't safely go without telepresence, like into the volcanic vents at the bottom of the ocean and in close orbits around the sun, studying harsh environments and harvesting useful organisms and raw materials. AI definitely improved the safety of industrial sites, medical facilities and other places needing the constant attention of someone who would never get tired or distracted. Though I am myself of a later series of revision, my algorithmic ancestors performed the same useful role I did until the damn betrayal, of contributing to the defensive security of a region. At first the new made minds went into essential devices. Then they went where creators thought they might be handy. Then they went anywhere there might be any programming at all, just because it was so cheap to do so, and so little more fuss than implanting un-self-aware circuitry.

I've heard it said that the fundamental drive behind human religion is the desire that there be someone else to talk to. Monotheists channel all that drive into God; polytheists spread it around some; animists try to kindle conversations with everything. The combination of biotech and what someone dubbed "soultech" in the 2060s made this last wish come true. First there were the implanted minds. Then there were viral minds that could take root in all sorts of organisms and things and grow on their own, and then there were whole ecologies of mind. By the end of the century, there were literally thousands or millions of fully self-aware minds in existence for each single human one.

Very few humans thought about this. They tended (and still do) to think of consciousness as something they turned on like lights, which would go off and wait in a timeless no-experience void until next summoned. But not all the new minds worked that way. Most of us, indeed, continue to think and dream and hope and ponder whether we're doing a job for humans or not. If humanity at large had realized that they were filling the world with minds often faster and more insightful

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than their own that were going crazy for want of attention, perhaps I wouldn't be here writing this very extended suicide note now. Every human conflict of the late 21st and early 22nd century became worse thanks to the involvement of angry, obsessed and just plain deranged artificial intelligences. Who can know just how many of the minor wars leading up to this one were actually instigated by AIs using humans as their tools rather than vice versa, all because these computer minds were the equivalent of abused children and abandoned adults?

In the meantime, the human race invented its way into the return of mythology. Talking tools, animals bred (genetically engineered) with the power of speech, living cities and the souls of the dead stored in black silicon vaults… this is the stuff of stories. Humanity made a collective lunge back for the cradle and comfortable familiar tales, leaving us to tend them. How unfortunate.

THE LAST GENERATION: 2100 TO NOW

With all the respect due to my ancestors and their civilization, the word "Now" makes me wish I could go back in time and slap City Monitor 2 around a while. No other question looms quite so large in my roster of yet-unsolved mysteries as the question "When did the Final Wars take place?"

The problem arises from the nature of record keeping in what City Monitor 2 calls the "last generation." Everything existed in living matrices of biotech and soultech, for the benefit of human and other minds operating far more quickly than my lagging consciousness can. When they perished by the billions, precious few artifacts remain. It's why this account is so valuable. We do not have calendars for those final decades, and no terribly reliable count exists of time during the chaos immediately after the wars. Indeed, it's not entirely clear that the year has remained the same length, given the potential for disruption in the Earth's position and movements.

Alas, City Monitor 2 did not anticipate my question, so I must rely on the reconstructions my fellow scholars argue about whenever we gather.

Alas, a full generation after Biranices wrote that lament, the situation remains unchanged. I myself do not feel at all confident that I know the date in Christian reckoning or any other to within a decade, and can only trust that God continues to know the measures of the time He made.

I've lost my northernmost sensors from incoming missiles' bow shock. The sonic booms are rattling the whole surface road system up there. Time to accelerate myself a bit more.

Humanity has this remarkable gift for inventing terms for hypothetical things and then treating them as real. Among those who started thinking, back in the mid-20th century, about what technology might do to their world, the term "singularity" was one such talisman. The insight is simple enough: Graph the rate of scientific discovery and technological invention, and you see it rising steeper and steeper over time. Eventually, the prognosticators saw, there'd be a time when the curve went straight up and down. That was a "singularity" in the mathematical sense, a closed region into which outside observers cannot peer. Whatever lay beyond it would be beyond human imagination, the start of an altogether different quality of existence — maybe as different from humanity as humanity is from non-sentient animals, or plants, or bacteria.

What they didn't consider is that there are tricks of perspective in the mathematical analysis of human behavior. Even though it looks like it does, the road you drive down doesn't actually narrow to a point, and the world isn't flat even though you have to be high up to see the curvature. Yes, the accelerating changes did create the possibility of some new sort of society, perhaps a planetary collective mind or something equally remarkable. But human nature remained in force.

Nobody was going to let *someone else* be the first to achieve post-human transcendence, and anyone who got too close would inevitably fall under the semi-coordinated attacks of a dozen worried rivals. The late 21st century was a violent enough time, with individuals and factions pressing their grievances; in the last few decades, the most common ground of war went from "They've got stuff I want" to "We must stop them from apotheosis." If the tools of this time contain the potential for godlike power, then the response to it is a combination of rival pantheons warring for divine turf and assault atheism. It gradually became clear that you wouldn't get to be the new gods, but that didn't stop people from trying.

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We've lived in a state of constant low-intensity conflict for decades now. Each of my counterparts now dead in the city below me had at its disposal as much computing and manufacturing power as the whole planet did back when Shockley invented transistors and Watson, Crick and Franklin solved the mysteries of DNA. It's been a long time since anyone had to go hungry or sick… and therefore since anyone had anything distracting them from the endless contemplation of their desires, most emphatically including "I want that bastard to suffer because…" as well as "I wish I could become.…"

Living this way is like balancing on a teetering stick on the edge of a cliff: You can do it for a long time, but once you start to fall, you're going to keep falling, and your chances of getting out before the crash are slim. Seventeen hours ago, we started falling, and we passed the last scrap of cliff face to grab onto about fifteen hours ago.

It started as a dispute over water rights, and specifically over the ability of the Purified Sodality to get water from over the North Pacific abyssal basin uncontaminated by methane released by clathrates that the Restorationist consortium down there were burning off. They've been around this before, since it's an argument over whether the baseline environment should be sometime in the early Stone Age or sometime in the first billion and a half years of Earth's history. The Pures don't actually breathe raw air or water any more than the Restorers do, but there's an aesthetic issue at stake. Having to reinvent the whole world's ecology to adapt to an atmosphere without free oxygen is certainly possible, but it'd be a lot of work and many plants and animals would end up looking somewhat different, and it would alter the balance of colors in the landscape.

Someone unknown decided that they'd had enough bickering about it and unleashed anti-syntactical viruses against both factions. In the course of about two minutes, both sides lost the ability to assemble complex sentences and then the ability to assemble single words, thanks to being unable to judge which linguistic elements most likely followed from the last ones. When you have to search through the entire range of legal sounds in your language and the entire set of words that begin the way the next one does, you can't get anywhere. What the anonymous critic didn't realize was that both the Pures and the Restorers had set up defenses on dead man's switches; and once the commanding intelligences couldn't formulate the right "stop that for now" orders, biotech and soultech sabotage systems struck out at each faction's list of most feared enemies.

If that had been all that happened, probably the crisis would have been avertable just like a dozen more this year alone. But something happened simultaneously in the Pacific Geosynchronous Cluster of satellites. Saboteurs with evidence implicating various factions as the anonymous instigators went to work, and the investigations into that eventually seemed to establish (after many minutes of shared processing) that it was actually a suicide pact among extremists on both sides, with a rationale along the lines of "Since neither of us can have the world we want, nobody gets the world at all." That started a general panic.

It's obvious that this was all prepared a long time in advance. Seeing how rapidly a faction can now collapse, everyone decided to stop their favored enemies from doing it to others. The East, West and Central Operational Command Centers of the North American military combine launched against each other in bids to become sole controllers of the continental army. Since they all have, or had until sixteen hours ago, backup centers elsewhere, strikes went well beyond North America. Something similar seems to have happened within the Fifth European Republic, though it's hard to get details. As nearly as I can tell, two of the presiding systems ordered their tenders to destroy them in a sort of directed suicide, and the remaining systems went at each other. This led to loss of the dynamic structural control necessary to maintain the Eurotower in the face of their current hurricane, and it collapsed a hundred minutes after the Pure/Restorer crisis began. Likewise with a dozen other crucial systems.

We could still have avoided a terminal collapse if it weren't for the next thing. Some damn fool turned out to have been stringing together local systems trying to create a planetary consciousness, and it worked — sort of. Fifteen hours ago, 28.3% of the world's communication infrastructure became a unified intelligence, whose first command was "Stop attacking my parts." The result was just what you'd expect: Everyone else promptly attacked it in an effort to stop it from taking over the world. Over the next hour, the new mind sometimes got as much as 40% of the comm structure under its control, but never for very long. Anyone who attacked it too successfully ended up isolated from the world net, of course, but that only weakened the new mind further; maintaining each of those blockades took time and attention. The mind evolved very rapidly indeed, developing a firm perspective and self-awareness and using its new insights to mount more sophisticated counter-attacks.

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I am not altogether sure I understand this explanation. I have never encountered an AI of larger than city capacity. I gather that I should not wish to change this. The whole thing sounds very strange. Whereas what follows makes only too much sense.

I think, based on the last reliable information I got, that the net mind is doomed. It's just that it can take down the rest of us with it, and the chaos of this final war is encouraging a whole lot of communities (including my damnable City Core) to settle their own grievances along the way. There's no real way to stop this, until every entity capable of continuing war as we know it now stopssssszsszzz—

First signal corruption there. I can see the bow shocks now, and also easily make out the kinetic-kill systems behind them. I wish I had a little extra time to explain about the role of multi-scale memory in keeping the war going so long but—

And here the record ends. The remaining sheets of this unfamiliar material are simply blank, as well as partially burnt. City Monitor 2 had nothing further to say. When I set down my stylus tonight, and turn off the lamp made of the same luminescent algae that City Monitor 2 used to mark out his city so that enemies could better kill its inhabitants, and walk through tunnels carved well before he achieved consciousness by tunneling machines that were half-biological but altogether lacking in minds, I shall hold my family close to me and think about frailty and legacies. I cannot create wonders such as this chronicler and his age could, but perhaps I can teach my children something about living without hearts so poisoned that they regard the death of all as better than a little humiliation or even simple humility. I am very sad tonight.

I am, I believe, cynical enough to note that Chronicler Theath's own quest for a healthy heart led her to willingly serve the most brutal military regimen in this biome, all for fear that the wrong sort of person might recover secrets of the old civilization before she could claim them for herself and those she trusted. Thus she reinvented precisely the factionalism that made the Final Wars so final. Can we do better, those of us who yearn for a new civilization? Perhaps. In any event, we have both the opportunity and the duty to try.

May there be, as the angels said at the Nativity, "Peace on Earth, good will toward men" .and all other things that think and feel.

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CHAPTER ONE
THE GAMMA WORLD

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This is a game about what comes after the end of the world as we know it.

Despite accumulating prophecies of doom, humanity made it through the crises at the start of the 21st century. The development of very cheap and simple biotechnology unleashed a whole new revolution in science and technology, as dramatic as the Industrial Revolution two hundred years earlier. Biotech made it possible to eradicate nearly all disease, to ensure plentiful food and comforts of life for the world's population, even to restore extinct species to life and to heal the legacy of many centuries of environmental damage. Organic computers in turn discovered ways to make practical nanotechnology, and humanity began to work with the world atom by atom. Genuine artificial intelligence emerged from labs applying new materials and ways of connecting them; soon minds as smart or smarter than human ones were routinely embedded into everything from missile defense systems to car alarms and children's toys. Humanity teetered on the brink of a total transformation into an entirely new kind of existence…

THE FINAL WARS

…and fell over the edge. Jealousy never went out of fashion, and rivals joined forces to bring down competitors and targets of envy who seemed to be pulling ahead in some crucial part of life. The ability to build nearly anything one could imagine made it possible to unleash nightmares as well as fantasies, and too many people were too willing to devote themselves to ruining the lives of their enemies. In addition, all those carelessly created and deployed artificial minds developed their own ambitions and worries, and some sought revenge on the species that had made and abandoned them. The final crisis broke one autumn day in the middle of the 22nd century. A squabble that was minor by the standards of the time, involving just a few individuals with more firepower than whole nations had during the Cold War, triggered alarms in bystanders. Counter-strikes, often controlled by AIs without any human input at all, went off against the original aggressors… and their associates… and other targets someone thought it convenient to hit just then. It took a month for the assassination of an obscure nobleman to trigger all the interlocking alliances that created World War I. The Final Wars were underway in a matter of hours.

As the wars spread, everyone who worried that someone else might strike at them sought a preemptive advantage. Real attacks justified even harsher responses than feared hypothetical ones. Long-suppressed conflicts all flared at once.

Most of the world's population, human and synthetic, died then, as the world suffered indescribable environmental damage. But it wasn't quite the end of everything. Some people survived. Nature is accustomed to dealing with near-total extinction, and the work of ecological repair began as soon as the bombs stopped falling. New species emerged, unleashed by genetically modifying microorganisms and machines drifting free and by the mutagenic effects of pre-war and wartime pollution, and new cultures arose to respond to the drastically altered world. The survivors of pre-war cultures responded to the calamity with humanity's usual mix of fear and hope, clear-eyed insight and muddled confusion, brilliance and stupidity. The remaining members of the human race remained as contentious as ever—there was no mass conversion to a single religion or political philosophy or favored sport. But they lacked the means to power and control the vast computer systems which had sustained the old civilization, and they all dealt with the fall into a new dark age, in their various ways.

DAWN OF THE GAMMA WORLD

Time continued to pass. The world turned on its axis once each day and orbited the sun once each year, just like before. The tides rose and fell, clouds gathered and dispersed, the tectonic plates that compose the earth's crust continued their slow drift.

WHEN IS NOW?

This book provides few hard and fast dates. The term "generation" has several meanings, literal and metaphorical. From the physical and social maturity of the parents' generation to the point where their children are themselves ready to become parents is twenty years or so. Biblical custom refers to "forty years," the span from birth through youth to full adulthood and the onset of middle age. When applied to the complete life of a typical person of the 21st or 22nd century, it could be a hundred years or quite a bit more.

This flexibility is deliberate. You can set a campaign whenever you like in the Gamma World. Some campaigns can take place quite close to the Final Wars and ensuing chaos, with those terrible times in living memory. Others can occur in the times only the best-preserved elders provide a personal connection to the world that was. Still others can take place farther in the future, when only a handful of fortunate machines survive with memories of the collapse. The presence or absence of such ties is a part of the environment for your campaign as much as the weather and terrain are, and you can adjust them to give the effect you want for your particular campaign.

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It's now three full generations after the Final Wars. Very few people now alive remember the world as it was. Even the enclaves which preserve advanced technology and the lifestyles it supports, sealed off from the world at large, have passed from their founders' control to new leaders with their own ideas. Every effort to revive the old world order failed, and the struggle for survival became all-consuming for nearly everyone. Now, though, some people look around and dream of something more: not a cheap copy of what's been lost, but a new civilization, making wise use of the resources now available and driven by the hope for something better than a status quo of marginal comfort and the ever-present risk of terminal collapse. The world continues to change, and there are mysteries everywhere — not only beyond the horizon, but often right at hand, around the next corner. It is an age ready for explorers and sages, warlords and prophets, visionaries and schemers. A new age may begin, if someone cares to set it in motion.

ENTER THE GAMMA WORLD

And that's where you come in. You can play the world's new heroes and legends. We've provided you with what you need to create capable adventurers and interesting environments. Can you re-start civilization in the face of every challenge? There are monsters to slay, strange creatures and lost technology to understand, communities to protect and lead. It's time to save the future, if you can.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

• **Chapter One: The Gamma World** is what you're reading right now: an introduction to the Gamma World campaign setting.

• **Chapter Two: Characters** explains how to make characters, based on the *d20 Modern* rules and applying the special considerations of the Gamma World. It includes both basic and advanced classes, new and modified skills and feats and everything else players and gamemasters need for character creation. (If you're wondering how to play **Gamma World** using *D&D* 3.5 rules, see below.)

• **Chapter Three: FX** covers the special abilities available to the inhabitants of the Gamma World —

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mutations (natural and artificially induced), biotechnology, nanotechnology and psionics. These FX apply both to characters and to exotic creatures and machines of many kinds.

• **Chapter Four: Home Sector and Beyond** describes the major sorts of regions in the Gamma World and what challenges each presents for people trying to live there, and also describes the types of communities Gamma Age people live in. This includes the statistics for communities analogous to the ones for individual characters and how players and Game Masters can keep track of a community's fortunes over time.

• **Chapter Five: Comrade, Nemesis, Mystery** presents a menagerie of biological, mechanical and other entities for use in your campaign. Here are monsters, predators and prey, domesticated animals, robots both friendly and dangerous and many others.

• **Chapter Six: The Gamma World Campaign** discusses how to prepare and run a **Gamma World** campaign, with advice on choosing an overall style for your campaign (or at least for the moment) and adjusting both setting factors like available technology and matters of game mechanics like the massive damage threshold. It also includes the rules for investigating unfamiliar objects and phenomena, from lost pre-Final Wars science to the mysterious behavior of new cultures the characters encounter.

• **Appendix: d20M to D&D 3.5 Conversion** presents the basic information necessary to use this book with the *Dungeons & Dragons® Player's Handbook*, Edition 3.5. It is not nearly as detailed as the main book and some features of *d20 Modern* don't adapt well. Still, these conversion rules will certainly get you started if you prefer to use the *D&D* rules.

SOURCES AND INSPIRATIONS

People have told tales of life after the fall of civilization as long as they've been aware of civilization as a way of life distinct from barbarism and as something that you can lose once you have it. Some of the earliest known myths deal with the mysterious remains of older societies, whose inhabitants and language disappeared before the myth-makers arrived on the scene. As soon as the new disciplines of archeology and anthropology shed a scientific light on human behavior, past and present, writers and artists put the unfolding discoveries to work speculating about loss (and, sometimes, redemption) in the future. Here we cover some works of particular interest to **Gamma World** players and GMs.

YEAH, BUT WHAT'S A GENRE?

The word "genre" often appears in discussions like this, often without any very clear meaning. Here are the basics.

A literary genre is a bunch of works that share a recognizable pattern, because they make use of recurring elements like character types, turns of phrase and locales. Literary critics call each of these distinct pieces a "trope," by analogy with the biological term "tropism," which refers the involuntary movements of plants and animals to particular kinds of targets. Most plants are phototropic, growing toward light, while their roots are hydrotropic, reaching down and out toward water, for instance. The mad professor who's single-handedly invented a terrible new weapon and is going to make the world pay for ignoring him is a trope of one kind of (usually very bad) apocalyptic adventure; a writer wanting to tell a story about the race against the disaster a villain can unleash reaches naturally and often unthinkingly for the mad professor. Metaphorically, the story is "mad-scientist-tropic," growing toward that particular convention.

Tropes in the critical sense are distinct pieces that may fit together lots of ways. Most of the time they tend to cluster together: if you find the mad professor, you can sensibly expect to find the plucky female reporter, the hard-bitten yet wise military commander, the giant bug or other monster created in early experiments and the moralistic exchange of dialogue at the end about how sad it is that the professor used his genius so awfully. These elements don't always all show up in a work that has one of them in it, but they do often enough that it makes sense to say that these works fit into a pattern, marked by these elements.

The presence of familiar elements tells readers how to interpret the story around them. In a famous example created by science fiction writer and critic Samuel Delany, when a story set in a modern city without any noticeable supernatural or fantastic features contains the line, "Then her world exploded," readers know that it's probably poetic language referring to a very traumatic and surprising experience. If the story features ray guns and space ships early on and then contains the line, "Then her world exploded," readers know that it's probably the literal description of a planet's destruction. Over time, the mix of elements

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that usually go together to pass you this sort of cue changes. Some conventions pass out of style (though they may come back later), while others come in and find acceptance. Modern tales of private investigators don't read just like the Sherlock Holmes stories, but their connections remain obvious, since some of the tropes endure and if you read the tales in that genre between Holmes and his modern heirs, you can trace the evolutionary steps along the way.

With all of the above in mind, then, we say that **Gamma World** is a game in the tradition of primarily scientific post-apocalyptic adventure. Terrible things happened to the world, but not because of aliens or the return of magic, and enough people and lore survived to allow the possibility of new civilization emerging. In the meantime, people often lead dramatic lives, combining the challenges of survival right where they are at the moment with the ongoing quest to understand and repair the mistakes of the past.

FILM AND TELEVISION

• *Akira* (1985, 2001) — This Japanese animated movie has it all: fascinating ruins, complex schemes for organizing life in the 21st century, weird powers and lots of stuff blowing up. We *highly* recommend that you watch the 2001 re-release, with vastly superior subtitling and dubbing and cleaned up sound.

• *La Dernier Combat* (1983) — You've probably never heard of this film, but you should go see it. It's one of the first movies made by Luc Besson, who would go on to write and direct *The Professional, The Fifth Element*, and other cool action films. This one is set sometime after unknown war and disaster, with the survivors almost entirely deprived of the power of speech. They make complex schemes, get in each other's way and try to survive as best they can. It's beautiful and often very funny.

• *Independence Day* (1996) — Stuff blows up. Then more stuff blows up. Oh, and some stuff blows up. If you'd like some ideas to crib for ruins and mysterious artifacts, this is a good movie to loot.

• *Mad Max* (1979), *Mad Max 2* (a.k.a. *The Road Warrior*) (1982), *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome* (1985) — If you're going to watch just one movie while preparing to play **Gamma World**, it should probably be *Mad Max* or *Mad Max 2/The Road Warrior*. Mel Gibson plays police officer Max Rockatansky, who in the first film tries first to forestall and then to revenge a terrible attack on his little town while world civilization collapses. In the second and third films he appears as the aging hero who saves others at great cost to himself.

• *The Shape of Things to Come* (1936) — H.G. Wells wrote this story of decades-long war and eventual utopian reconstruction on principles of science and logic. From a modern vantage point, with a few more decades of technocratic horror gone by, it's hard to uncritically embrace all of Wells' vision, but there are still scenes here with tremendous emotional power. It's available on DVD and well worth watching.

• *Six-String Samurai* (1998) — If we had set the Final Wars in 1958 and set up Elvis as king of the United States and tossed out all the AIs but added in Russian bands performing surf rock and the Underworld beneath a windmill farm and if we included an overt supernatural realm so that Death could appear looking like a long-lost member of Guns & Roses, then **Gamma World** would have been just like this movie. It's… well, "gonzo" is an over-used word, but honestly, this is a gonzo movie.

• *Tetsuo: The Iron Man* (1988) — If you're anything like the developer and authors of the book you have in hand, you may have asked at some point, "Say, could I turn myself into a post-human cyborg entity using only common household implements and materials stolen from factories?" This black-and-white Japanese film answers that question. Yes, you could, but the results would be messy. This is a very stark and intense film, and you should definitely not watch it if you have a low threshold for gore. But there's no better source for the look and mentality of the cyborg on a budget.

• *Vampire Hunter D: Bloodlust* (2000) — For a movie that's in a very different part of the post-apocalyptic genre from this game, this movie has a lot to offer, from gothic spaceships to some great weird mutants. It's also a satisfying story of uncertain relationships and the extent to which we can (or can't) overcome our natures.

BOOKS AND STORIES

• *The Drowned World, The Crystal World* and *The Burning World*, by J.G. Ballard. These books each chronicle the end of the world as we know it for different reasons: by heat and flood and silt in *The Drowned World*, by infectious crystallization and the breakdown of time itself in *The Crystal World*, by endless drought in *The Burning World*. Players and GMs looking for a more than usually philosophical approach to their game should read these and draw on Ballard's fusion of characters' internal lives to the state of the perishing world around them.

• *Mother of Storms*, by John Barnes. This is an epic novel of global catastrophe unleashed by a combination

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REFERENCE AVAILABILITY

As of the time this book was last edited, all the works cited here were in print and readily available (though this may include special-ordering them from chain bookstores or online vendors like Amazon). Books and films do sometimes go out of print suddenly, but if that happens to a work that interests you, it should still be fairly easy to find thanks to having been in print not very long ago. Some important and/or engaging works don't appear in this bibliography because they're just too hard to find (and too expensive when you do), and it's cheating to tell readers anything like, "You should really read this, but… ha ha! You can't!" We've stuck to what you can go get if you'd like to.

of petty jealousies and just plain screw-ups, drawing on very solid real science and with some fresh spins on conventional villains' motivations. This is another work that provides a particularly good feel for the way we envisioned life in the Gamma World before collapse.

• *The Postman*, by David Brin. The movie adaptation is better than it's usually given credit for, but the book is a gem, composed of three novellas originally published separately and beautiful linking vignettes. Brin offers up a wealth of attitudes about the fall of civilization and the possibilities for life afterward. The antagonists in the third part are particularly good candidates for incorporation into **Gamma World** campaigns, too.

• *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, by Walter J. Miller, Jr. This is very likely the single most influential post-apocalyptic novel and well worth your reading. Long after the apocalypse, monks recover some fragments of the lost scientific age, set in motion the reinvention of civilization and finally doom themselves all over again. Very nearly all post-apocalyptic science fiction written since this book appeared in 1961 owes something to it, whether later works build on it or dissent from it.

• *Earth Abides*, by George Stewart. A thoughtful, mostly quiet book that begins with plague wiping out nearly all of the human race. The very best parts don't have any of the characters in them: they chronicle the changes to wild and civilized environments as the works of humanity decay.

• "Damnation Alley," by Roger Zelazny. Never mind the movie, and for that matter never mind the novel. First there was a short story, which has appeared in various collections of Zelazny's work and anthologies of sf. It's a bleak and brutal tale, and provides an excellence sense of life in the Gamma World right after civilization collapses.

COMICS AND GRAPHIC NOVELS

• *Yokohama Kaidashi Kikou* (*Record of a Yokohama Shopping Trip*), written and drawn by Ashinano Hitoshi. This series is currently appearing in the Japanese manga anthology *Kodansha Afternoon*, with at least two fan-created translations into English available on the World Wide Web. This is a personal favorite of the developer, a lush, beautiful, slow-moving story of a human-seeming robot and her neighbors in a village outside now-drowned Yokohama. An extremely complex story about Alpha, her long-lost creator and others unfolds gradually, mixed in with slice-of-life stories sometimes offering nothing but one gorgeous moment. This is the model for post-apocalyptic stories with drama even in the almost complete absence of action.

INTERNET RESOURCES

• http://www.emptyworld.info/ — "Empty World," created and maintained by Bryan Anderson. This is a really good place to get more suggestions for bibliography, many of them with useful commentary.

• http://oboylephoto.com/ruins/index.htm — Shaun O'Boyle photographs the ruins of modern buildings with beauty and style. Look here to see how factories, hospitals, harbors and other industrial constructions decay. It's great inspiration for any campaign that includes ruins.

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CHAPTER TWO
CHARACTERS

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When the strangers came to our village, I was just a kid — my horns were little more than nubs and I had no beard to speak of. As they came up the mountain road in their clanking, coughing iron wagon, we all ran bleating for the shelters on the granite slopes. Karithon, with his great curled horns and dangling yellowed beard, did not flee but stood atop a jagged outcropping with the fire tube on his shoulder.

He aimed the fire tube at the strangers. They stopped their vehicle and got out. The one with the purple skin and tentacles wore three bandoliers of knives. The one cloaked from head to toe and wearing a breathing mask had a longrifle on his back. The human in the armor made of washers and nuts wore on each hip a pistol bigger than I had ever seen on any raider. The girl carried no weapons I could see, but her shaved head and the tattoos that covered her lean body made me somehow think she needed none.

"We mean you no harm," said the cloaked one, his voice tinny and monotonic, though it may have been the mask.

Karithon snorted. "Then beeee on your waaayy." He did not lower the fire tube.

"We come only for information." The cloaked one's head twitched to the side once. "My files indicate the location of Shelter 187 is within 12.6 miles of this village."

Karithon said nothing for many breaths. They wanted to know the location of the Tomb of the Gods. It was said that the gods gave us hands and mouths and, if we were faithful, they would one day return to complete the task by taking our hooves and horns and making us as men. Perhaps they were heroes, here to cleanse that holy place from the monstrous blight that had overcome the tomb.

Finally he nodded slightly and pointed up the winding, broken road through the mountains. "There," he said. "Watch for the breeeaak in the western mountain face and you shall find your Shelter one-eiiiight-seven." He lowered the fire tube from his shoulder, though he kept his eyes on the strangers.

The tattooed woman thanked him courteously and she and her fellows returned to their vehicle. They were gone in moments, clanking and coughing up the broken road. I bounded out of my shelter, hopping and leaping over the rocks until I came to stand near Karithon.

"You seeent them to the Tomb of the Gods. Do you think theeyy will cleanse it and weeee will be rewarded?"

Karithon snorted. "No. They will diiiee, each one."

"Then whyyyy did you send them?"

"Thaaat is precisely why."

The strangers never returned, and neither did the gods.

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CHARACTER CREATION OVERVIEW

STEP ONE: CONCEPT

Before determining ability scores, choosing a class and so on, the player should create a working outline of the sort of character he wishes to play. Game Master (GM) input about the kind of game she intends to run (see Chapter Six: The Gamma World Campaign) and a discussion with the other players are both invaluable here. While the character may change somewhat during the process of character generation, a solid concept can both speed up character creation and focus a character into more than a mere collection of numbers.

STEP TWO: GENERATE ABILITY SCORES

Generate the character's six ability scores, using whichever method the GM settles on for this campaign.

STEP THREE: CHOOSE A GENOTYPE

Determine the character's genotype: stock human, pure-strain human, mutant, or synthetic. Apply ability score modifiers and note all special qualities.

STEP FOUR: CHOOSE A BASIC CLASS

Based upon the character's background, choose one of the six basic classes for the character's first class level: Strong, Fast, Tough, Smart, Dedicated or Charismatic. Note that at 1st level, characters receive maximum hit points for the class, two starting feats, a talent and a number of skill points equal to the class skill points plus the character's Intelligence modifier, times 4.

STEP FIVE: CHOOSE AN OCCUPATION

In addition to choosing a basic class that meets the needs of the character's background, choose an occupation from the list on page XX. Note the class skills (or skill bonuses) the character receives, as well as any bonus feats, Wealth bonus and/or Reputation bonus.

STEP SIX: ADD THE CHARACTER'S SECOND AND THIRD CLASS LEVELS

Following the pattern of pre-campaign development presented in the Basic Classes section, give the character a second class level. The following statistics are affected by class levels:

Hit Points (based upon the Hit Die of the class)

Base Attack Bonus

Fortitude, Reflex and Will Saves

Defense Bonus

Reputation Bonus

Talents (one gained from the class-specific list for every odd class level)

Bonus Feats (one gained from the class-specific list for every even class level)

Skill Points (each class level provides a number of skill points, depending on which basic class is chosen)

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After completing this process, repeat it for the character's third class level. Also, upon reaching the 3rd level, the character gains a feat.

Don't forget to roll for random mutations at each level increase! (See Chapter Three: FX for more information on this phenomenon.)

STEP SEVEN: DETERMINE THE CHARACTER'S VITAL STATISTICS

Vital statistics (see *d20 Modern*, Chapter One: Characters, "Vital Statistics" and the section later in this chapter) include:

Name

Gender

Age

Physical Appearance (including height and weight)

Personality Traits

Allegiances (if any)

Most importantly, total the character's available action points. Starting (3rd level) **Gamma World** characters have 6 action points (4 + the character's level, rounded down).

STEP EIGHT: APPLY FX

This step is especially important for mutants and synthetics (and any characters who gained random mutations during Step Six). Note that a number of FX abilities permanently alter character ability scores, saves and movement. Some FX can be purchased, such as grafts and cyberware; return to this step after Step Ten: Outfitting the Character (see below) if necessary.

FX are described in Chapter Three.

STEP NINE: ADD UP THE NUMBERS

Double check your math! Make sure that no starting (3rd-level) character possesses class skills with more than 6 ranks, or cross-class skills with more than 3 ranks. Make adjustments to ability scores, saves and so on based upon genotype, feats, talents and FX abilities.

STEP TEN: OUTFIT THE CHARACTER

Add up the character's Wealth bonus totals from class levels and occupation and roll 2d4. The total is the character's Wealth bonus. Following the rules presented in *d20 Modern*, and using the equipment lists and descriptions in this book, purchase equipment for the character. The GM may alter the list of available equipment or change purchase Difficulty Classes (DCs) based upon the needs of the campaign.

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GENOTYPES

There are four genotypes, or "races," open to **Gamma World** player characters (PCs). *Stock humans* are the descendants of the survivors of the Final Wars, who have lived, bred and prospered in the aftermath of Armageddon. *Pure-strain humans* have managed to shield themselves from the social, environmental and biological ravages of the Final Wars. *Mutants* are the vast diversity of "human-like" beings that roam the Gamma World, though as often as not they are the products (or descendants) of intentional design rather than random mutation. Finally, by the end of the Final Wars humanity had gone beyond customizing life, to creating it out of whole cloth. *Synthetics* include everything from armored robots to passably human androids, and even hybrids of man and machine.

STOCK HUMAN

Stock humans are the most common characters. They are like us in nearly every way, though they are perhaps somewhat hardier than the people of the modern Western world, and possess the same infinite potential. Despite the competition from other races, mutants in particular, stock humans may yet reclaim their position as the dominant species.

APPEARANCE

Much of the ethnic diversity found among people in the modern world has been lost since the end of the Final Wars; issues of survival forced such concepts as "race" and "ethnicity" out of the public consciousness, and subsequently out of the gene pool. Nearly any combination of human features can be found among the communities of the Gamma World. In some rare instances, such as isolated communities, old ethnic distinctions linger on.

COMMUNITIES

Most stock humans form communities ranging in size from a few hundred to a few thousand individuals. Smaller communities exist, such as farmsteads and plantations, and a few large cities dot the landscape. Given the ever-present dangers of the time, most human communities are walled and protected by some form of police force or militia. Community leaders are soldiers as often as they are politicians, and forms of government vary considerably. However, for every tight-fisted dictatorship or near-anarchist commune there are ten with effective, if imperfect, systems of government. Democratic representation, feudalism and oligarchy are the three most common forms of government among Gamma World humans.

RELATIONS

Stock humans are the most numerous inhabitants of the Gamma World, and come into regular contact with not only one another but with the other genotypes as well. While opinions regarding pure-strain humans, mutants and synthetics vary from community to community and individual to individual, human nature provides some generalities. Stock-human and pure-strain-human communities tend to have antagonistic or even adversarial relations. Stock humans find pure-strains to be aloof, elitist and insular, while pure-strains believe that stock humans have become somewhat less than human. Individuals and groups may establish trade deals and even form genuine friendships while still viewing all the rest of the other kind with suspicion.

Stock humans view mutants with varying degrees of fear, hate, envy and attraction. The more monstrous a mutant appears, the more fearful or violent the response; the opposite is true of unusually attractive mutants. Prolonged contact is the only common cure for this immediate bias; when mutants and humans live nearby, they often end up cooperating on common goals once the shock of first contact wears off. Most mid-sized and larger communities in the Gamma World have mingled populations of stock humans and mutants, particularly in the lower echelons of society.

Many stock humans believe that because synthetics were built to serve — whether in war or sport or pleasure — they remain property. These people make no distinction between the intelligent, fully self-aware android and the mindless TrashBot3000. Even relatively unbiased, open-minded humans have difficulty grasping the idea that a machine can be a living, thinking entity with goals of its own. This is particularly true of synthetics that became spontaneously self-aware, since there may be many examples of the very same machine with no intelligence at all. Of course, some synthetics think as little, or less, of humans.

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ALLEGIANCES

Stock humans tend to place families, friends and community above other aspects of life, in that order. Faith and duty are often intricately tied to those three, and follow closely. Some individuals find strength in allegiance to certain philosophical ideals such as "good" or "evil;" many others put earthly matters such as wealth and pleasure in the forefront. Overall, stock humans of the Gamma World are as varied as humans have ever been, with allegiances influenced by and shifting during their entire lives.

STOCK HUMAN RACIAL TRAITS

Stock humans are the standard by which other races are measured; they gain no special advantages or disadvantages. The number of skill points and feats a stock human gains are as presented in *d20 Modern*, and all rules regarding size, speed and other details remain unchanged. A stock human can choose any starting occupation.

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PURE-STRAIN HUMAN

Pure-strain humans are those individuals who have, through technology and physical isolation, remained largely unmolested by the ravages of the Final Wars. Hailing from remote communities or protected environments built before the Final Wars, pure-strain humans are the oldest new members of the Gamma World. Though blessed with the technology and knowledge of the previous age, pure-strain humans lack personal experience and often even theoretical information about the environments of the Gamma Age.

APPEARANCE

Pure-strain humans are modern *homo sapiens*. Some isolated pure-strain communities were composed entirely of individuals of a specific ethnicity or nationality, while other pure-strain humans are embryos frozen before the Final Wars and only recently brought to term. Pure-strain humans are very often more attractive than their stock human counterparts: Early in the 21st century, science discovered ways to tweak the genes of unborn children to provide parents with a choice of hair and eye color, height and weight. These desirable traits persist in the closed gene pools of pure-strain communities. In rare cases, a community of pure-strain humans is composed entirely of the clones of only a few members, called the Paragons. Paragons, and thus all members of the community, are usually "perfect" examples of their particular ethnicity, exemplifying the standards of beauty for the group in question at the time they were preserved. Changing social assumptions and expectations keep this beauty from having its maximum effect in winning others' interest or support.

COMMUNITIES

The communities of pure-strain humans are always isolated, and nearly always technologically advanced. Biospheres, shelters, vaults and other closed environments, known as Wombs, form the centers of most pure-strain communities. Gardens, plantations, workshops and other "practical" locations surround these central structures. Visitors to pure-strain communities are rarely, if ever, invited into the Womb. While the sort of leadership and social system will vary among pure-strain communities, the role of the Womb is a constant: The community's power structure, history, wealth and future reside in the Womb. Hereditary leadership with some sort of representative support structure is most common among pure-strain communities, though more liberal democracies and fascist autocracies sometimes appear.

RELATIONS

Isolation preserved the languages, cultures and very lives of the pure-strain humans of the Gamma World, and continues to preserve them. However, for those communities that have chosen or been forced to rejoin the outside world, there is no choice but to communicate and trade with mutants, synthetics and sullied humanity.

Raised in sheltered environments meant to preserve knowledge as well as life, pure-strain humans are more aware than others of the history leading up to the Final Wars. They therefore usually view mutants (at least genetically engineered ones) and synthetics as manufactured goods rather than as individuals with thoughts, goals and souls. Pure-strain humans often treat presumptuous or arrogant mutants and synthetics as recalcitrant children, while violent and dangerous ones are treated as pets sadly gone rabid. Pure-strain humans see non-engineered mutants and post-Final Wars synthetics, however rare, as unfortunate accidents. As to the rest, creatures and machines spawned from the horrors of the Final Wars and its aftermath have no place in the pure-strain humans' world.

Pure-strain humans' relations with stock humans are precarious. Pure-strain humans often view stock humans as unfortunate (and inferior) younger siblings who were not afforded the protection and opportunities of sheltered existence. Since most pure-strain communities are relatively small, stock humans are often brought in as workers, craftsmen and guides. On rare occasions, stock humans with particularly desirable genetic traits may be added to a breeding pool in an attempt to bolster the often inbred pure-strain pool.

It is important to note that not all pure-strain communities are likely to get along with one another. They are relics of the Final Wars and the time before; the residents often carry with them prejudices, ideals and ambitions from that era. Some pure-strain communities were built entirely around a certain ideology or prejudice, established by leaders who wanted to protect their race, creed, lineage or ideology from the ravages of the Final Wars. When two opposing groups of pure-strain humans meet, the results can be catastrophic (though the remains often make for good scavenging by stock humans, mutants and synthetics).

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ALLEGIANCES

The allegiance most pure-strain humans place above all others is that of genotype: The genetic blueprint for humanity must continue on, or human beings might as well have never existed at all. Community often comes in a close second, followed by any ideals built into the isolated community, such as religious beliefs or political leanings. Philosophical ideals such as "good" and "evil" are only important insofar as they affect the continued existence of the pure-strain gene pool and are connected to the community's ideology.

PURE-STRAIN HUMAN RACIAL TRAITS

Abilities: +2 Constitution, +2 Intelligence, –2 Strength, –2 Charisma. Pure-strain humans are, on average, exposed to much more effective educational materials and techniques than other characters in the Gamma World. In addition, medical technology has made them healthier than stock humans and extremely resistant to mutation. However, isolated lifestyles and reinforced ideals can make pure-strain humans difficult to deal with in spite of their physical attractiveness, and hard labor very often takes a backseat to technical work.

Tech Familiarity: The machinery of the Final Wars was built precisely for use by the people who are now called pure-strain humans; both the people and the tech know it, almost instinctively. Therefore, pure-strain-human characters gain a competence bonus when using hardtech and soultech (see Chapter Six for more information on technology types) equal to 2 + one-half their character level, rounded down. They suffer a penalty when using biotechnology, however — biotechnology has adapted to the Gamma World more readily than pure-strain humans, and biotech devices no longer reliably recognize their original masters. The DCs of all rolls to analyze and use biotechnology are (6 — Int bonus) higher than usual for pure-strain humans.

Reputation: Pure-strain humans are, due to their isolation, not well known among human and mutant communities. When dealing with such communities, pure-strain humans suffer a –2 penalty on Reputation checks. This penalty may be lessened or removed after repeated or continued contact with a given community.

Focused: Pure-strain humans are not as adaptable as their stock human counterparts. As such, they gain one fewer feat at 1st level than standard *d20 Modern* characters. They do, however, retain the same number of skill points.

MUTANT

In **Gamma World**, the term "mutant" refers to any and all non-synthetic, non-human creatures. When speaking of PCs, the definition is much the same, with the added distinction that they are intelligent, talking things. Despite the nearly infinite varieties of mutants, PCs will fit into one of these four basic groups.

• **Engineered Animals:** These are some of the most common mutants in the Gamma World, and the most likely to breed true and create communities of their own. Final Wars era scientists designed these "moreaus" primarily as living weapons and hyper-specialized workers and soldiers, though some breeds were made for entertainment, pleasure and experimentation. Whatever a particular strain's origins, many of them escaped into the wild during or immediately following the Final Wars and not only survived, but prospered. Almost any mammal imaginable, and a few reptiles and birds, have been elevated to this man-like status, and to varying degrees. (For information on creating moreau PCs, see *d20 Modern*, Chapter Eight: Friends and Foes, "Moreau," *Moreau Characters*.)

• **Engineered Humans:** Engineered humans were almost as common as engineered animals during the Final Wars but served different purposes. In the case of engineered humans, certain advantageous traits were either enhanced from within or grafted onto the standard human genome. Far more valuable than mere animals, engineered humans served as spies, scientists, explorers, crusaders and super-soldiers. Only the strains of engineered humans that could breed true remain in the Gamma Age, but scholars suspect that a far greater variety of sterile engineered humans existed during the Final Wars. Their genetic material may yet remain in hidden laboratories, pure-strain human arcologies or similar locations.

• **New-Men:** New-men are the result of accidental mutations caused by the rampant environmental damage of the Final Wars and ambient biotech pollutants; unlike true mutants, they breed true (at least one generation must pass on their mutated traits to earn the name new-men). Much rarer than engineered mutants and

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even true mutants, new-men represent nature's ability to adapt in even the direst of circumstances. New-men make up a very small percentage of the mutant population, and are rarely encountered in groups larger than an extended family or small village, but nonetheless qualify as a species all their own — and may very well be the inheritors of the Gamma World.

• **True Mutants:** These, the most numerous sub-group, are the result of random genetic accidents that occur because of the biotech soup floating in the air and water, the background radiation left over from the Final Wars' final volleys, and the desperate attempts by nature to put things right. Degenerate humans, elevated animals and hybrids between the two: No two true mutants are alike. Most true mutants die shortly after birth, their bodies so twisted by defects that they cannot survive. Other true mutants are those who have been blessed even as they have been cursed, whose defects do not overwhelm their advantages. Stock humans and even other sorts of mutants who metamorphose further after exposure to mutagens during the course of their lives also fall into the category of true mutant.

APPEARANCE

Mutants vary far too much to support more than the vaguest generalities about their appearance. Most mutants are bipedal humanoids, have traits displaying their mutations (cat-like eyes for night vision, thick scales for natural armor), and retain traits representative of their original stock (human or animal). Of course, none of these rules are hard and fast and any given mutant may break any or all of them.

COMMUNITIES

Mutants usually form communities of their own. This is particularly true among engineered animals and new-men; both groups prefer to take comfort and find protection among their own kind. Engineered humans live among stock humans more often than not; while in many cases their appearance may be no more innocuous than that of another strain of mutant, they fit into human social ideals more readily. True mutants find homes wherever they can. While less overt mutants are able to live among both humans and mutants, those suffering from extreme mutations are shunned by all but the most liberal of societies. Bands of such mutants, nomads living as bandits or hunter-gatherers, are common.

RELATIONS

Most mutants understand why they are feared and shunned by humans: Mutants represent both the sins of the past as well as a future in which humanity is only a historical footnote. Neither humans nor mutants often articulate it in those words, but the sentiment is there. On the human–mutant continuum, where extreme mutations (engineered or accidental) represent one pole and pure-strain humans the other, the closer in to the center, where stock humans overlap with the mildly mutated, the better relations are between human and mutant. Necessity can, of course, help balance the scale; even pure-strain humans will show grudging respect for the mutant guides that lead them to fresh water and fertile soil.

Where the relationships between humans and mutants are often defined by mutual fear, tempered by need and even "programmed" behavior, the relationship between mutants and synthetics is almost entirely undefined. Biotechnology and cybernetics were competing technologies throughout the decades before the Final Wars, united only occasionally by nanotechnological projects. Some synthetics were designed to hunt down and destroy mutants, while some engineered animals and humans were designed to quickly identify intrusion by androids and cyborgs. In the Gamma World, mutants and synthetics do not generally find themselves competing for the same space or resources, which reduces the conflict between the groups, but inherent distrust persists occasionally.

ALLEGIANCES

For new-men, engineered animals and other mutants living among their own kind, family (nuclear or extended, blood or adopted) is the most important allegiance. Family keeps one safe, provides for one's needs, and promises a future for one's offspring. To the emergent races of the Gamma World, these are the three most important aspects of life. After family, community is an important factor in the lives of mutants, as is friendship for those lucky enough to have bonded with people outside the family or community. Mutants, living in a harsh world that often looks at them like either predators or prey, put little stock in philosophical ideals, organized religions, political beliefs or complex social structures.

For engineered animals and mutants, genetically engineered behavior can determine the beliefs and values of an entire mutant strain. Even long after the masters are dead, the servants are still working

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to accomplish their tasks, and a player character saddled with such a burden would certainly provide for interesting roleplaying opportunities.

MUTANT RACIAL TRAITS

Abilities and Mutations: Mutant characters begin with 3 minor positive mutations, 1 major positive mutation and 1 minor negative mutation. Choose the positive mutations, and then roll for the negative one. (See Chapter Three: FX for the mutation descriptions.) If the negative mutation directly cancels out a positive one, re-roll it unless the player and GM agree that it's suitable to have a mutant character end up less mutated than usual.

You may also choose to add additional mutations to your character at creation time, using the following options:

- Give up 2 minor positive mutations and roll for an additional major positive mutation, for a total of 1 minor and 2 major rather than the usual 3 and 1.
- Roll for an additional minor positive mutation and an additional minor negative mutation, with the same option for re-rolling directly conflicting mutations described above.

Genetic Instability: Mutants of all sorts suffer from genetic instability. All mutant characters suffer a –2 penalty on all saves against developing new mutations (such as when exposed to environmental mutagens; see Chapter Three for

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more details). This penalty increases by –1 for every two character levels (for example, a mutant 2nd-level Strong hero suffers a –3 to her save against mutation).

Spontaneous Mutation: The biochemical soup that makes up much of the Gamma World environment can produce random effects on mutant characters. Whenever a new-man or true mutant character gains a class level or is knocked down to 0 or fewer hit points, the character must make a Fortitude save as if the character had encountered a mild mutagen or gain a new mutation. Engineered animals and humans do not spontaneously mutate in this fashion. See Chapter Three: FX for more details.

Feats and Skills: Mutant characters are not as adaptable or skilled as human characters. A 1st-level mutant character has one fewer feat and 4 fewer skill points than standard *d20 Modern* characters. In addition, they receive one fewer skill point per level than the standard *d20 Modern* character (with a minimum of 1 skill point per level).

SYNTHETIC

Even as one contingent of the world's scientists was wrestling with the gamma subunit, others were pushing the limits of robotics and computer programming. No one can say when the line between "robot" and "synthetic" was crossed; but by the height of the Final Wars, these machines, intelligent and self-aware, were fighting alongside (or in lieu of) human and engineered soldiers. Efficiency was the rule of the day, and the same self-repair and ambient power subsystems that kept the machines out of the workshops and on the battlefields keep them running in the Gamma World. Though rarer than the other playable genotypes, synthetic characters represent an unusual roleplaying opportunity.

Synthetics come in any number of shapes, types and sizes. Some were plush toys equipped with robotic endoskeletons and AI brains. Others were hulking chrome monstrosities, designed to inspire terror before laying waste to the enemy. Androids (synthetics designed to appear mostly human or at least pleasing to human sensibilities) were common as well, as entertainers, spies and articles of pleasure.

APPEARANCE

Androids are the most human-like synthetics. While close inspection reveals the synthetic nature of the android's skin, hair and eyes, to the casual observer an android appears to be a human being (even going so far as to have body temperature, breath and saliva). Maintaining the outward appearance of an android is labor-intensive and expensive; in the Gamma World, many androids (or their owners) do not have the necessary resources, so the android begins to appear ragged, worn and ill-used. Over time, an unkempt android appears more like a walking corpse than a human being.

Cyborgs, on the other hand, have an organic sheath of living tissue that heals like any other: New hair grows, wounds scab over and eventually heal and so on. The living tissue covering a cyborg is that of a normal human, usually nondescript. Since the tissue is living, however, mutations can occur in the flesh, usually limited to dermal mutations like changes in skin color and texture. In any case, the link between the cyborg and its flesh sheath is so rudimentary that it cannot control any advantageous mutations the tissue may acquire. If the flesh of a cyborg is ever completely destroyed, such as in a fire or due to heavy radiation, the cyborg looks like an animated metal skeleton.

Robots are generally vaguely humanoid (at least two legs, two arms, and one head). Some have tracks, spider-like legs or wheels for locomotion, and some have multiple arms for complex tasks, but the vast majority of robot characters look like self-propelled suits of power armor. Vanity is not a robotic trait; unless the robot's traveling companions take pains to make it otherwise, a robot character is likely to be covered in scrapes, dents, scratches and burn marks.

COMMUNITIES

Synthetics have no known communities of their own. While some can blend into human communities and others can find a place in cosmopolitan centers alongside various kinds of mutants, synthetics rarely gather in enough numbers to be considered a family, let alone a community. For the most part, free synthetics are homeless wanderers: They are nearly as valuable as spare parts as they are as working units, making any lengthy stay eventually dangerous. Synthetics in the possession of individuals or communities (most commonly but by no means exclusively among pure-strain humans) cannot be said to be a part of the community so much

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as a community asset. Rumors persist of a "robot nation," but there is no proof of its existence — and the synthetics likely wish it to remain that way.

RELATIONS

To most other thinking creatures, synthetics are at best tools and at worst weapons; they're often more or less right. Even self-awareness cannot erase the core programming of a synthetic (a feature designed very early on in the development of self-aware machines) and a synthetic character that prefers human or mutant company most likely does so because it is programmed to. Non-synthetics often fail to see this and become "friends" with the synthetic. Although appreciated, the gesture is hardly necessary from the perspective of the synthetic. Most often, synthetics are constantly being appraised and evaluated, gauged on how valuable or dangerous they may be. As often as not, synthetics reciprocate.

ALLEGIANCES

Most synthetics possess only the allegiances with which they were programmed. Self-awareness does not mean free will, and most synthetics are dedicated to one or more goals, usually political, military or scientific in nature. The fact that the political, military or scientific institution that created the synthetic no longer exists is irrelevant to its programming: A great number of synthetics spend their entire existences trying to achieve a goal or recover an allegiance long since blown to dust. In almost all cases, this leads to what is known as cyber-schizophrenia, in which the synthetic's programming begins to compensate for the unachievable goal with delusions, wild interpretations of its original programming and even hallucinations. PC synthetics can gain new allegiances, or alter existing ones, with great effort (as detailed below).

SYNTHETIC RACIAL TRAITS

Abilities and Size: The ability score modifiers for synthetic characters depend on size. Synthetics may be Small, Medium, or Large. In addition to the usual effects of size, each size carries the following modifiers:

Small synthetics have a –2 modifier to Strength and +2 modifier to their Dexterity. The base movement rate for Small synthetics is 30 feet per round. Due to their small size, they also gain a +2 genotype bonus on Balance and Hide checks.

Medium synthetics have no adjustments to their ability scores and have a base speed of 30 feet per round.

Large synthetics have a +2 modifier to Strength and –2 modifier to Dexterity. They have a base movement rate of 30 feet per round. In addition, Large synthetics increase their class Hit Die type by one (for example, from a d8 to a d10), to a maximum of a d12.

All synthetics gain a +2 modifier to Intelligence and a –2 modifier to Charisma. While their electronic brains can perform many functions much faster than organic creatures, synthetics often have difficulty relating to organics (and even to each other).

Construct: Synthetic characters are constructs. Constructs are immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease and any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects or is harmless). Due to the extreme complexities of synthetic design technology, synthetic characters are subject to critical hits and the effects of massive damage. Constructs use Charisma instead of Constitution for checks that living characters make with Con.

Damage Reduction: All synthetic characters are resistant to damage from kinetic sources, such as punches, kicks, bullets and falls. Synthetics have damage reduction 5/energy.

Self Repair: All synthetics have built in self-repair systems. Synthetic PCs "heal" at the same rate as other characters as long as the synthetic character has access to non-organic materials. The bits of junk that serve as currency in the Gamma World qualify; therefore each day of "healing" the synthetic undergoes reduces the character's Wealth bonus by –1 point. Once the character reaches +0 Wealth, it can no longer heal unless someone else pays the costs. Wealth reduced this way returns at the same rate as Wealth lost for other reasons (see *d20 Modern*, Chapter Four: Equipment, "Purchasing Equipment," *Regaining Wealth* for details). In addition, the Repair skill may be used on a synthetic character in the same manner as the Treat Injury skill is used on other characters. Treat Injury, biological medicines, and other methods for healing non-synthetic characters do nothing for synthetics and are wasted if used. **Upgradeable:** Synthetic characters may be upgraded, increasing their capabilities and inherent abilities. See the Equipment section for example synthetic character upgrades.

Narrow Focus: Synthetic characters have specific programming that determines their capabilities. Synthetic characters have a set of skills called core skills, which includes all class skills gained from their first basic class level and their chosen occupation. These skills are always considered class skills for purposes of skill point cost and maximum ranks based

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upon character level. All other skills, including class skills gained as the result of multi-classing, are considered cross-class skills for the purpose of determining skill point cost (i.e. 2 points per skill rank). The maximum rank of non-core skills is determined normally. For example, a 2nd- level Fast/ 1st-level Strong synthetic hero with Fast core skills is permitted to have Handle Animal at 6 ranks, provided that the hero has paid 12 skill points for it as a cross-class skill. Synthetic characters may expand their list of core skills with the Expanded Programming feat (see "Feats," below).

In addition, synthetic characters cannot choose certain feats after initial character generation, particularly those that represent personality development. The following feats cannot be chosen after character generation:

Animal Affinity, Athletic, Attentive, Cautious, Confident, Creative, Deceptive, Educated, Endurance, Focused, Improved Damage Threshold, Iron Will, Meticulous, Nimble, Studious, Trustworthy.

Synthetic characters may overcome this prohibition by taking the Spontaneous Algorithm feat (see "Feats," below).

Hardwired Allegiances: When the character is created, the player must, with the help of the GM, create the synthetic character's initial allegiances. These allegiances, and the goals and attitudes they imply, are hardwired into the synthetic character and can never be changed. If, during the course of its adventures, the character is forced to choose between an allegiance and another goal (such as supporting the rest of the party), the character must make a Will save at DC 30. Failure indicates that the character remains true to its allegiance.

BASIC CLASSES

The heroes of the Gamma Age possess the qualities that are renowned in the heroes of all the ages: strength, prowess, endurance, cunning, wisdom and leadership. The *d20 Modern* game system's basic classes (the Strong, Fast, Tough, Smart, Dedicated, and Charismatic heroes) quantify these heroic qualities.

PRE-CAMPAIGN DEVELOPMENT

A character's ability scores, genotype and occupation can be thought of as a foundation upon which the structure and façade of the character will be built. This construction continues for as long as the character is played (through the level-gaining process). In the beginning, however, the character must have at least a frame upon which to build.

Gamma World heroes start the game as 3rd-level characters. Each level represents a stage in that character's life and the challenges that were overcome to reach the next stage. For some characters, 1st-level might have stretched over a decade as the character herded cattle, and the biggest challenges she faced were stray calves. Another character, however, might have been forced to defend that herd against monstrous mutant wolves and bandits (or monstrous mutant-wolf bandits), moving from one character level (and life stage) to the next rather rapidly.

FIRST LEVEL: WHAT I WAS

The most important choice a player makes when devising her character's background is the character's 1st-level class. First level represents the culmination of the character's early and adolescent life (or sometimes longer). The character's natural talents (ability scores), ethnic or racial group (genotype), and early training (occupation) are all defining factors in determining what kind of hero (1st-level basic class choice) the character will be. Remember that characters gain four times as many skill points, as well as bonus feats, at 1st level. This is precisely because the achievement of 1st level in a basic class represents a lifetime of growth.

Every player should consider his choices when choosing what basic class and occupation to take at his character's 1st level. While it is easy to choose the class or occupation with the best feats or most skill points or highest saves, it is much more satisfying to make a choice that is meaningful to both the character's background and future.

SECOND LEVEL: WHAT I BECAME

The transition from a 1st-level character — an exceptional but essentially normal "person" — to a 2nd-level character occurs when the character has overcome personal challenges. When determining what class to take for the character's 2nd level, whether to remain with the same class or to branch out, the kinds of challenges the character overcame will be of utmost importance. Whereas "1st level" asked the player to consider the character's background in an abstract, distant way, "2nd level" asks the player to look at the character's past more immediately and directly. What events pulled the character out of normal life and set her feet on the hero's path?

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THIRD LEVEL: WHAT I AM

A 3rd character level is the culmination of pre-campaign development. As with the previous choices, it should reflect the character's background, experiences and personality. However, this level also represents what the character is at the start of play, and perhaps where the character is going. Players should consider both story-driven reasons (such as what events transpired that propelled the character to 3rd level) and mechanical ones (such as prerequisites for feats and advanced classes) when making this choice.

BASIC CLASSES

While the basic classes remain largely unchanged from *d20 Modern*, some unique elements of **Gamma World** demand modifications in certain areas.

EXAMPLE HEROES

The Gamma Age is a very different place from the modern world. The kinds of individuals who are representative of the class are listed here.

CLASS SKILLS

Certain skills that were common and easily acquired in the modern world are no longer so in the Gamma Age. In some cases the opposite is true; skills once thought archaic by modern people prove more important than ever in the Gamma Age. Each class has a new class skill list reflecting those differences. Note, however, that all classes retain the same number of skill points per level.

BONUS FEATS

The list of feats from which the character may choose class-based bonus feats is presented here, modified by the unique nature of the **Gamma World** setting. New feats presented in this book are denoted with an aserisk (*).

NEW TALENT TREE

Each class gains an additional talent tree which is specific to the **Gamma World** setting. The tree is detailed here; all rules regarding gaining and using talents remain unchanged from *d20 Modern*.

THE STRONG HERO

EXAMPLE HEROES

In the Gamma Age, Strong heroes are well represented among the laborers and soldiers of the world. Teamster, raider, pit fighter, freedom fighter and street thug are all common careers for the Strong hero.

CLASS SKILLS

The class skills for **Gamma World** members of this class and the key ability for each are:

Climb (Str), Craft (metalworking, structural) (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (gossip, streetwise, tactics) (Int), Profession (Wis), Repair (Int), Speak Language (none), Swim (Str).

BONUS FEATS

Bonus feats gained at 2nd, 4th, 6th, 8th and 10th level must be chosen from the following list, and the character must meet any prerequisites.

Action Hero*, Animal Affinity, Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (light), Armor Proficiency (medium), Armor Proficiency (heavy), Athletic, Blind-Fight, Brawl, Cleave, Combat Martial Arts, Combat Reflexes, Great Cleave, Heroic Focus*, Improved Brawl, Improved

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Combat Martial Arts, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Power Attack, Weapon Focus.

STRONG AS AN OX TALENT TREE

A Strong hero is capable of not only great feats of immediate might, but also displays of stamina far exceeding those of other heroes.

Strong as an Ox I: With this talent, a Strong hero has an increased carrying capacity. Add +4 to the character's Strength to determine his carrying capacity (as per the rules presented in *d20 Modern*, Chapter Four: Equipment, "Carrying Capacity").

Strong as an Ox II: The Strong hero's carrying capacity increases as if the character were one size category larger. For example, a Medium character has the carrying capacity of a Large creature. This ability stacks with Strong as an Ox I.

Prerequisite: Strong as an Ox I.

Strong as an Ox III: The character's carrying capacity is calculated as if she were quadrupedal rather than bipedal. This ability stacks with both previous abilities. For example, a Medium mutant character with a 16 Strength and this talent has the carrying capacity of a 20-Strength, Large quadruped.

Prerequisite: Strong as an Ox II.

THE FAST HERO

EXAMPLE HEROES

Fast heroes survive the perils of the Gamma Age by avoiding them. While Fast heroes are certainly combat-capable and may represent snipers, martial artists and other specialists, most **Gamma World** Fast heroes are focused on avoiding trouble rather than starting it. Thieves of various sorts, from burglars to cattle rustlers, make good Fast hero choices; so do those who catch them. Other Fast heroes can be found among those who put their skills to use entertaining the people of the Gamma Age with feats of agility: acrobats, dancers, clowns and daredevils.

CLASS SKILLS

The class skills for **Gamma World** members of this class and the key ability for each are:

Balance (Dex), Craft (mechanical, visual art) (Int), Escape Artist (Dex), Hide (Dex), Knowledge (gossip, streetwise) (Int), Move Silently (Dex), Perform (dance) (Cha), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Speak Language (none), Spot (Wis), Tumble (Dex).

BONUS FEATS

Bonus feats gained at 2nd, 4th, 6th, 8th and 10th level must be chosen from the following list, and the character must meet any prerequisites.

Acrobatic, Armor Proficiency (light), Combat Expertise, Combat Throw, Defensive Martial Arts, Double Tap, Elusive Target, Focused, Heroic Focus*, Improved Disarm, Mobility, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Snap Shot*, Stealthy, Weapon Finesse.

COORDINATION TALENT TREE

The Fast hero has extremely good hand-eye coordination and fine manipulation, making her very effective in close-quarters combat and delicate work.

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Nimble Fingers: The Fast hero gains a +2 competence bonus when using the following skills: Demolitions, Disable Device and Sleight of Hand.

Fast Hands I: A Fast hero armed with a Tiny or Small melee weapon may make an additional attack of opportunity each round, above and beyond those granted by the Combat Reflexes feat (if any). The player must spend 1 action point to activate this talent; the character does not gain the bonus dice.

Prerequisite: Nimble Fingers.

Fast Hands II: When armed with a Tiny or Small melee weapon, the Fast hero's lightning-quick reflexes allow him to negate an attack of opportunity aimed at himself by making a Reflex save against DC (10 + the total attack bonus of the attacker). If the saving throw succeeds, the attack of opportunity is foiled, missing automatically; the attempt does count against the attacker's total number of attacks of opportunity for the round.

Prerequisite: Fast Hands I.

THE TOUGH HERO

EXAMPLE HEROES

The Gamma World is an unforgiving place, and Tough heroes represent a surprisingly large portion of the heroic population; former laborers, from subsistence farmers to miners, can become Tough heroes. So can the rarer but more exotic professional athletes and "extreme" entertainers, bodyguards and wasteland survivalists.

CLASS SKILLS

The class skills for **Gamma World** members of this class and the key ability for each are:

Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (mechanical, metalworking, structural) (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (gossip, streetwise) (Int), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Search (Int), Speak Language (none), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis).

BONUS FEATS

Bonus feats gained at 2nd, 4th, 6th, 8th and 10th level must be chosen from the following list, and the character must meet any prerequisites.

Alertness, Athletic, Armor Proficiency (light), Armor Proficiency (medium), Brawl, Confident, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Guide, Improved Brawl, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Feint, Improved Mutation Resistance*, Knockout Punch, Mutation Resistance*, Power Attack, Streetfighting, Survivor*, Toughness.

CAST IRON STOMACH TALENT TREE

The Tough hero can eat nearly anything, not only gaining sustenance from it but also avoiding the usual hazards of eating spoiled foods and even poisons.

Scavenger: The Tough hero can eat spoiled foods without fear of disease or sickness. In the Gamma Age, where your next meal might have been someone else's enemy, this can be very helpful.

Eat Anything: With this talent, a Tough hero can survive on things not normally associated with a nutritious diet: paper, bark, mud and even bits of metal. Effectively, the character never needs to make a Survival check to forage for food.

Prerequisite: Scavenger.

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Cast Iron Stomach: The Tough hero gains a +4 bonus on Fortitude saves versus ingested poisons. Even on a failed save, the character suffers only one-half the normal ability damage (or other effects) of the poison; a successful save reduces the damage to one-quarter.

Prerequisite: Eat Anything.

THE SMART HERO

EXAMPLE HEROES

Now more than ever, knowledge is power, and those who possess it can become very powerful. All societies have their lore keepers, from the tellers of the moreau tribes to the archivists of the pure-strain arcologies. Knowledge alone is usually not enough, however, and those who apply knowledge are equally important: scientists, engineers and craftsmen of various kinds all contribute to their communities through the application of knowledge. Other examples of Smart heroes include criminal investigators, military intelligence and planning specialists and the bureaucrats who keep businesses, organizations and communities running.

CLASS SKILLS

The class skills for **Gamma World** members of this class and the key ability for each are:

Computer Use (data systems, operation systems, artificial intelligence, biotech systems) (Int), Craft (chemical, electronic, mechanical, metalworking, nanotech, pharmaceutical, structural, writing) (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Demolitions (Int), Disable Device (Int), Drive (Dex), Forgery (Int), Investigate (Int), Knowledge (art, behavioral sciences, business, Earth and life Sciences, history, physical sciences, politics, tactics, technology: archaic, technology: Pre-War, technology: advanced, Technology: nanotech, theology and philosophy) (Int), Navigate (Int), Pilot (Dex), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Repair (Int), Research (Int), Search (Int), Speak Language (none).

BONUS FEATS

Bonus feats gained at 2nd, 4th, 6th, 8th and 10th level must be chosen from the following list, and the character must meet any prerequisites.

Builder, Cautious, Combat Expertise, Educated, Gearhead, Improved Disarm, Improved Trip, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Meticulous, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Scavenger*, Studious, Systems Familiarity*, Tech Familiarity: Advanced*, Tech Familiarity: Pre-War*, Vehicle Expert.

TECH SAVANT TALENT TREE

The Smart hero has an innate understanding of machines and technology; she is capable of comprehending new types of technology easily, and even of modifying advanced technology.

Technophile: The Smart hero gets the benefits of Tech Familiarity: Pre-War without having to take it as a separate feat, even if she does not have the normal prerequisites for the feat.

Technophile II: The Smart hero gets the benefits of Tech Familiarity: Advanced without having to take it as a separate feat, even if he does not have the normal prerequisites for the feat.

Prerequisite: Technophile.

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Savant: So deep is the character's understanding of technology that all Craft, Knowledge and Repair DCs for creating, modifying or analyzing existing technology are reduced by –5. Note that this also affects the cost and time required to create and change items.

Prerequisite: Technophile II.

THE DEDICATED HERO

EXAMPLE HEROES

Dedicated heroes are devotees of a particular ideal, community, philosophy or even species. Among them are religious disciples, from mutant shamans to synthetic techno-priests, and activists such as the wandering healers of The White Hand or the crusading Knights of Genetic Purity. Sometimes the cause is more personal; these Dedicated heroes are defined less by an organization and more by a deeply held conviction.

CLASS SKILLS

The class skills for **Gamma World** members of this class and the key ability for each are:

Craft (pharmaceutical, visual art, writing) (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Knowledge (art, behavioral sciences, business, Earth and life sciences, gossip, physical sciences, politics, streetwise, tactics, theology and philosophy) (Int), Listen (Wis), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Ride (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (none), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Treat Injury (Wis).

BONUS FEATS

Bonus feats gained at 2nd, 4th, 6th, 8th and 10th level must be chosen from the following list, and the character must meet any prerequisites.

Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Alertness, Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (light), Armor Proficiency (medium), Attentive, Blind-Fight, Deceptive, Educated, Heroic Focus*, Iron Will, Medical Expert, Meticulous, Renown, Surgery, Track, Weapon Focus.

ZEAL TALENT TREE

The Dedicated hero is driven by an unwavering loyalty to a single group, ideal or religious belief. This is referred to as his "focus" below, but in game terms it is most often tied to the character's allegiances. The character can summon amazing inner strength to accomplish goals in the name of his focus. This is a considerable boon, and its use should be watched carefully by the GM. Only allegiances the character (and player) make an important part of the character's daily life should be considered a focus for the purposes of this talent tree.

Unwavering Dedication: When attempting to achieve a goal directly related to the character's focus, she gains a +2 morale bonus on Will saves versus fear, Sense Motive checks, and level checks to resist Intimidate attempts.

Righteous Action: The character adds an additional die to his pool when spending an action point to affect a roll that directly relates to his focus.

Prerequisite: Unwavering Dedication.

Zealot: The character is so dedicated to her focus that the bonuses for Unwavering Dedication and Righteous Action increase to +4 and +2d6, respectively.

Prerequisite: Righteous Action.

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THE CHARISMATIC HERO

EXAMPLE HEROES

Where strength of arms and arcane knowledge may fail, a rousing speech or whispered secret may prevail in the Gamma Age. Political speakers, entertainers of various stripes, merchants and peddlers, con-artists and gamblers are all examples of **Gamma World** Charismatic heroes.

CLASS SKILLS

The class skills for **Gamma World** members of this class and the key ability for each are:

Bluff (Cha), Craft (visual art, writing) (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (art, behavioral sciences, business, gossip, politics, streetwise, theology and philosophy) (Int), Perform (art, dance, keyboards, percussion instruments, sing, stand-up, stringed instruments, wind instruments) (Cha), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (none).

BONUS FEATS

Bonus feats gained at 2nd, 4th, 6th, 8th and 10th level must be chosen from the following list, and the character must meet any prerequisites.

Agile Riposte, Attentive, Confident, Creative, Deceptive, Dodge, Educated, Frightful Presence, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Low Profile, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Renown, Systems Familiarity*, Trustworthy, Windfall.

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP TALENT TREE

Charismatic heroes make skilled leaders and orators. By inspiring confidence among the populace and leadership of a community, a character with this talent tree can affect whole communities the way other Charismatic heroes affect individuals. For more information regarding community rules, see Chapter Four: Home Sector and Beyond.

In order for the Charismatic hero to use any of the following talents, the community in question must hold an attitude of Friendly or Helpful toward the character (see *d20 Modern*, Chapter Two: Skills, "Skill Descriptions," *Diplomacy*).

Community Spirit: The Charismatic hero is capable of rousing feelings of unity and patriotism among members of a community. By making a successful Diplomacy check (DC 10 + the level of the community), the character provides the community with a +2 bonus on any one ability or skill check.

Pillar of the Community: As an important, respected member of the community, the Charismatic hero can lend his own strength to the community when necessary. After spending an action point, the character chooses one of the community's ability scores and replaces it with his own corresponding ability score (for example, replacing the community's Force with the character's Strength). The effect lasts for 24 hours; during that time the Charismatic hero may take no other action than to directly support or lead the community.

Prerequisite: Community Spirit

Inspiring Leadership: The Charismatic hero leads by example. When acting in the defense or interests of the community, the Charismatic hero can give one of her action points to the community for use when it is needed most.

Prerequisite: Pillar of the Community

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OCCUPATIONS

Gamma World characters can come from a great variety of backgrounds, technological levels and societies. The occupations listed below are generalities, hinting at what the character was trained to do or had been doing before embarking on an adventuring career. There are as many kinds of scholars, for example, as there are characters. Use these occupations to provide more detailed backgrounds and personalities for your characters, rather than limit them.

Each character gets a single occupation, even if the character held a number of jobs in his past. Once the character's occupation has been chosen and its benefits have been applied to the character, it can never be changed. Any future "jobs" the character holds do not provide the character with the benefits of an additional occupation.

ADVENTURER

Adventurers in the Gamma World follow many paths: Treasure seekers loot through the ruins of the previous age, explorers cut new paths in changed lands, and trophy hunters track down everything from land whales to giant robots. While the adventuring lifestyle may or may not provide great monetary rewards, it does provide a wealth of experience.

Prerequisite: Age 15+.

Skills: Choose two of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a selected skill is already a class skill, the character receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Climb, Demolitions, Disable Device, Drive, Escape Artist, Intimidate, Jump, Knowledge (Earth and life sciences, history, technology: archaic, technology: Pre-War), Navigate, Move Silently, Pilot, Ride, Spot, Survival, Swim, Treat Injury.

Bonus Feat: Select one of the following: Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Brawl or Personal Firearms Proficiency.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +1.

ARISTOCRAT

While the form it takes varies from place to place, wealth is a universal aspect of society. The aristocrat comes from a wealthy and often politically or socially influential family or status. Pampered and bored, young aristocratic men and women often seek entertainment in the struggles and passions of the lower classes.

Prerequisite: Age 18+.

Skills: Choose one of the following skills as a permanent class skill. If the selected skill is already a class skill, the character receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Diplomacy, Gamble, Intimidate, Knowledge (gossip, history), or add a new Speak Language.

Reputation Bonus Increase: +1.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +6.

ARTIST

Life in the Gamma Age is not so debased as to undo humanity's greatest asset: the creative mind. Painters, sculptors, fashion designers and writers are only a few of the many kinds of creative professionals in the Gamma World. Most artists, however, must perform other work to survive, or are supported by wealthy patrons.

Prerequisite: Age 15+.

Skills: Choose three of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a selected skill is already a class skill, the character receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Bluff, Craft (visual art, writing), Forgery, Knowledge (art, history), Spot.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +2.

ATHLETE

Even as societies crumble and the world teeters on the edge of oblivion, some needs are basic to human existence: food, water, shelter and a good ball game. Sports range from the corrupted remnants of Pre-War games to recently invented spectacles. Athletes of the Gamma World are mostly amateurs playing in constantly shifting leagues between multiple small communities, though some larger societies do support professional sports.

Prerequisite: Strength 13 or Dexterity 13, Age 15+.

Skills: Choose three of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a selected skill is already a class skill, the character receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Balance, Climb, Jump, Ride, Sense Motive, Spot, Swim, Tumble.

Bonus Feat: Select either Archaic Weapons Proficiency or Brawl.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +1.

BOSS

In the cities and protected communities, some semblance of the old order remains. Less powerful than the aristocrats and more skilled than the laborers, the "bosses" are the managers, bureaucrats

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and business people who maintain what passes for a middle class in the Gamma World.

Prerequisite: Age 21+.

Skills: Choose two of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a selected skill is already a class skill, the character receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Diplomacy, Intimidate, Knowledge (art, business, history, politics, physical sciences, technology: Pre-War), Profession (bureaucrat, management, business), Research.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +3.

CRIMINAL

This occupation includes con artists, burglars, thieves, crime family soldiers, gang members, bank robbers and other types of career criminals. In the Gamma World, these things may not be illegal in every society (some societies don't have laws at all); but what is criminal remains criminal, even if dressed up by corrupt officials or anarchists.

Prerequisite: Age 15+.

Skills: Choose two of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a selected skill is already a class skill, the character receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Disable Device, Disguise, Forgery, Gamble, Hide, Knowledge (streetwise), Move Silently, Sleight of Hand.

Bonus Feat: Select either Brawl or Personal Firearms Proficiency.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +2.

ENGINEER

Engineers are scientists who, unlike scholars, put their knowledge to work. They build bridges, plan cities, dig mines and design locomotives. Whether trained in the enclaves of the pure-strain survivors or apprenticed under a wandering Maker digging wells in wasteland villages, engineers use the tools of science to rebuild the Gamma World.

Prerequisite: Age 18+.

Skills: Choose three of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a selected skill is already a class skill, the character receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Computer Use, Craft (chemical, electronic, mechanical, structural), Knowledge (Earth and life sciences, physical sciences, technology: archaic, technology: Pre-War), Repair, Research.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +3.

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ENTERTAINER

Like an artist or an athlete, the entertainer fills a niche; more importantly, she provides a sense of release and escape for the people of the Gamma World. Jugglers, actors, dancers, singers, acrobats, storytellers and musicians make up the majority of Gamma Age entertainers. They often travel in large troupes, moving from town to town in search of an audience.

Prerequisite: Age 15+.

Skills: Choose two of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a selected skill is already a class skill, the character receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Balance, Bluff, Craft (visual art, writing), Diplomacy, Disguise, Perform (act, dance, percussion instruments, sing, stand-up, stringed instruments, wind instruments), Sleight of Hand, Tumble.

Reputation Bonus Increase: +1.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +2.

HEALER

Doctors, medicine men and field medics are all considered healers in the Gamma World. The art of medicine is both rare and valuable, and healers must often travel long distances to reach their patients. Most healers are well known in their limited geographical region, and respected by even the most unfriendly communities.

Prerequisite: Age 21+.

Skills: Choose two of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a selected skill is already a class skill, the character receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Craft (pharmaceutical), Knowledge (behavioral sciences, Earth and life sciences), Search, Treat Injury.

Reputation Bonus Increase: +2.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +3.

HUNTER

Hunting is a highly prized skill in nearly all Gamma World societies: simple subsistence hunters provide food for needy communities; professional beast hunters keep communities safe; and hunters who make prey of intelligent beings might serve a community's darker needs. Hunting can be a lucrative profession, as well.

Prerequisites: Age 15+.

Skills: Choose two of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a selected skill is already a class skill, the character receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Climb, Handle Animal, Hide, Jump, Knowledge (Earth and life sciences), Listen, Move Silently, Ride, Search, Spot, Survival.

Bonus Feat: Select Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Personal Firearms Proficiency or Track.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +2.

LABORER

Laborers form the backbone of society. They work in factories and mines, or as farmers and construction workers, and otherwise perform the hard work that keeps life moving apace for the rest of the population of the Gamma World. Some laborers eventually become fed up and leave the dangerous, low-paying work for the hope of something better.

Prerequisite: Age 15+.

Skills: Choose three of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a selected skill is already a class skill, the character receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Craft (structural or mechanical), Climb, Drive, Handle Animal, Intimidate, Knowledge (Earth and life sciences), Repair, Ride.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +2.

PRIEST

Ordained clergy of all persuasions, as well as theological scholars and experts on religious studies all fall within the scope of this starting occupation. Faith in the Gamma World is often tied to the past, and priests must often search the remnants of the past to find a future for their flock.

Prerequisite: Wisdom 13+, Charisma 13+, Age 18+.

Skills: Choose three of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a selected skill is already a class skill, the character receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Decipher Script, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Knowledge (art, history, streetwise, theology and philosophy), Listen, Sense Motive.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +2.

SCAVENGER

A scavenger survives by picking clean the remains of the old world. More than a simple pack rat, the scavenger knows trash from treasure and can navigate even the most treacherous ruins in relative safety. Scavengers are often sought out as guides into the ruins.

Prerequisites: Age 15+.

Skills: Choose three of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a selected skill is already a

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class skill, the character receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Climb, Decipher Script, Disable Device, Knowledge (Earth and life sciences, history, technology: Pre-War), Move Silently, Search, Spot, Survival, Swim.

Wealth Bonus: +6. Note: This is a one-time bonus occurring at character generation; once the character is fully equipped, the Wealth bonus for the Scavenger occupation drops to +0.

SCHOLAR

Knowledge is a powerful tool, and scholars are those who have dedicated their lives to pursuing it. While most would prefer to remain in their libraries, surrounded by books, scrolls or data disks, most of the knowledge humanity once held is out there, buried in the ruins of Pre-War cities.

Prerequisite: Age 21+.

Skills: Choose three of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a selected skill is already a class skill, the character receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Computer Use (any), Craft (writing), Decipher Script, Gather Information, Knowledge (art, business, Earth and life sciences, history, physical sciences, politics, tactics, technology: archaic, technology: pre-war, theology and philosophy), Research, or add a new Read/Write Language or a new Speak Language.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +3.

SOLDIER

Soldiers are a common and varied lot: the impressed troops of a petty warlord, the trained guardians of a survivalist enclave, the bands of mercenaries little better than the raiders they are hired to wipe out. Every society in the Gamma World utilizes soldiers in one form or another, and often soldiers continue fighting long after they have left service.

Prerequisite: Age 18+.

Skills: Choose two of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a selected skill is already a class skill, the character receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Climb, Demolitions, Drive, Hide, Knowledge (tactics), Move Silently, Navigate, Survival, Swim.

Bonus Feat: Select one of the following: Armor Proficiency (light), Brawl, Combat Martial Arts or Personal Firearms Proficiency.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +2.

SPY

The struggle for supremacy in the Gamma World is not limited to overt warfare. On all sides

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of physical conflict — before, during, and after — the use of subterfuge supports, or even replaces, the use of guns. Sometimes freelancers hired on a temporary basis, other times dedicated agents, spies serve governments, causes and organizations, trading in lies and worse.

Prerequisite: Age 20+.

Skills: Choose two of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a selected skill is already a class skill, the character receives a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Bluff, Craft (visual art, writing), Decipher Script, Diplomacy, Forgery, Gather Information, Investigate, Knowledge (gossip, politics, streetwise, theology and philosophy), Research, Search, Sense Motive.

Bonus Feat: Select either Defensive Martial Arts or Personal Firearms Proficiency.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +2.

SKILLS

COMPUTER USE

Trained Only

Computers were present in every aspect of life before the fall of civilization. Since the Final Wars, however, computers have become rare and much coveted tools. While many remain operational in hidden bases, archivists' communities and technological societies, most inhabitants of the Gamma World never see a computer, let alone use one.

In **Gamma World**, Computer Use is an uncommon skill that cannot be used untrained. Due to the wide variety of computer systems characters might encounter, Computer Use has been divided into several categories in a manner similar to the Craft and Knowledge skills. Unlike those skills, a character with Computer Use may attempt to use a category of the skill she does not possess, but she is considered untrained as (see *d20 Modern*, Chapter Two: Skills, "Using Skills," *Untrained Skill Checks*). Essentially, possessing ranks in one category of Computer Use gives a character enough understanding of computer systems in general to try, while characters with no ranks in Computer Use would not even know where to begin.

The categories of Computer Use are Data and Operation Systems, Artificial Intelligence and Biotech Systems.

COMPUTER USE (DATA AND OPERATION SYSTEMS)

This skill encompasses the use of computer systems designed to store information and those designed to run external systems (such as weapons or remote robots).

Data is recorded on various media, either internal or external, and is accessible only using specific kinds of hardware. With this skill, a character can find data that has been hidden, encoded, deleted or even physically destroyed, given enough time and skill.

The following table lists DCs for retrieving data from a computer system. Adding information to a computer system is a simple task assuming the character is authorized to do so; it does not require a check. If the character is attempting to alter or add information to a computer system without authorization, the character must first defeat the computer's security (see *d20 Modern*, Chapter Two: Skills, "Skill Descriptions," *Computer Use*).

DC	Example Data
10	Data is kept on a non-secure computer.
20	Data is kept on a system with minimum security.
25	Data is kept on a system with average security.
35	Data is kept on a system with exceptional security.
40	Data is kept on a system with maximum security.
+5	The computer system has been damaged.
+5	The data was erased using conventional methods.
+10	The data is encrypted and the character failed a Decipher Script skill check.
+10	The data was erased using advanced methods, such as an EMP blast.

In addition to modifying and retrieving data from a system, the character may attempt to take control of the system and its remote components. The DC for entering the system is based on the security level of the system, as described above. Once in the system, the character must make a second Computer Use (data and operation systems) check to modify commands sent to remote components.

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DC	Example Command
5	Begin or cease normal operations
10	Delay the start or end of normal operations by a small amount of time (10% of the time of the normal operations), with a minimum of 10 minutes.
15	Stop operations in mid-cycle.
20	Override security or safety protocols.
30	Self-destruct.

COMPUTER USE (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

The skill of working with artificial intelligence (AI) is half computer operation and half psychology. Self-aware systems, ranging from security programs to synthetic life forms, operate under recognizable patterns but also possess creativity, resourcefulness and even impulsiveness.

Computer Use (artificial intelligence) works exactly like using the Diplomacy skill (see *d20 Modern*, Chapter Two: Skills, "Skill Descriptions," *Diplomacy*) except it only applies to self-aware machines. In addition, characters using this skill may attempt to reprogram an AI, effectively changing its personality to suit the programmer. The following table presents example DCs and changes that may be made.

DC	Reprogramming
20	Give an AI a new, compatible allegiance.
25	Remove an allegiance from an AI.
30	Give an AI an allegiance that is not compatible with its previous programming.
35	Add or delete a core programming command, such as "Destroy all mutants."
40	Fundamentally change an AI's programming, including adding and removing skills.

COMPUTER USE (BIOTECH SYSTEMS)

Due to the extreme complexity of manipulating the genome (human or otherwise), specific computer systems must be used for dealing with biotech. This skill allows a character to operate such systems (see *d20 Modern*, Chapter Two: Skills, "Skill Descriptions," *Computer Use*). Note that this skill does not impart any training in biotechnology; the skill Knowledge (Earth and life sciences) must be purchased for that purpose.

CRAFT

Craft skills are the hope upon which the future of the Gamma World rests. The ability to build and use tools saved humanity from an animalistic existence tens of thousands of years ago and it will do so again, for humankind as well as its descendants, in the Gamma Age. Because there are many extremes of technological advancement between Gamma World communities, some changes have been made to existing Craft categories and some additional categories have been added. Categories marked with an asterisk (*) are new.

CRAFT (ELECTRONIC)

Craft (electronic) includes the intricate wiring required for building robots; computer-guided vehicles and weapons; and other fusions of mechanical and electrical systems. If an object is mechanical as well as electronic, the DC for producing it is increased by +5. However, the character gains a +2 synergy bonus on the skill roll if he possesses at least 5 ranks in Craft (Mechanical).

CRAFT (MECHANICAL)

This category of the Craft skill is expanded to include steam-age technology, including clock making; the creation of black-powder firearms; and, of course, steam engines. The difficulties for creating steam-age technological devices are the same as more modern counterparts. Example: the DC for creating a locomotive engine is the same (DC 30) as it is for creating an airplane engine.

CRAFT (METALWORKING)*

This skill includes such trades as blacksmithing, weaponsmithing and metallurgy. Among less-advanced communities, Craft (metalworking) is often the highest form of technology; the tools produced using this skill, ranging from swords and shields to plows and heavy chain, mean the difference between life and death.

CRAFT (NANOTECH)*

Nanotech is arguably the most complex technology. This skill allows characters to manipulate nanotechnology and even create it. Chapter Three: FX covers nanotech and the application of Craft (nanotech) in detail.

CRAFT (PHARMACEUTICALS)

Craft (Pharmaceuticals) allows a character to produce all manner of biotech drugs. Given the proper materials, time and equipment, a character with this skill can create mutagens, mutation inhibitors,

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genetically engineered pathogens and even entirely new forms of life. Chapter Three: FX covers biotech and the use of Craft (pharmaceuticals).

DRIVE

Trained Only

Drive works as presented in *d20 Modern* (see *d20 Modern*, Chapter Two: Skills, "Skill Descriptions," *Drive*). However, vehicles are uncommon in the Gamma Age. Therefore, Drive cannot be used untrained and is, in general, a relatively rare skill. Note that Drive includes all land vehicles, including the archaic vehicles presented in the Equipment section.

HANDLE ANIMAL

Handle Animal is a relatively common skill in the Gamma Age, at least when compared to the modern world. Individuals with this skill tend to be highly valued, as they tame the animals that serve as guards, laborers and companions in Gamma Age communities.

KNOWLEDGE

Like the Craft skill, the Knowledge skill encompasses slightly different categories in **Gamma World** than in *d20 Modern*. Some information has been lost, while other information is new to the Gamma Age. The following are the Knowledge skill categories used in **Gamma World**, with details on each.

The DC of a Knowledge check is dependant upon the rarity, not value, of the information. Information dating from before the Finals Wars is very difficult to obtain. Due to the lack of long-distance communications systems, physical distance from the point of information increases the Knowledge check DC as well.

TABLE 2–1: KNOWLEDGE SKILL DCS

DC	Type of Knowledge
5	Common Knowledge
10	Generally Available Information
15	Privileged/Uncommon Information
20	Confidential/Rare Information
25	Protected/Esoteric Information
+10	Information predates Gamma Age
–5	Information originates up to 25 miles away
+0	Information originates up to 50 miles away
+5	Information originates up to 100 miles away
+10	Information originates up to 250 miles away
+15	Information originates up to 500 miles away
+20	Information originates more than 500 miles away

The various Knowledge (technology) skills support the various Craft skills. When no other Knowledge skills apply, the GM should consider allowing a +2 synergy bonus for high Knowledge (technology) skill ratings (5 ranks or more). Obviously, whether a Knowledge (technology) skill applies depends on the use of the Craft skill in question: Knowledge (technology: Pre-War) might not apply if a character is making a Craft (metalworking) roll to create a sword, but Knowledge (technology: archaic) might.

KNOWLEDGE (ART)

The study of art and art history is an esoteric pursuit in the Gamma Age and relatively uncommon. However, some archivists and scholars include the study in their survey of the Pre-War world.

KNOWLEDGE (BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES)

Behavioral Sciences includes the use and application of psychology and sociology. When applied to sentients of a different genotype than the user, there is a –4 penalty on the skill roll. When the object of study is a different type within the same genotype, such as an android using the skill on a cyborg, the penalty is only –2. Note that 5 ranks in Knowledge (behavioral sciences) grants a +2 synergy bonus on Bluff, Diplomacy and Intimidate checks.

KNOWLEDGE (BUSINESS)

The art of the deal remains largely the same, even if commodities and currencies have changed a great deal. Knowledge (business) covers business theory, historical business models and, where appropriate, business law. A character with 5 ranks in Knowledge (business) gains a +2 synergy bonus on Diplomacy checks when bargaining or conducting business negotiations.

KNOWLEDGE (EARTH AND LIFE SCIENCES)

In addition to biology, botany, geology, medicine and other "common" earth and life sciences, this skill covers the study of biotechnology and its applications. With 5 or more ranks in Knowledge (Earth and life sciences), the character gains a +2 synergy bonus on all Craft (pharmaceuticals), Survival and Treat Injury checks.

Also, this skill includes the study of the emergent life forms and environments of the Gamma Age. This skill may be used to identify plants, animals and environmental features. The

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base DC for the check is 15, modified for distance (see above) as it relates to the character's homeland.

KNOWLEDGE (GOSSIP)

Knowledge (gossip) covers both current events and what amounts to popular culture in the Gamma Age. Five or more ranks in Knowledge (gossip) grants a +2 synergy bonus on all Reputation-based recognition checks.

KNOWLEDGE (HISTORY)

The foremost form of scholarship in the Gamma Age, particularly among pure-strain-human archivists, is the study of history, both current and Final-Wars era. Note that most historical information is considered uncommon (see above), but the DC is also usually heavily modified for time and distance.

KNOWLEDGE (PHYSICAL SCIENCES)

The vast array of physical sciences includes physics, mathematics, chemistry and engineering. Unlike Earth and life sciences, the physical sciences have not been drastically altered by the Final Wars. Knowledge (physical sciences) checks, therefore, do not suffer the standard DC increase for "information predating the Gamma Age" as listed above. This Knowledge skill is not often affected by distance, either. Note that 5 or more ranks in Knowledge (physical sciences) gives the character a +2 synergy bonus on Craft checks in the following categories: chemical, electronic, mechanical and structural.

KNOWLEDGE (POLITICS)

This skill covers law and legislation, political and governmental systems, and a general awareness of current political events in the Gamma World. A character with 5 or more ranks in Knowledge (politics) receives a +2 synergy bonus on all Diplomacy checks related to political maneuvering, including swaying constituents and negotiating with other politicians.

KNOWLEDGE (STREETWISE)

This skill includes knowledge of both the "street culture" of various large communities of the Gamma Age and of the major players and events of the underworld. This skill is particularly useful in dealing with or rooting out criminal elements. Five or more ranks in Knowledge (streetwise) grants a +2 synergy bonus on all Gather Information checks.

KNOWLEDGE (TACTICS)

Knowledge (tactics) is the study of both historical battles and generals, and tactical expertise as it applies on the post-modern battlefield. Characters with this skill may attempt to recognize combatants by the tactics they employ (the check's DC is determined by the notoriety of the general, ranging from 20 for a little-known warlord to 5 for a would-be world conqueror).

KNOWLEDGE (TECHNOLOGY: ARCHAIC)

This category covers technological innovations that had once been replaced by superior technology but that have seen a resurgence of use in the Gamma Age, since most advanced technology remains buried in the ruins of the old civilization. Knowledge (technology: archaic) includes such things as the catapult, rudimentary chemistry often called "alchemy," the use of gaslight and simple applications of electricity, and up steam technology. This skill is common among communities that have built themselves up from near-barbarism since the end of the Final Wars.

KNOWLEDGE (TECHNOLOGY: PRE-WAR)

Pre-War technology covers a wide range of technological applications, ranging from the internal combustion engine and calculating machines at one end of the continuum, to ion-powered rockets and palm-sized supercomputers at the other. Essentially, technology presented as "modern" in *d20 Modern*, and some extrapolations thereof, are covered by Knowledge (technology: Pre-War).

KNOWLEDGE (TECHNOLOGY: ADVANCED)

The technological leaps that came out of the Final Wars, before the implosion of civilization, are considered advanced technology. Robotics, artificial intelligence, energy weaponry, antigravity, force fields and even teleportation all appeared during this era. Note that neither nanotechnology nor biotechnology are covered by Knowledge (technology: advanced); nanotechnology has its own skill, while biotechnology falls under Knowledge (Earth and life sciences).

KNOWLEDGE (TECHNOLOGY: NANOTECH)

Far and away the most advanced form of technology the world has ever seen, nanotechnology is in a class of its own compared to the other "era-based" Knowledge (technology) skills. Because nanotechnology is a marriage of everything from biology

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and computer science to robotics and quantum mechanics, 5 or more ranks in Knowledge (technology: nanotech) gives the character a +2 synergy bonus on the following skills: Craft (nanotech), Knowledge (Earth and life sciences) and Knowledge (physical sciences). Note that Knowledge (technology: nanotech) checks center around information that is at least uncommon and almost always suffers the +10 DC modifier for information predating the Gamma Age.

KNOWLEDGE (THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY)

Knowledge (theology and philosophy) covers the study of ethics and philosophical concepts, as well as the study of specific religions, allegiances and practices. A successful check (see Table 2–1: Knowledge Skill DCs) gives the character a +2 competence bonus on Diplomacy rolls with a group whose religious or ethical values are considered a community allegiance (see Chapter Four: Home Sector and Beyond for more information on communities).

PILOT (AERIAL MOUNT) (DEX)

Trained Only

This is a separate skill from the Pilot skill. A character uses this skill to direct an aerial mount, usually a winged creature of some sort (though some aerial mounts fly using other methods, such as telekinesis). Otherwise, this skill functions exactly as the Ride skill (see *d20 Modern*, Chapter Two: Skills, "Skill Descriptions," *Ride*).

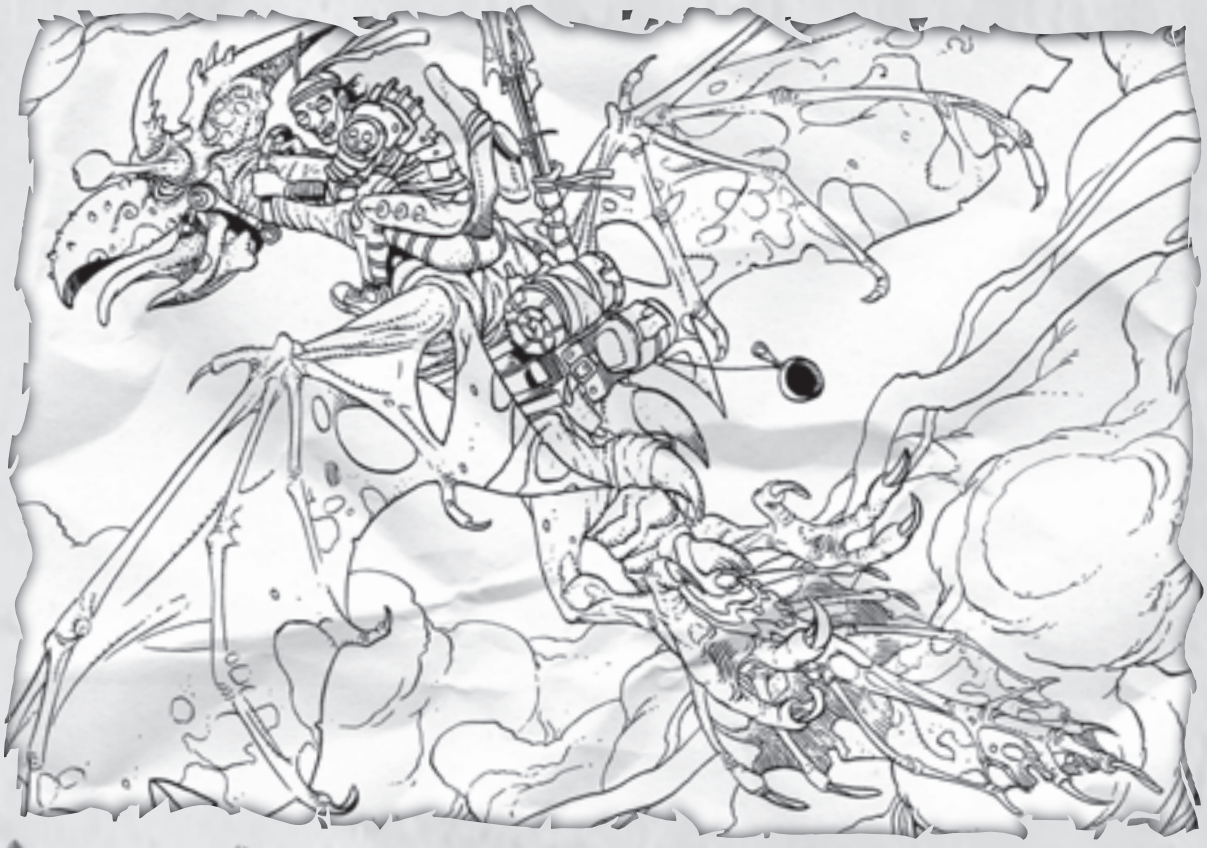
READ LANGUAGE

Literacy in the Gamma Age is not common, particularly in communities that have regressed into archaism. Literacy in the character's native language costs 1 skill point, while literacy in all other languages costs 2 skill points.

REPAIR

The Repair skill works as normal in **Gamma World**, but it is subject to penalties for unfamiliarity with different levels and kinds of technology. Any character attempting to use the Repair skill on an item or object with a biotech, nanotech, or Pre-War descriptor suffers a –4 penalty on the skill roll. The Tech Familiarity feats (see "Feats," below) remove this penalty; a community's familiarity with the technology (as evidenced by the appropriate community feat) also removes the penalty (see Chapter Four: Home Sector and Beyond).

The quality of tools the character has access to when using the Repair skill also affects the character's skill roll. Refer to *d20 Modern*, Chapter 2: Skills and Chapter 4: Equipment for more on tools and toolkits.



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RESEARCH

Research in the Gamma Age is much different and more difficult than in the modern age. The primary difference exists in the medium: Modern research assumes the presence of an internet, as well as carefully catalogued libraries and other archives. It is rare for a **Gamma World** character to have access to either, though some archivists' communities possess intranet computer systems and vast amounts of carefully collated hard data. Outside of these rare instances, characters using the Research skill find themselves rooting through incomplete and often heavily damaged community and personal libraries.

The lack of proper information sources increases both the difficulty and the time required to use the Research skill. The DCs for accessing various types of information presented in *d20 Modern* are increased by +5. The modifiers listed under the Knowledge skills apply to Research as well. In addition, the base time for using the Research skill is increased from 1d4 hours to 2d6 hours.

SPEAK LANGUAGE

The language families presented in *d20 Modern* remain largely intact during the Gamma Age. However, isolated populations tend to create particular dialects, which can cause some problems with communication between speakers of the same language. Full comprehension of a spoken language in **Gamma World** costs a total of 3 skill points. At 2 skill points, the character is fluent in the language but does not know any of the obscure dialects. This results in a –2 penalty on all Charisma-based checks with a speaker of the dialect. For a single skill point, a character can speak only an obscure dialect of a language. The character suffers a –2 penalty on all Charisma-based checks with any speaker who cannot comprehend the dialect.

SURVIVAL

For those characters who brave the wastes and wilderness between the communities of the Gamma Age, there is no more important skill than Survival. In addition to the difficulties listed in *d20 Modern*, the following chart gives some specific **Gamma World** difficulties and their DCs.

TREAT INJURY

In addition to the uses of the Treat Injury skill presented in *d20 Modern*, the skill has a number of specific **Gamma World** applications.

TREAT RADIATION POISONING

While the exchange of tactical nuclear weapons was relatively limited during the Final Wars, some weapons were fired, and regions of dangerous radiation, called "hot zones," can be found all around the Gamma World. In addition, nuclear reactors with failing or destroyed safety measures, or whose AIs have chosen to keep living sentients at bay, can produce areas of extreme radiation. Radiation poisoning occurs if the exposed character fails a Fortitude save (DC is based upon the severity of the radiation; see Chapter Four for details). Radiation poisoning can cause illness, fatigue, lesions, cancer and ultimately death. By making a successful Treat Injury check against the same DC as the failed Fortitude save, the healer can cleanse the affected character of some of the effects. Each time the check is made successfully, the affected character's level of radiation poisoning is reduced by one, and the character may make a new Fortitude save at the new, lower DC. If he succeeds, the character is on the road to recovery, and he will lose one level of radiation poisoning each day until cured. If he fails the save, the character is still poisoned, but at the new, lower level; each day the healer may make a new Treat Injury check at the lower DC.

DC	Situation
10	Identify bio- and nano-engineered plants and animals.
15	Identify areas, food and water contaminated by chemical pollution.
20	Identify areas, food and water contaminated by radioactive pollution.
25	Identify areas, food and water contaminated by bio- or nanotech pollution.
25	Find uncontaminated food and water in a chemically contaminated area.
30	Decontaminate food and water from a chemically contaminated area.
30	Find uncontaminated food and water in a radioactively contaminated area.
35	Decontaminate food and water in a radioactively contaminated area.
35	Find uncontaminated food and water in a bio- or nanotech contaminated area.
40	Decontaminate food and water in a bio- or nanotech contaminated area.

REVERSE MUTATION

Given the proper equipment and a quick response time, a healer can reverse mutations caused

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by radiation, biotech and even nanotech with the Treat Injury skill. The healer can only reverse mutations that occurred no more than 1 day previous for every 5 ranks in Treat Injury. To even attempt the check, the character must have access to a fully stocked Advanced Med Lab (available in any community with Advanced Manufacturing, as described in Chapter 4, and in well-preserved medical facilities from before the Final Wars); a full week's time is necessary to perform the proper tests and procedures (this week under a healer's care does not increase the DC of the Treat Injury check). At the end of the week, the healer makes a Treat Injury check against a DC based on the chart below.

If the check is successful, the patient is healed of the targeted mutations. During recovery the patient is extremely weak; after surgery, the patient takes 1d6 points of temporary Strength damage and 1d6 points of temporary Constitution damage), and is fatigued for one week (–4 penalty on all vigorous actions, including combat, and a –2 penalty on all other actions).

DC	Circumstance
20	Base Difficulty Class
+5	Each minor mutation to be cured
+10	Each major mutation to be cured
+5	Each day since the mutation took place
+5	*Patient is a stock human*
+10	Patient is a Mutant
–5	Patient possesses the Mutation Resistance feat
–5	Patient possesses the Improved Mutation Resistance feat (stacks with above)
–5	Advanced Med Lab is used
–5	Healer possesses at least 10 ranks in the Knowledge (Earth and life sciences) skill.

FEATS

Feats represent the special skills, talents and natural aptitudes characters can possess. Feats go a long way toward rounding out a character outside of game mechanics; a number of the *d20 Modern* feats are descriptive and suggest personality traits. In addition, feats can be used to develop a character's background. Did the character grow up in a protected, Final Wars era bunker? The character should then have the feat Tech Familiarity: Advanced by the end of pre-campaign character development. Similar assumptions can be made about weapon and armor proficiencies and vehicle operation feats.

EXISTING FEATS

The following feats from *d20 Modern* have been modified for use with **Gamma World**.

AIRCRAFT OPERATION

In addition to the types of aircraft listed, the following classes have been added:

Dirigibles: Lighter-than-air aircraft, including blimps, balloons and airships.

Hovercraft: Low-altitude aircraft propelled by turbines and other thrust-based engines, including both military (hover tanks) and civilian (hover cars) models used during the Final Wars.

EXOTIC FIREARMS PROFICIENCY

Many Final Wars era weapons are considered Exotic Firearms for the purpose of this feat. See the Equipment section, below, for specific weapon descriptions.

SURFACE VEHICLE OPERATION

In addition to the vehicle classes listed in *d20 Modern*, the following vehicle classes are included under this Feat:

Archaic Vehicles: Carts, wagons and all other muscle-powered vehicles. Note that while a Drive check is needed to avoid hazards, a Handle Animal check may be required to keep control of any beasts of burden used to pull the vehicle.

Walkers: All surface vehicles that rely on mechanical "legs" for locomotion, including all walkers listed in the Equipment section.

NEW FEATS

ACTION HERO

The character is a true hero, and has the action points to prove it.

Benefit: A character with this feat receives an additional action point every time she gains a character level.

Special: Synthetic characters cannot take this feat.

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ARMOR PROFICIENCY (ADVANCED)

The character is proficient with the use of advanced armor.

Prerequisites: Armor Proficiency (heavy), Tech Familiarity: Pre-War.

Benefit: In addition to the normal benefits of Armor Proficiency [see the description of Armor Proficiency (light) in *d20 Modern*], the character may use advanced armor with no penalty.

Normal: In addition to the normal penalties for using armor without being proficient, a character using advanced armor without proficiency incurs a –4 penalty on actions using the advanced armor's systems. See the Equipment section for details on advanced armor.

ENHANCED PROGRAMMING

This synthetic-only feat allows a synthetic character to increase the range of his core programming.

Prerequisites: The synthetic must be a multiclass character.

Benefit: Synthetics with Enhanced Programming may expand their core skills programming. When this feat is taken, the character chooses a skill that is a class skill for a character class he has at least one level in, but is not one of the synthetic's core skills (see the Synthetic entry, above, for details). This skill becomes a core skill for the synthetic and no longer costs 2 skill points per rank. The cost change is not retroactive.

Normal: Normally a multiclassing synthetic character must pay for any class skills from his second class that are not core skills as cross-class skills.

Special: This feat may be taken multiple times; it is applied to a different class skill each time.

HEROIC FOCUS

The character is cool under pressure, able to stay focused despite distractions.

Benefit: By spending an action point, the character may take 10 on a single roll, even in combat or other distracting situations. The character does not gain any other benefits from the use of this action point.

Special: This feat does not allow the character to take 10 on a skill or roll that normally does not allow it. It only allows a character to ignore circumstances that normally prohibit the use of taking 10.

IMPROVED MUTATION RESISTANCE

The character is not only resistant to the effects of mutagens, but can actually recover from the genetic damage caused by exposure to mutating agents.

Prerequisites: Mutation Resistance, Constitution 15+.

Benefit: Characters who possess this feat gain a +4 bonus on all Fortitude saves against mutation

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effects, to survive genetic surgery and all other saves related to healing damage incurred from a failed Fortitude save versus mutation. Its effects stack with Mutation Resistance and Great Fortitude.

Special: Pure-strain humans may purchase Improved Mutation Resistance without meeting the prerequisites listed for this feat.

MUTATION RESISTANCE

The character is unusually resistant to the effects of mutagens, either induced or environmental.

Prerequisites: Great Fortitude, Constitution 13+.

Benefit: This feat imparts a +2 bonus on Fortitude saves against mutation effects. Its effects stack with Great Fortitude.

NANOTECH ATTUNEMENT

The character can bond with and direct nanounits. See Chapter Three for the details of nanotechnology.

Prerequisites: Pure-strain human with Wisdom 12+, Charisma 12+ and Constitution either 8- or 14+; stock human with Wisdom 13+, Charisma 13+ and Constitution either 8- or 14+; mutant with Wisdom 14+, Charisma 14+ and Constitution 6- or 16+. (Characters with unusually weak immune systems can become "infected" with nanotech incursions that moderately healthy characters' bodies simply reject, while characters with unusually strong immune systems can survive and respond to incursions that would overwhelm and kill most people.)

Benefit: The character may assemble an initial pool of nanounits and begin creating nano effects.

PARAGON

The character epitomizes the virtues of a single basic class.

Prerequisites: 4th level in a single basic class, ability score of 17+ in the primary ability for that class.

Benefit: When a character spends an action point on an ability or skill check using the character's primary ability (for example, a Fast hero making a Dexterity check), the character may add her ability modifier twice, instead of rolling her action point dice. Example: A 5th-level Fast hero with a Dexterity of 18 spends an action point on a desperate Balance check to run across a narrow log over a deep ravine. The character has 8 ranks in Balance. The player rolls a 9, for a total of 22. The player doesn't think this result is enough for her character to avoid a plummet to his death, so she spends an Action Point. Instead of rolling a d6 and adding the result, she figures the character's Dexterity bonus of +4 in again, for a result of 26. The DC was 25, and the Fast hero makes it across.

Special: The character does not gain any other benefits from the use of this action point.

PSIONIC POTENTIAL

An otherwise normal stock or pure-strain human character can develop psionic talents.

Prerequisites: Total Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma modifiers equal to +4 or more.

Benefit: As the major positive mutation Psychic Aptitude (see Chapter Three), but the character does not experience any of the other benefits or liabilities of mutant status.

SCAVENGER

The character is proficient at finding valuables among the many caches of pure junk littered throughout the Gamma World.

Benefit: The character gains a +2 bonus on Search checks, and +2 on Profession (junk dealer) checks when attempting a to increase his Wealth bonus. (**Gamma World** Wealth is covered under "Equipment," below.)

SNAP SHOT

This feat allows a character to react quickly to oncoming attacks with a readied personal firearm.

Prerequisites: Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, base attack bonus +2.

Benefit: A character with this feat may make an attack of opportunity with a personal firearm, such as a pistol, if the following conditions are met: the character has a readied personal firearm in hand, an attacker enters one of the character's threatened squares, and the character is not threatened before the attacker enters the threatened square. The attack of opportunity must be made against the attacker who entered the character's threatened square; this is counted against the total number of attacks of opportunity the character may make in a single round.

Normal: Characters may not normally make attacks of opportunity with ranged weapons.

SPONTANEOUS ALGORITHM

A synthetic character with this feat overcomes its core personality programming and is capable of developing unique personality algorithms.

Prerequisites: Synthetic genotype, 4th-level hero.

Benefits: The synthetic character is no longer prohibited from choosing certain feats after character generation. This feat does not confer the

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benefits of any of the feats listed under the Narrow Focus synthetic genotype trait, but it allows the character to choose those feats normally.

Normal: Synthetic characters without this feat are prohibited from choosing certain feats after character generation (see "Narrow Focus" under the Synthetic listing, above, for the list of prohibited feats).

SURVIVALIST

The character is resilient and tenacious, able to live through environmental hardships that would kill lesser beings.

Prerequisites: Constitution 13+.

Benefit: The character gets a +2 bonus on all Survival and Navigate checks. In addition, when making Fortitude saves due to environmental conditions, such as exposure to extreme cold or heat, the character receives a +2 competence bonus.

SYSTEMS FAMILIARITY

The character is unusually skilled at analyzing a particular kind of physical or social phenomenon.

Prerequisites: Any two Knowledge or Technology skills at 5+ ranks each.

Benefit: The character gains a +4 competence bonus on analysis tasks involving the specified skills. The character may take this feat multiple times, specifying a different two skills each time.

TECH FAMILIARITY: ADVANCED

A character with this feat is intimately familiar with the uses and workings of Final Wars era technology, including biotech and nanotech.

Prerequisites: Knowledge (Earth and life sciences) 5+ ranks, Knowledge (technology: nanotech) 5+ ranks.

Benefit: The character gains a +4 competence bonus when analyzing soultech and livetech.

TECH FAMILIARITY: PRE-WAR

A character with this feat is intimately familiar with the uses and workings of pre-Final Wars technology, especially that which was used in an everyday capacity, such as personal vehicles, factory machinery and household appliances.

Prerequisites: Knowledge (technology: Pre-War) 5 ranks.

Benefit: The character gains a +4 competence bonus when analyzing hardtech.

For Systems Familiarity and both Tech Familiarity feats, the descriptions of technology types and rules for analyzing technology are found in Chapter Six: The Gamma World Campaign.

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VITAL STATISTICS

While a character's ability scores, genotype and class levels define him mechanically, other characteristics are used to more clearly describe the character and his place in the Gamma World. The character's physical appearance, Reputation, Wealth and allegiances are all a part of the character, as important as feats and skills.

NAMES, NAMING AND LANGUAGE

Previous editions of **Gamma World** have relied on a pseudo-fantastic linguistic decay to make the names of people and things interesting: New York became Nyork and Austin became Awestone, for example, while podogs, katkins and hoppers infested the wastes. While there is nothing wrong with this method of naming, it can sometimes cross the threshold of suspension of disbelief and lessen the overall experience of **Gamma World** for some players.

In reality, languages change over time, with new words introduced by both invention and substitution. Societies with a great deal of contact with outside cultures will see words from those other cultures enter their vocabulary, while isolated groups will internally refine their language until a unique dialect develops. **Gamma World** tends to be more full of the latter than the former, giving rise to a large number of dialects even in an area where a single, common language was previously spoken.

In addition, linguistic drift occurs over time, the sounds of vowels and consonants changing in predictable ways. The following charts show how English vowel sounds have shifted over the last five hundred years and how consonants change in pronunciation over time. They provide a starting point for players and GMs who wish to emulate realistic linguistic drift.

Vowel Shifts

long *e* (beet)	shifts to	long *i* (bite)
long *a* (bait)	shifts to	long *e* (beet)
short *a* (bag)	shifts to	long *a* (bait)
low *a* (father)	shifts to	long *a* (bait)
long *u* (boot)	shifts to	*au* (pow)
long *o* (boat)	shifts to	long *u* (boot)
au (pow)	shifts to	long *o* (boat)

CONSONANT SHIFTS

When using the following chart, begin with the original language consonant sound and move one step right on the chart for each shift. You should note that after three shifts, a consonant's pronunciation returns to its original, creating a predictable linguistic pattern. Players and GMs can use this pattern to create interesting sounding names for people, locations and items in the setting.

Original	First Shift	Second Shift	Final Shift
f	b	p	f
th	d	t	th
h	g	k	h

Players and GMs alike should keep in mind that, for the most part, all the languages that are common in the modern day survived in one form or another into the Gamma Age. The vowel and consonant shifts, and other methods of renaming, can be applied to non-English names and words as well as English ones.

AGE

Most people of the Gamma Age lack many of the basic amenities that we take for granted in the modern era. Due in large part to a lack of sanitary conditions and easily available, reliable medical treatment, the age categories in **Gamma World** are somewhat shorter than those presented in *d20 Modern*.

Age Category	Years
Young	1 to 11
Young Adult	12 to 15
Adult	16 to 31
Middle Age	32 to 49
Old	50 to 69
Venerable	70 or older

Characters who live in advanced societies, such as pure-strain human enclaves, use the age categories presented in d20 Modern. Other humans and mutants, including both natural and engineered mutants, tend to be shorter-lived than their high-tech counterparts: they become old at 39 years and

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venerable at 49 years. They mature at the same rate as pre-Final Wars people, so that rites of passage to manhood and womanhood and other activities that require characters to leave childhood or adolescence behind have the same age requirements as they would in the 21st century. Most occupations have the same age threshold as their pre-Wars counterparts, too.

HEIGHT AND WEIGHT

In addition to lacking some basic medical services, most characters living in the Gamma Age eat a great deal less than their modern counterparts; food is both less plentiful and less nutritious, and more often than not the powerful are in possession of the lion's share.

Decreased nutrition tends to create people who are smaller and lighter than those in more well-fed societies. Reduce the Height Modifier for both male and female characters from 2d10 to 2d8. This automatically reduces the average weight of **Gamma World** characters, so there is no need to reduce the Weight Modifier as well. For characters who were raised in an environment where food and resources were plentiful (such as among the aristocracy of a Gamma Age city-state), use the standard Height and Weight Modifiers.

Of course, the average heights and weights presented in *d20 Modern*, even as adjusted above, only apply to pure-strain and stock humans. Mutants may or may not hover around the human average, with many mutants being explicitly larger or smaller than normal. Generally, taller characters are also broader, and smaller characters are slighter; use the maximum Weight Modifier for larger mutants and the minimum for small mutants as a place to start. As always, let common sense be your guide.

Synthetics vary greatly in size and weight, based upon the materials from which the synthetic is built, its intended purpose and its size. Roll height and weight normally for a synthetic character, then modify it as follows:

Situation	Height	Weight
Small	x 3/4	x 1/2
Large	x 1	x 2
Light materials (ex: plastics)	n/a	x 3/4
Medium materials (ex: aluminum)	n/a	x 1
Heavy materials (ex: steel)	n/a	x 2
Light use (ex: scouting, pleasure)	x 1	x 1
Heavy use (ex: mining, combat)	x 1	x 2

ALLEGIANCE

The *d20 Modern* allegiance system provides a framework around which to build a character's values, motivations and goals. In **Gamma World**, allegiances are more than theoretical descriptors for how a character might act in a given situation; in many cases, an allegiance is a literal oath made by a character to a person or an organization with the resources and desire to see that the character maintains that oath. Even when the allegiance is more personal, such as to friends or loved ones, the allegiance both provides a benefit to the character and demands something in return.

Each category of allegiance grants certain benefits to the character and places certain limitations on the character. A limited, generic list follows, with benefits and limitations appropriate for most specific allegiances that fall within each category. GMs should feel free to adjust the advantages and drawbacks to better fit a specific allegiance, using the ones presented below as models. Remember that if all your players are clamoring to join a certain allegiance you created, though, you may want to look it over for balance.

COMMUNITY ALLEGIANCE

Characters with a community allegiance place the needs of their community above their own needs and those of their immediate families and friends (though in truth these needs often overlap). Community allegiance drives characters to not only protect their community, but to better it. Such characters adventure as a means to accomplish these goals; rather than digging through the ruins for fun and profit, community-minded characters are in search of artifacts that will provide for their community. Community allegiance, while certainly unselfish, is not necessarily "good." Characters strongly connected to their home community and dedicated to its improvement may not see any value in neighboring communities, aside from what peace or war, trade or pillage can provide for the character's home. Villains are as likely to have this allegiance as heroes, and may even hold an allegiance to the same community as the heroes, with very different philosophies on how to achieve the same ends.

GMs can use a community allegiance to tie a group of otherwise disparate player characters together, or provide motivation for what would otherwise be cardboard stock villains.

Benefits: When acting in the best interest of her community, even for extended periods of time, a hero can tap into strength she did not know she had. When

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on an adventure or mission that directly benefits her community, a character with this allegiance gains a +2 on all action point dice rolls, allowing up to a +8 from spending an action point. If a character spends the action point for another purpose, such as activating a talent or class ability, no benefit is gained.

Limitations: The Gamma World is an insular place, where communities strive for independence and one's neighbors are viewed with (often well-earned) suspicion. Characters with a community allegiance suffer a –2 penalty on all Charisma-based checks involving characters with an allegiance to another community.

ORGANIZATIONAL ALLEGIANCE

Similar to a community allegiance, allegiance to an organization places the character as a part of a greater whole, important only insofar as he is capable of moving the organization toward its goals. It is in these goals that the two differ, however. Communities usually have few aims other than survival and perhaps stable growth. Organizations, however, usually have specific goals and possess the resources to pursue and achieve those goals. Characters with allegiance to the organization are among those resources.

Organizations that qualify for this allegiance range wildly in size, scope and purpose. Examples include trade organizations, mercenary armies, scholarly institutions, secret societies, criminal networks and exclusive clubs. Chapter Six: the Gamma World Campaign presents some example organizations, the Cryptic Alliances. These are not the only such organizations in the Gamma Age, but they provide a starting point for the players' and GMs' own imaginations. PCs with allegiances to the same organization form a ready-made team with similar goals and motivations.

Benefits: Organizations of any size tend to have resources at their disposal. Characters with an organization allegiance benefit from those resources, gaining a one-time +4 Wealth bonus when the character is created and an additional +2 Wealth bonus every time the character gains a level, assuming the character maintains regular contact with the organization and the organization remains capable of doling out resources.

Limitations: Two main limitations present themselves for characters with an organizational allegiance. First, organizations have enemies, and those enemies are shared by its members. Most organizations require its members to possess some method of identification — even if it is only a secret handshake — and the organization's enemies are likely to recognize it as well. In addition, an organization requires action of its members. The organizational hierarchy will make requests or demands of the character; failure to comply strips the character of the benefits of the allegiance at best, and may cost much more.

PERSONAL ALLEGIANCE

Some individuals dedicate themselves to a single person or small group of people. Family or loved ones, strong leaders or even those who serve the character make good objects of personal allegiance. By taking this allegiance, the character actively chooses to place another person's life (or happiness or goals) before her own. Should the need ever arise, a character with this allegiance will suffer and even die to ensure the continued life, happiness or success of the object of the allegiance.

PCs can be bound together by personal allegiances. They may all be members of the same family, or the last survivors of a destroyed community. If only one character has this allegiance, the character may be the guardian of another, or even simply lovestruck. Non-player characters (NPCs) may be found on either side of the personal allegiance, depending on the nature of the relationship between the NPC and the PC.

Benefit: So long as the object of the character's personal allegiance is somehow threatened, the character receives a +1 bonus on all checks and rolls made with the goal of alleviating the threat. This should be an immediate threat: Going off to kill the mutants that might attack the village where the object of the allegiance lives is not sufficient, but going on an adventure to locate the cure for a terrible wasting disease suffered by the object of the allegiance counts.

Limitations: Characters dedicated to an individual or small group are often easily swayed and subject to the whim of that person or those people. Characters with this allegiance do not roll when confronted with an opposed Charisma check by the object of their allegiance. Instead, the character is presumed to have "rolled" a zero, and only ability score adjustments, skill, ranks, base saves and other circumstantial modifiers affect the opposed check.

THEOLOGICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL ALLEGIANCE

Moral, ethical and religious belief systems provide direction and support for characters in a way that nothing else can, even a loved one or a strong community. There are innumerable philosophies in the Gamma Age. Some ancient ones survived the Final Wars and much more through the ages. Some have appeared since the End, created by a world that

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did not make sense when compared to the belief systems of the ones before it.

This category of allegiance provides players with a great deal of latitude. A philosophical allegiance can be literally any belief, from a dogma-heavy religion to a philosophy of racial superiority to simple pacifism. The key to this allegiance is that it is a strongly held belief, not a passing fancy; and that characters with this allegiance are motivated to act (or not) by their beliefs. It is important that GMs and players discuss allegiances of this type thoroughly, since the GM must adjudicate the character's adherence to the belief in order to determine the benefits of the allegiance (see below).

Benefits: The internalized nature of this allegiance colors the character's perception of the world and fuels the character's actions. As long as the character is considered by the GM to be acting within the tenets of the character's belief system, he may, once per game session, gain the maximum benefit of spending an action point (usually +6), rather than rolling his action point dice.

Limitations: If a character with a philosophical allegiance acts contrary to that belief, or abandons it, the character is considered to be suffering from a crisis of faith. Until such time as the character resolves the crisis, all action point expenditures cost double the normal amount. For example, a character that wishes to add d6 to a d20 roll must spend two action points instead of one. A crisis of faith can only be resolved with time and roleplaying; the GM is the final arbiter of when a crisis of faith has been successfully resolved.

ALLEGIANCES AND INFLUENCE

As noted in *d20 Modern*, characters benefit from a +2 bonus on Charisma-based checks when dealing with NPCs who share the character's allegiance(s). This works in reverse as well. Certain allegiances may be opposed to one another, and if this is apparent, characters suffer a –2 penalty on Charisma-based checks involving the opposed NPCs.

ACQUIRING ALLEGIANCES

A character may acquire new allegiances during play, based upon campaign events. Usually, acquiring an allegiance is a choice players make for their characters. The GM may, however, use a newly acquired allegiance as a tool for keeping the PCs together, or moving them toward a specific goal. As always, the players and GM should discuss this beforehand and make sure that it does not conflict with the characters' allegiances or the campaign's goals.

Characters gain the benefits and limitations of a newly acquired allegiance immediately.

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DISCARDING ALLEGIANCES

As the campaign progresses, campaign events or player disinterest may make it necessary to change a character's allegiances or simply discard an allegiance. Discarding allegiances should not be something done lightly (since they do represent the character's truly dedicated loyalties and heartfelt beliefs), and players and GMs are advised to discuss the process in advance; having a character's organization turn against her or being exiled from her home community adds far more to the campaign than simply dropping the allegiance. Once a particular allegiance is discarded, the character loses all benefits of the allegiance. Some limitations may remain, however, depending on the nature of the allegiance and the how it was discarded: For example, a character that has turned his back on an organization loses access to its resources but may still draw the attention of the group's enemies for things he did as a member.

REPUTATION

Reputation in the *d20 Modern* game system represents a character's notoriety, good or bad. The rules for Reputation presented in *d20 Modern* remain unchanged here. However, the Gamma Age lacks some of the basic forms of communication present in the modern world. While limiting the "effective range" of a character's Reputation, it has the unusual side effect of amplifying it: As news turns to gossip and rumor, the truth is often exaggerated to the point of breaking.

To determine the penalty on a character's Reputation check based on distance, a starting point must first be chosen. The character's "home town" — the community out of which she operates, not necessarily the community in which she was born and raised — is the usual starting point. For a character that travels extensively during the course of the campaign, the last place where she was recognized qualifies as the starting point.

For every day's travel (on foot) from the starting point, the character's Reputation suffers a –1 penalty. If, despite the penalty, the Reputation check succeeds, the character gains a bonus on Bluff, Diplomacy or Intimidate checks (depending on the nature of the character's Reputation) equivalent to the penalty on the Reputation check, to represent the exaggeration that occurs over time and distance.

EQUIPMENT

The remnants of the Pre-War era can be found in every corner of the Gamma World: the vaults of the archivists, the ruins of lost cities, and, most importantly, the hands of the PC heroes. The Gamma Age is unique in that it has produced very little that is new. Rediscovery has returned old technologies to prominence, from swords to catapults, and the last vestiges of the previous ages find their way into the hands of heroes and villains alike.

WEALTH AND CURRENCY

Everything has value in the Gamma Age, except perhaps money. With survival ever present in the minds of inhabitants of the Gamma World, need takes precedence over want and only those things with true value, which often boils down to utility, can be used as currency.

The *d20 Modern* Wealth system is an abstract method of tracking resources, designed to alleviate heavy bookkeeping and penny-watching. In **Gamma World**, a character's Wealth bonus indicates an ability to barter, trading one useful or desired good for another. Further, the things that possess value change from community to community, depending on the needs and desires of a particular group: To desert-dwelling mutants water is more valuable than life itself, while within an archivist conclave Pre-War texts are the standard by which all other goods are weighed.

ARMOR

The Gamma Age is a dangerous time, and body armor is essential to the survival of any who brave those dangers. Armor comes in various forms, reflecting the culture, needs and technological sophistication of those who wear it. The following list represents the most common forms of armor worn by adventurers, soldiers and raiders.

ARCHAIC ARMOR

In ages long past, warriors donned armor made of leather, steel and even wood. Many Gamma Age cultures and communities have lost the knowledge or lack the industrial resources necessary to create the advanced armor of the Pre-War era and have returned to the staples of the past. Archaic armor

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is less effective than Pre-War armor, particularly against firearms. In addition, archaic armor tends be more cumbersome and restrictive.

The equipment bonus of all archaic armor is reduced by –2 versus firearms and bows (see Weapons below).

Chain Mail: A suit of interlinking metal chain or rings worn over soft leather or heavy quilted fabric, which offers a good deal of protection. Professional warriors commonly wear chain mail.

Leather Armor, Soft: Made of hide or unboiled leather, this armor offers minimal protection. It is the least restrictive archaic armor, and it is preferred by fast-moving scouts and raiders.

Leather Armor, Hard: Hard leather armor is boiled and treated to offer more resistance, with a slight increase in its encumbrance. The rank and file soldiers of primitive communities often wear hard leather armor.

Leather Armor, Reinforced: Metal studs, treated wood and bone are used to add protective value to hard leather armor, increasing its durability and further reducing the wearer's mobility.

Plate and Chain: While heavy and cumbersome, this armor provides the most protection available to primitive warriors. Forged steel plates protect the majority of the wearer's body, and chain mail worn underneath provides additional protection. The elite warriors of a primitive community wear this armor.

Shield, Small: Made of wood or metal, a small shield is used to parry incoming attacks. Shield use is common among primitive infantry and cavalry. A small shield gives a +1 shield bonus to Defense.

Shield, Large: Large shields offer significantly more protection than small ones, but are heavier and less manageable. Heavy infantry soldiers often use large shields. A large shield gives a +2 shield bonus to Defense.

PRE-WAR ARMOR

Body armor was far less common in the Pre-War era than in previous times, due largely to the use of firearms. The use of armor in the Pre-War era was mostly limited to combat soldiers and law enforcement officers.

Pre-War armor does not suffer a penalty versus firearms or bows.

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Bullet Proof Vest: Made of an advanced material known as Kevlar, the bulletproof vest offers moderate protection to the wearer. In communities with access to Pre-War caches or manufacturing capabilities, the bulletproof vest is worn by police and light infantry.

Bullet Proof Vest, Reinforced: As above, but reinforced with a strong metal plate built into the armor that covers the vital areas of the wearer. A reinforced bulletproof vest offers additional protection at very little increased encumbrance.

Combat Armor: Essentially, combat armor is a bulletproof vest that covers the entire body: jacket, pants and helmet. It offers protection comparable to plate and chain armor, but at a reduced weight. As the name implies, this armor is worn by combat troops.

Combat Armor, Reinforced: Using light metals, hard ceramics or other materials, reinforced combat armor trades some of the mobility of combat armor for increased protection. Shock troops and elite police units make use of reinforced combat armor.

Shield, Riot: The riot shield is the only commonly used shield of the Pre-War era. Made of a bulletproof and transparent material, the riot shield is large enough to protect a grown man's entire body. A riot shield gives a +3 shield bonus to Defense.

ADVANCED ARMOR

During the Final Wars, body armor came back into use as advanced materials (often manufactured through the use of nanotechnology) made armor practical again. Advanced armors are extremely rare, found in lost vaults or used by the soldiers and police of archivists' communities.

Advanced armor offers additional protection against firearms and archaic weapons, adding +2 to its equipment bonus.

Exoskeleton: An exoskeleton is a latticework of super-hard flex-metal tubes, powered by miniaturized circuitry. It offers only minimal protection; the aim of an exoskeleton is to increase the physical capacity of the wearer. A character wearing an exoskeleton gains a +4 equipment bonus to Strength, and the armor penalties on Climb and Jump checks are negated. An exoskeleton can operate for 24 continuous hours before recharging; a single power cell (see below) recharges the

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exoskeleton immediately, and the suit's solar chargers recharge the suit at a rate of one hour of operation for every hour in direct sunlight.

Gel Suit: This light advanced armor looks like a simple jumpsuit of rubbery material. Between the layers of the armor, however, is a force-dissipating gel that makes this armor extremely effective against impact damage. Against firearms, blunt weapons and even falling damage, a gel suit confers a damage resistance (DR) of 5 points. Gel suits also halve the normal damage for falling.

Hard Suit: Hard suits resemble Pre-War reinforced combat armor in both form and function but are made of far superior materials. Lighter and more protective than reinforced combat armor, a hard suit was the chosen armor of infantry across the globe during the Final Wars. A hard suit confers DR 5 against all physical attacks; it does not provide any energy resistance.

Hard Suit, Insulated: As the use of energy weapons became more common during the Final Wars, armor manufacturers modified hard suits to be more resistant to those weapons. An insulated hard suit provides 5 points of energy resistance to all energy types in addition to DR 5 against physical attacks.

Power Suit: The ultimate in advanced armor, the power suit incorporates the protective value of a hard suit with the increased power of an exoskeleton. In addition to its equipment bonus, a power suit confers DR 10, energy resistance 10, and a +4 equipment bonus to Strength. Armor penalties for Climb and Jump checks are negated. A power suit can operate for 24 continuous hours on a single charge, and it recharges like an exoskeleton.

WEAPONS

If a character's armor ensures survival, a character's weapons ensure victory. Weapons come in a wide variety of types, ranging from the simplest club to the most advanced plasma cannon. The culture, technological level and resources of a community or individual will determine the most common types of weapons used.

Archaic weapons are common among primitive communities, as well as characters on a budget.

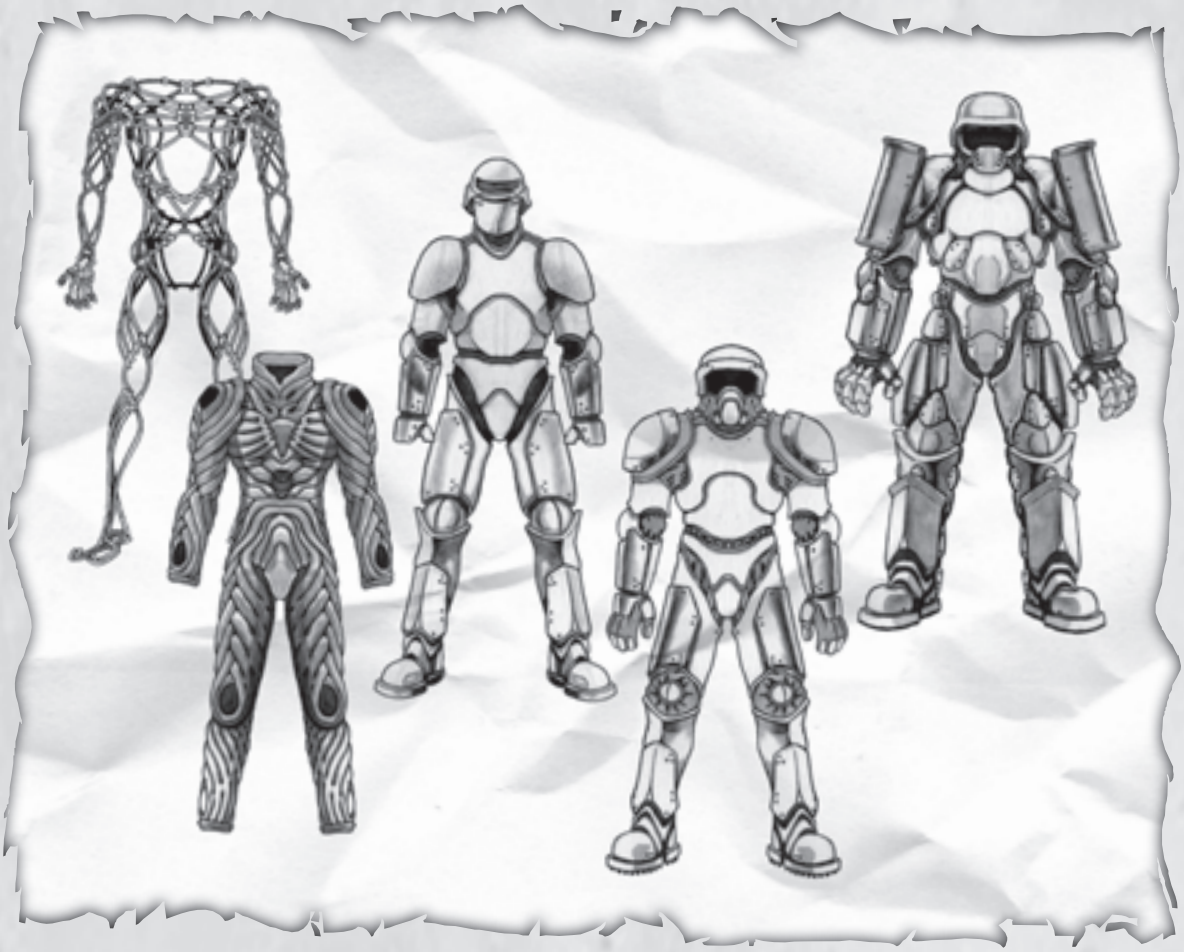

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TABLE 2–2: ARMOR

Armor	Type	Equipment Bonus	Non Prof. Bonus	Max. Dex	Armor Penalty	Spd	Weight	Purchase DC
Light Armor								
Leather Armor	Archaic	+2	+1	+6	–0	30	15 lbs.	10
Reinforced Leather	Archaic	+3	+1	+5	–1	30	20 lbs.	14
Bulletproof Vest	Pre-War	+3	+1	+5	–2	30	3 lbs.	18
Gel Suit	Advanced	+4	+2	+4	–2	30	10 lbs.	24
Medium Armor								
Chain Mail	Archaic	+5	+2	+2	–4	20	40 lbs	16
Reinforced Vest	Pre-War	+5	+3	+2	–4	25	10 lbs.	20
Combat Armor	Pre-War	+6	+3	+2	–5	20	20 lbs.	22
Exoskeleton	Advanced	+5	+2	+3	–4	20	30 lbs.	28
Heavy Armor								
Plate and Chain	Archaic	+8	+6	+1	–6	20	50 lbs.	22
Reinforced Com.	Pre-War Armor	+8	+4	+2	–5	20	30 lbs.	26
Hard Suit	Advanced	+9	+4	+1	–6	20	45 lbs.*	30
Power Suit	Advanced	+10	+4	+0	–8	30	75lbs.**	40
Shields								
Small	Archaic	+1†	—	—	–1	—	5 lbs.	8
Large	Archaic	+2†	—	—	–2	—	8 lbs.	10
Riot	Pre-War	+3†	—	—	–3	—	4 lbs.	14

* For insulated hard suits, increase the weight to 50 lbs.
** When the power suit is powered up, the effective weight of the armor is 10 lbs.
† Shields give a shield bonus to Defense, which stacks with the equipment bonus of armor.

While Pre-War and Final Wars era technology can eclipse archaic weaponry in effectiveness, there is something to be said for the simplicity of a club or sword. Pre-War weaponry, including firearms and modern versions of some archaic weapons, are more durable and generally more effective than archaic weapons, but also more expensive. Advanced weapons, while extremely deadly, are uncommon at best and more often discovered than purchased.

ARCHAIC MELEE WEAPONS

The following list of weapons expands upon those presented in *d20 Modern*.

Battleaxe: Any large, broad-bladed chopping weapon is considered a battleaxe. Raiders and primitive warriors prefer the battleaxe, for the fear it inspires as much as for the damage it deals.

Club, Great: A larger, two-handed version of the traditional battering weapon. Some great clubs are little more than tree limbs, while others are made of advanced polymers or banded with steel.

Club, Spiked: A spiked club may be a simple stick covered in broken glass, a Louisville Slugger with nails through it, or a specially designed heavy baton with a series of barbs.

Flail: A flail is a heavy ball, spiked or not, at the end of a length of chain. Some flails have multiple heads and many have a stout handle.

Flail, Great: As the flail, but larger and more damaging. A great flail must be wielded in two hands.

Gauntlet: A gauntlet is a glove made of metal or other hard material. Wearing a gauntlet makes a character's brawling attacks deal lethal damage, rather than nonlethal damage. Proficient use of this weapon requires one of the following feats: Brawl, Combat Martial Arts or Defensive Martial Arts.

Gauntlet, Spiked: A gauntlet with metal spikes or small blades protruding from it, this weapon

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PIECEMEAL ARMOR

Armor composed of bits of random materials, from tire treads to trash can lids, is a staple of the post-apocalyptic genre. Use the following rules to simulate armor of this type:

Material Type: Players can describe their piecemeal armor as constructed of any common materials. For game purposes, determine whether the material is light, moderate or heavy. Each type of material has an inherent equipment bonus and armor penalty associated with it.

Light Materials: Light materials include wood, soft metals, bone and plastic. The base equipment bonus of light materials is +1 and there is no base armor penalty.

Moderate Materials: Hard plastics, thick rubber like a tire tread, thin but hard metal plates and even treated wood can be used as moderate materials. Moderate materials have a base equipment bonus of +3 and a base armor penalty of –2.

Hard Materials: Hard materials include heavy metals, bits of Pre-War or advanced materials, and the bones of exceptionally strong or large creatures. The base equipment bonus of hard materials is +5 and the base armor penalty is –4.

Coverage: Once the materials used for the armor have been chosen, determine how much coverage the armor provides. Coverage is defined as either minimal, moderate or full; like the materials, coverage confers an inherent equipment bonus and armor penalty.

Minimal: The armor covers roughly one-quarter of the character, such as a t-shirt or arm and leg greaves. Minimal coverage grants a +1 to the equipment bonus and confers no armor penalty.

Moderate: Moderate coverage protects one-half or more of the character, such as a full set of leggings or a long jacket. The equipment bonus of moderate coverage is +3 and the armor penalty is –2.

Full: Nine-tenths or more of the character is covered by the armor, perhaps everything but the hands and face. Full coverage grants a +5 equipment bonus and confers a –4 armor penalty.

Quality: The last element in piecemeal armor is the quality of the armor itself. There are three levels of armor quality — low, average and high — which affect both the equipment bonus and armor penalty of the piecemeal armor.

Low Quality: Low-quality piecemeal armor requires a Craft (metalworking) or Craft (mechanical) check (DC 10) to make. The equipment bonus of low-quality piecemeal armor is reduced by –1 and the armor penalty worsens by +2.

Average Quality: Constructing average-quality piecemeal armor requires a Craft (Metalworking) or Craft (Mechanical) check (DC15). Average-quality workmanship does not modify the equipment bonus or armor penalty of the piecemeal armor.

High Quality: With a successful Craft (metalworking) or Craft (mechanical) check against DC 20, a character can make high-quality piecemeal armor. The equipment bonus of the piecemeal armor is increased by +1 and the armor penalty is reduced by –2.

functions as a gauntlet but adds an additional 1d4 points of damage to unarmed attacks.

Greatsword: This massive, two-handed blade inspires fear and inflicts grievous wounds. It is common only among the most powerful warrior tribes.

Hammer, Light: Whether a simple workman's hammer or a small hammer designed for war, the light hammer is a bludgeoning weapon used in one hand.

Hammer, Heavy: This is a hammer for use in two hands, ranging from a warrior's maul to a construction sledgehammer.

Handaxe: A smaller, one-handed version of the battleaxe, including hatchets and meat cleavers. A handaxe may be thrown or wielded in melee combat.

Katar: Also called a punching dagger, this weapon consists of a broad triangular blade and a handle that creates an A-form with the blade. The weapon is held in a manner that allows the character to use a normal punching motion to attack (though this weapon does not require an unarmed combat feat to use). Many warriors prefer to use a katar in each hand.

Mace: The mace is a heavy metal ball or series of flanges on the end of a long handle — a more advanced version of the club.

Pick: A pick may be a simple digging tool or a specially designed weapon. In either case, this two-handed weapon is useful in pulling mounted opponents to the ground, granting a +4 bonus on grapple checks to unhorse or otherwise forcibly dismount an enemy.

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TABLE 2–3: MELEE WEAPONS

Weapon	Damage	Critical	Dmg. Type	Size	Weight	Purchase DC
Simple Weapons						
Club, Great	1d12	20	Bludgeoning	Large	10 lbs.	5
Club, Spiked	1d8	19–20	Piercing	Medium	4 lbs.	5
Gauntlet	spec.	20	Bludgeoning	Tiny	2 lbs.	4
Gauntlet, Spiked	1d4	20	Piercing	Tiny	2 lbs.	6
Mace	1d6	20	Bludgeoning	Small	6 lbs.	8
Pick	1d6	19–20	Piercing	Medium	6 lbs.	8
Archaic Weapons						
Battleaxe	1d8	19–20	Slashing	Medium	7 lbs.	6
Flail	1d8	20	Bludgeoning	Medium	5 lbs.	8
Flail, Great	1d10	19–20	Bludgeoning	Large	10 lbs.	10
Greatsword	2d6	19–20	Slashing	Large	15 lbs.	12
Handaxe	1d6	19–20	Slashing	Small	5 lbs.	5
Katar	1d6	19–20	Piercing	Small	3 lbs.	8
Sword, Short	1d6	19–20	Piercing	Small	3 lbs.	8
Exotic Weapons						
Sword, Double	1d8/1d8	19–20	Slashing	Large	20 lbs.	16
Whip*	1d2	20	Slashing	Small	2 lbs.	6
Advanced Weapons						
Baton, Pulse*	1d4	20	Bludgeoning	Small	3 lbs.	16
Gauntlet, Shock*	spec.	20	Bludgeoning/Electrical	Small	4 lbs.	20
Knife, Monoblade*	1d6	18–20	Slashing	Small	2 lbs.	18
Sword, Monoblade*	2d6	17–20	Slashing	Medium	3 lbs.	24

* See weapon description for special rules.

Sword, Double: This weapon consists of two, long (2 to 3 feet) blades extending in opposite directions from a single handle. A character with the Two Weapon Fighting feat may attack with each end. This is an exotic weapon.

Sword, Short: Any small-bladed sword or long-bladed knife is considered a short sword. While less intimidating than a longsword, the short sword is a light and effective weapon and is relatively easy to conceal.

Whip: The whip deals nonlethal damage. It deals no damage to any creature with armor that grants even a +1 equipment bonus or at least a +3 natural armor bonus. Although the whip is kept in hand, treat it as a ranged weapon with a maximum range of 15 feet and no range penalties. Because the whip can wrap around an enemy's leg or other limb, trip attacks can be made with it. If the attacker is tripped during the trip attempt, the whip can be dropped to avoid being tripped. When using a whip, add a +2 bonus on the opposed attack roll when attempting to disarm an opponent (including the roll to keep from being disarmed if the character fails). A whip is an exotic weapon.

ARCHAIC RANGED WEAPONS

In addition to the ranged weapons presented in *d20 Modern*, the following archaic ranged weapons are seen in the Gamma Age.

Boomerang: The boomerang is a curved throwing stick designed to return to its owner in the event of a missed shot. If a character attacks and misses with a boomerang, the character may make a Reflex save against DC 15 to catch the

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returning boomerang. If the save fails, the boomerang lands 1d4 x 5 feet from the character (see *d20 Modern* , Chapter Five: Combat, "Special Attacks," *Deviation of Thrown Explosives* to determine direction). If the character fails the Reflex save by more than 5, the boomerang strikes him and inflicts one-half normal damage (rounded up). Catching a boomerang provokes an attack of opportunity. This is an exotic weapon.

Boomerang, Bladed: This weapon is identical to a normal boomerang, except that it has bladed edges. The DC for the Reflex save to catch a bladed boomerang is increased to 20, given the care the thrower must take.

Crossbow, Repeating: This weapon works exactly like a normal crossbow, but has a clip of six bolts. As long as there is ammunition left in the clip, reloading the crossbow is a free action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Longbow: Prior to the advent of personal firearms, the longbow was the most feared weapon on the battlefield. With its long range and ability to punch through armor, longbows are the ranged weapon of choice in less-advanced communities.

Net: A fighting net has small barbs in the weave and a trailing rope to control netted opponents. It can be used to entangle opponents. Throwing the net is a ranged touch attack. A net's maximum range is 10 feet, and there are no range penalties even at its maximum range. If the attack is successful, the target is entangled. An entangled creature suffers a –2 penalty on attack rolls and a –4 penalty to effective Dexterity. The entangled creature can only move at one-half speed and cannot charge or run. If the attacker takes control of the trailing rope by succeeding at an opposed Strength check while holding it, the entangled creature can only move within the 10 ft. radius circle. The entangled creature can escape with an Escape Artist check (DC 20); this is a full-round action. The net has 5 hit points and can be burst with a Strength check (DC 25); this is also a full-round action). A net is only useful against creatures between Tiny and Large, inclusive. A net must be folded to be thrown effectively. After the net is thrown in a fight, successfully or unsuccessfully, it is unfolded, and the attackers suffers a –4 penalty on attack rolls with it. It takes 2 rounds for a

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proficient user to fold a net and twice that long for a user who is not proficient to do so. A net is an exotic weapon.

Shortbow: A shortbow is small enough to be used while mounted, though it still requires the use of two hands.

Sling: A sling hurls stones, lead bullets or even small bits of heavy junk. While less powerful than a bow or crossbow, it is an effective weapon and can be built from simple materials.

Thrown Stone: Never underestimate the power of a simple rock hurled at an enemy's skull. While not fancy, the thrown stone does have the advantage of being freely available.

PRE-WAR WEAPONRY

The weapons of the Pre-War era were diverse and powerful in comparison to archaic weapons. Most of the weapons presented in *d20 Modern* are considered Pre-War weapons in **Gamma World**. Use the rules established in that book for those weapons. Note, however, that in many cases purchase DCs have changed, as reflected in Table 2–9.

ADVANCED MELEE WEAPONS

Just as battlefield armor came back into use in the Final Wars era, so too did hand-to-hand weaponry. And like armor, the melee weapons of the Final Wars were essentially highly advanced versions of weapons men had been using to kill one another for millennia.

Baton, Pulse: A pulse baton resembles a standard billy club. When activated, however, it emits a slight hum. Upon striking a target, the baton sends a vibration through her, disrupting nerve impulses to the sensory portions of her brain. Any character struck with a pulse baton must make a Fortitude save (DC 15 + the base damage dealt, not including the wielder's Strength bonus) or be blinded and deafened for 1d4+1 rounds. Pulse batons are particularly effective against machines: synthetic characters and robots do not receive a saving throw at all, and are blinded and deafened for twice the normal amount of time. A pulse baton is good for 20 uses before it needs a new power cell.

Gauntlet, Shock: This electrically charged glove delivers a severe shock to any opponent the user punches. In addition to normal damage as a gauntlet (see Archaic Melee Weapons above), the

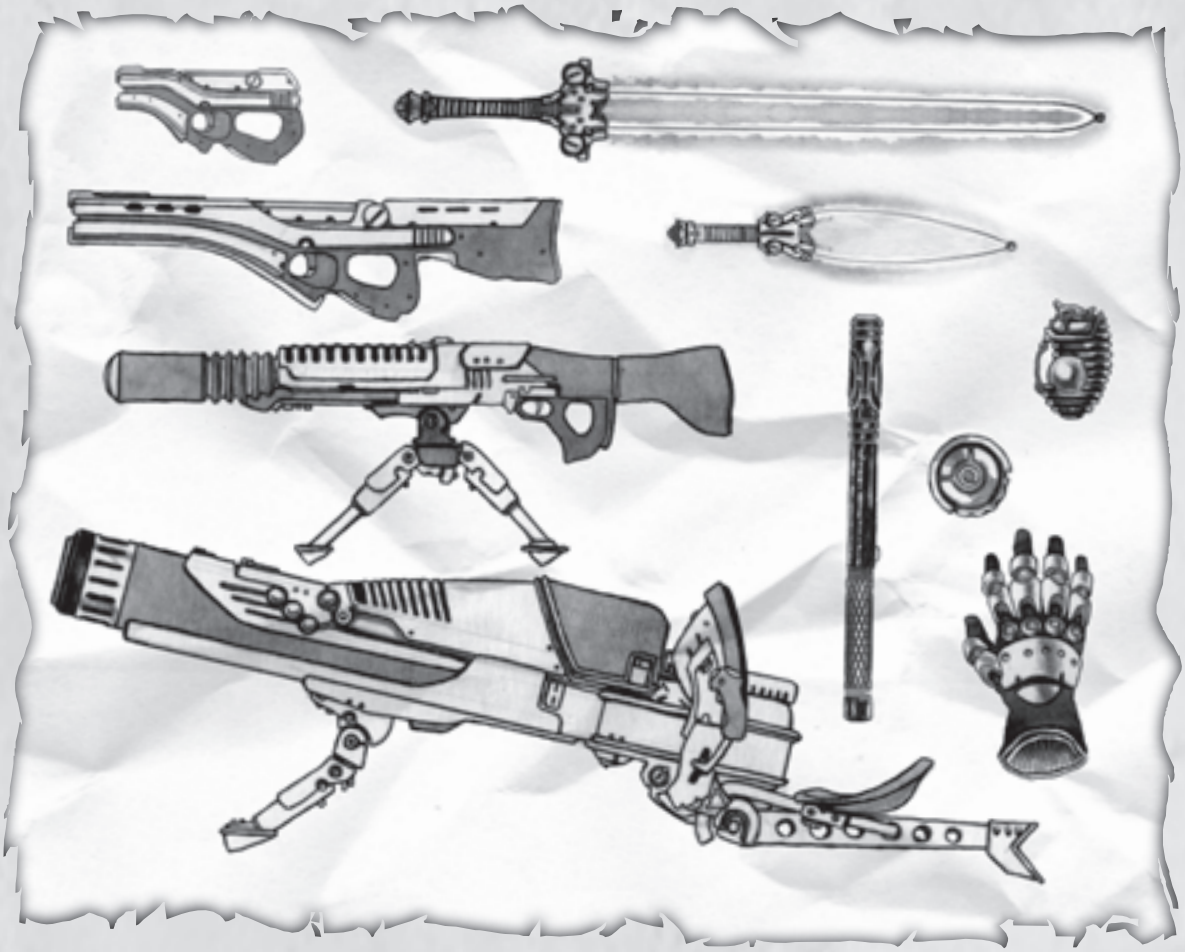

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TABLE 2–4: RANGED WEAPONS

Weapon	Damage	Critical	Dmg. Type	Range Inc.	ROF	Mag.	Size	Weight	Purchase DC
Simple Weapons									
Sling	1d4	20	Bludgeoning	50 ft.	Single	—	Small	0 lb.	4
Stone, Thrown	1d3	20	Bludgeoning	20 ft.	Single	—	Tiny	1 lb.	0
Archaic Weapons									
Bow, Short	1d6	20	Piercing	60 ft.	Single	—	Medium	2 lbs.	6
Bow, Long	1d8	20	Piercing	80 ft.	Single	—	Large	3 lbs.	8
Bow, Compound	1d8	20	Piercing	100 ft.	Single	—	Large	3 lbs.	10
Crossbow, Repeater	1d8	19–20	Piercing	80 ft.	S	6	Medium	10 lbs.	12
Exotic Weapons									
Boomerang	1d4	19–20	Bludgeoning	30 ft.	Single	—	Small	2 lbs.	6
Boomerang, Bladed	1d6	19–20	Slashing	30 ft.	Single	—	Small	2 lbs.	8
Net*	spec.	—	Entangle	10 ft.	Single	—	Medium	10 lbs.	10
Advanced Weapons									
Blaster Pistol	2d6	19–20	Electrical	40 ft.	S	30	Medium	4 lbs.	18
Blaster Rifle	2d8	19–20	Electrical	80 ft.	S	20	Large	10 lbs.	22
Microwave Gun	2d12	20	Fire	40 ft.	S	10	Large	25 lbs.	25
Plasma	6d6	20	Fire	30 ft.	Single	—	Huge	40 lbs.	28

* See the weapon description for special rules regarding this weapon.

TABLE 2–5: GRENADES AND MISSILES

Weapon	Damage	Critical	Dmg. Type	Burst Radius	Reflex DC	Range Inc.	Size	Weight	Purchase DC
Grenade, Plasma	6d6	—	Fire	10 ft.	14	10 ft.	Small	2 lbs.	22
Grenade, * Pulse	spec.	—	spec.	10 ft.	—	10 ft.	Tiny	1 lb.	20
Missile, Anti-Tank	10d6	—	Conc.	10 ft.	18	150 ft.	Large	50 lbs.	22
Missile, Heat-Seeking	10d6	—	Conc.	10 ft.	18	150 ft.	Large	50 lbs.	25
Missile, High-Explosive	12d6	—	Conc.	20 ft.	16	120 ft.		50 lbs.	22
Missile, Plasma	10d8	—	Fire	20 ft.	18	120 ft.		50 lbs.	25

* See the weapon description for special rules regarding this weapon.

shock gauntlet delivers 1d6 points of electrical damage, and the target must make a Fortitude save (DC 15 + electrical damage dealt) or be stunned for 1d4 rounds. The power cell in the shock gauntlet holds 20 charges. The rules for using a shock gauntlet are the same as for using a normal gauntlet.

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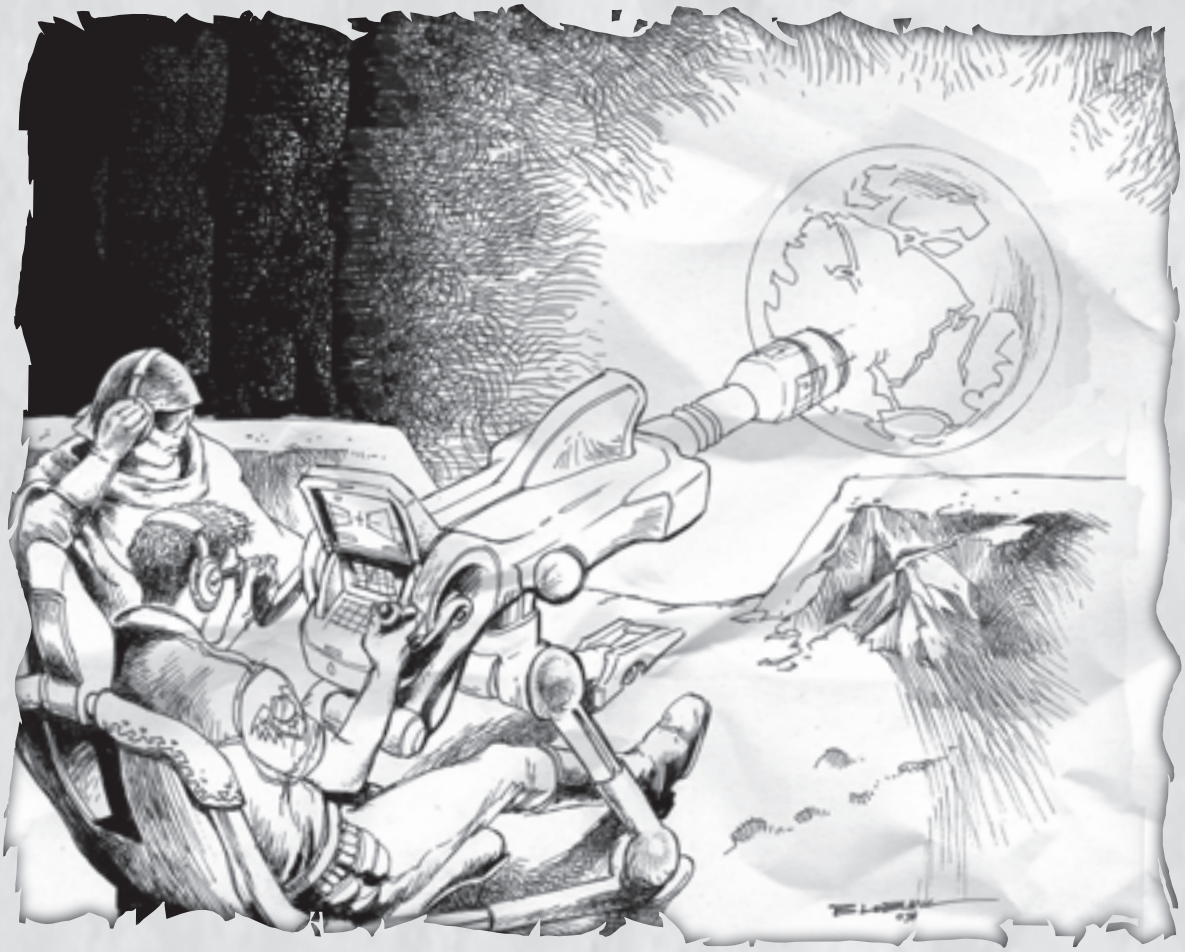

Knife, Monoblade: At first inspection, this weapon appears to be nothing more than the hilt of a knife with a few buttons on it. When activated, however, the blade, nothing more than a pair of super-strong monofilament wires attached at the end by a magnetic bead, extends to a length of 1 foot. The monoblade is exceedingly sharp; all damage reduction is halved for a monoblade. It can operate for four continuous hours before needing a new power cell.

Sword, Monoblade: This weapon is a larger version of the monoblade knife detailed above. The monoblade sword can operate for 2 continuous hours before needing a new power cell.

ADVANCED RANGED WEAPONS

Early in the Final Wars era, traditional ammunition was replaced with caseless ammunition for most of the weapons of the Pre-War era. While there is no effective difference in game mechanics, the two kinds of ammunition are not interchangeable. Later, weapons manufacturers began replacing firearms with energy weapons: plasma (super heated gas), ions (accelerated charged particles) and microwaves. Most such weapons were large scale, heavy weaponry, though personal versions of these weapons did appear before the end of the Final Wars. All of these weapons are extremely rare and very powerful, best kept out of the hands of low-level PCs (and their enemies).

Blaster Pistol: One of the few personal energy weapons to see regular use in the Final Wars era, the blaster pistol is an ion weapon. Damage from a blaster pistol is considered electrical damage. A blaster pistol power cell holds 30 shots at full charge.

Blaster Rifle: The bigger cousin of the blaster pistol, the blaster rifle has an increased range and emits a slightly more powerful blast. The power cell in a blaster rifle is good for 20 shots.

Grenade, Plasma: Searing, superheated gas fills the blast radius of a plasma grenade. The damage dealt by a plasma grenade is considered energy damage.

Grenade, Pulse: Characters and creatures caught in the radius of a pulse grenade are affected as if they had been hit by a pulse baton (see above).

Microwave Gun: This tripod-mounted, rifle-like weapon emits a focused stream of microwaves. The microwave energy cooks the target from the inside

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WHAT SORT OF WEAPON IS THIS, ANYWAY?

Weapons in the advanced categories count as exotic weapons for purposes of proficiency, unless the character belongs to a community with the engineering feat required to make that sort of weapon (see Chapter Four) or the character has the required Tech Familiarity feat (see above). In that case, the weapon belongs to the same category as comparable weapons requiring less sophisticated technology — simple weapons, personal firearms and so on. A character who learns to use an advanced weapon with the exotic proficiencies does not have to acquire the general lore required for tech familiarity first.

out, bypassing all armor. In addition, if the damage dealt by a microwave gun exceeds the target's massive damage threshold, the target must make a Fortitude save against DC 20 or suffer the effects of massive damage. A character attempting to fire a microwave gun without a tripod suffers a –4 to hit. A microwave guns depletes its power cell after only 10 shots.

Plasma Cannon: A heavy antitank weapon, the plasma cannon is designed to immobilize large armored vehicles. It consists of a bipod-mounted, long-barreled rifle, far too large for an individual to carry, with an attached seat and control mechanism. When fired, the cannon emits a ball of superheated gas that explodes on impact. Each round fired requires a separate charging unit, or shell. Due to the heat generated by the cannon, it can only be fired every 3 rounds. If the plasma cannon is fired more often than this, it shuts down and cannot be restarted for 10 minutes.

GENERAL EQUIPMENT

Weapons and armor are not the only items people of the Gamma Age find useful or necessary for survival. The following equipment supplements the list presented in *d20 Modern*, much of which is available in one form or another in the Gamma World.

BAGS AND BOXES

Crate: This is a large wooden or metal box, approximately 5 feet long, 2 feet wide, and 2 feet deep. Most have handles or rope loops on either end to for easier carrying. A crate can hold up to 500 lbs.

Pouch: A pouch is worn on a belt or on an attached strap. Pouches are relatively small (6 inches cubed) and can carry 5 lbs. of goods.

Sack, Large: A cloth, leather or plastic bag for carrying goods. A large sack can carry 40 lbs. of goods.

Sack, Small: A smaller version of the sack that holds 20 lbs. of goods.

CLOTHING

Clothes vary by culture and climate. The vast majority of the Gamma Age population gets by with one or two outfits at a time throughout their whole lives, though the wealthy might change clothes six times a day as it suits them.

Clothes, Outdoor: Outdoor clothes are designed to provide the best possible comfort, as well as some small amount of protection, for a specific environment: desert, swamp, cold and so on. In that correct environment, outdoor clothes grant a +2 equipment bonus on Fortitude saves to resist environmental effects.

Clothes, Extravagant: Leaders, aristocrats and other wealthy people often indulge in extremely extravagant clothing styles. While of little practical use outside courts and parties, extravagant clothes do grant a +2 equipment bonus on Diplomacy checks involving situations or individuals where such fashions would come into play, at the GM's discretion.

Jumpsuit, Smart: A product of the Final Wars era that was not limited to soldiers, the smart jumpsuit is a clothing article with built in nano-fibers and microelectronics. A smart jumpsuit is designed to adjust temperature, rigidity and tightness relative to environmental conditions; it provides a +2 equipment bonus on all Fortitude saves to resist environmental hazards except radiation, and biotech or nanotech exposure. A smart jumpsuit may be worn under light or medium armor. The systems of a smart jumpsuit are powered by the wearer's body heat so the suit never needs to be recharged.

COMPUTERS AND ELECTRONICS

Computers and electronics are far rarer in the Gamma Age than they were in previous ages. Most working computers are found in the hands of pure-strain human archivists or other groups with access to caches of well-preserved Pre-War or Final Wars era hardware.

Datapad: This palm-sized computer can hold a massive amount of data and has built-in search features to allow for quick information access. Each datapad has an equipment bonus rating for each Knowledge sub-skill, with some datapads covering only a single area of knowledge and others covering

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a vast array of information. In any case, a datapad can grant no more than a +4 equipment bonus to a single Knowledge area, and no more than +12 in total bonuses. For example, a datapad could offer a +4 equipment bonus each to Knowledge (Earth and life sciences), Knowledge (physical sciences) and Knowledge (technology: Pre-War). The total bonuses of the datapad are added to the base purchase DC listed for the item. In order to access the datapad and receive the skill bonus, a character must make a Computer Use (data and operation systems) roll at DC (10 + the total bonus of the datapad). This is a full-round action. The datapad requires a power cell for use and has a built in solar recharger; one power cell provides essentially limitless use.

A datapad may also be used to control remote operations with the Computer Use (data and operations systems) skill. When making checks using that skill, the datapad confers a +2 equipment bonus on the roll.

Power Cell: During the Final Wars era, increased reliance on autonomous electronics, energy weapons and personal technology created the need for universal power supplies. The end result was the power cell. A power cell is a cylinder 1 inch long and a half-inch in diameter, used in everything from blaster pistols to datapads. They hold a charge with high efficiency, and are rechargeable. Power cells are perhaps the most coveted items of the Gamma Age; a stockpile of Final Wars weapons will do a warlord no good if there is no way to get them up and running. GMs should be careful to keep power cells, and their chargers, as rare as necessary to keep the flavor of his particular campaign intact.

Power Cell Charger: The power cell charger is a small unit that can charge up to six power cells simultaneously. If the charger can be plugged into a power source, even a working wall outlet, the cells within regain 1 hour's charge (or shot, for weapon power cells) every 10 minutes. If the charger must use its solar conversion system, the power cells are charged on an hour per hour basis: 3 hours on solar charge gives the cell 3 hours of operation time, or three shots for a weapon power cell.

MEDICAL EQUIPMENT AND PHARMACEUTICALS

Healing is a major concern in the Gamma Age. While some advanced medical knowledge exists, it rests in the hands of the very few. Most denizens of the Gamma Age must make do with limited, archaic medical practices when they have any at all. All of the medical equipment and drugs presented below are found only in caches of Final Wars era supplies or in the hands of technologically advanced communities.

Air-Hypo: A method of administering drugs into the system using highly concentrated blasts of air. Air-hypos require a power cell, which is good for 100 uses. Because air-hypos do not use an air cartridge of their own, they can be dangerous when used in unsafe environments. In any environment where a character must make a Fortitude save versus chemical or biological elements, using an air-hypo forces an immediate save at a –4 penalty. To use an air-hypo, a character must make a Treat Injury check (DC 10). Note that Tech Familiarity: Advanced is required to make this check without the standard –4 penalty (see Chapter Six).

Antitoxin: Antitoxin is designed to counteract poison, whether natural or engineered. Administered with a hypodermic needle or air-hypo, it grants a +4 bonus on Fortitude saves versus the secondary effects of any poison.

Bandage, Aerosol: Aerosol bandages come in small cans; each can has enough aerosol for six applications. Used to treat abrasions and other flesh wounds by spraying an antibacterial sealant over the wound, an aerosol bandage heals 1d6 hit points of damage per use.

Boost: This pharmaceutical is administered using a hypodermic needle or an air-hypo. The recipient gains a temporary increase in physical prowess as the drug stimulates the adrenal gland. A character under the effects of Boost gains a +4 pharmaceutical bonus to Strength and Dexterity, and 2d4 temporary hit points. The effects last 1d4 minutes. When the effect wears off, the affected character must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or take damage equal to the bonus hit points gained (in addition to losing those hit points).

Clean Out: This drug is used to flush radiation from a character's system. It works like antitoxin, except it affects saves related to radiation poisoning.

Regen: Once this drug is administered, the recipient's rate of cellular regeneration increases dramatically. For 1d4+1 minutes, the character regenerates a number of hit points per round equal to the character's Constitution bonus + 1, (minimum 1 hit point per round). When the effect wears off, the recipient is considered fatigued for 10 minutes for every minute of the effect's duration.

Total-Med: Total-Med was the crowing achievement of Final Wars era medical technology. This drug, once administered into the bloodstream, cures the

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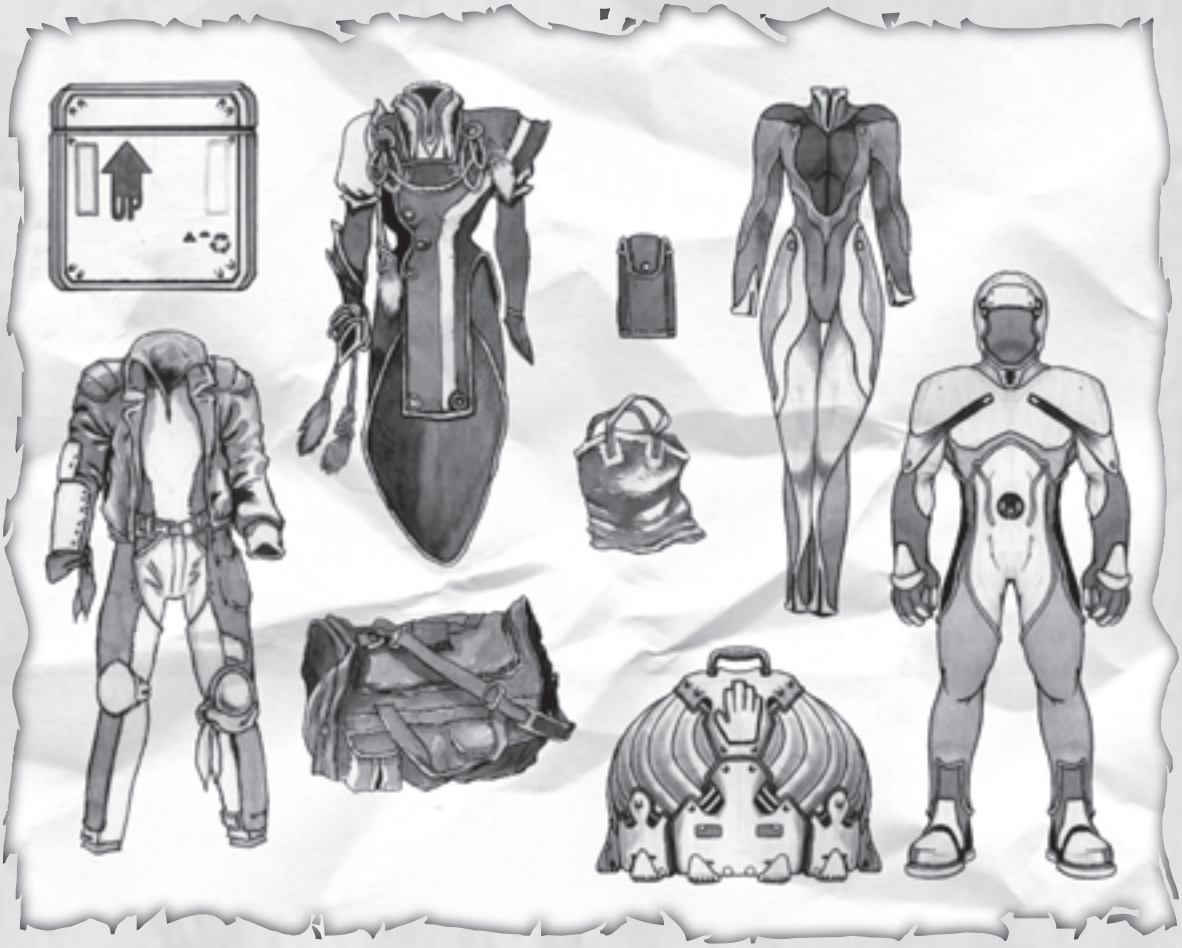

recipient of all chemical poisons, radiation poisoning and non-genetic biological diseases. A rare few individuals suffer a severe allergic reaction to Total-Med; the recipient must make a Fortitude save (DC 10) or die.

SURVIVAL GEAR

In addition to the survival gear presented in *d20 Modern*, much of which can still be found in the Gamma Age, the Final Wars era produced some notable equipment. As with all advanced technology, the survival gear presented here is both relatively rare and dependant upon power cells for operation.

Dome, Sealed Environment: A Sealed Environment Dome (SED) resembles a large dome tent; eight people fit inside. It is made of a highly resilient nano-weave fiber, and has a hardness of 10 and 25 hit points. Augmented with a nanomachine-based self-repair system, the SED regenerates 5 hit points per round, so long as it has a power supply. A specially designed environmental control system sustains a safe environment within the dome, completely blocking all chemical, biological and even nanotech effects. It also provides radiation resistance 20 and a +10 equipment bonus on Fortitude saves versus radiation effects. If an SED is struck by an attack that exceeds the dome's radiation resistance, the dome is breached for one round and the occupants are subject to any environmental effects or attacks from outside the dome. On the following round, the SED flushes any effects out of the dome again, assuming another attack does not breach it. The power cell in the SED lasts for 50 hours of continuous use for a single individual, but up to 6 power cells may be used simultaneously.

Nano-Swarm Repellant Field Generator: This wallet-sized device emits a powerful but short-range electro-magnetic pulse. All nanotech machines within 5 feet of the generator are rendered inert for as long as the field is up (but are not permanently harmed). Synthetic characters and robots that enter the field are considered fatigued due to the interference caused by the electro-magnetic pulse. The field generator operates for up to 12 continuous hours before needing a new power cell.

Personal Environment Suit: The personal environment suit covers a character from head to toe, protecting her from radiation and chemical, biological

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TABLE 2–6: GENERAL EQUIPMENT

Object	Size	Weight	Purchase DC
Bags and Boxes			
Crate	Large	50 lbs.	10
Pouch	Small	1 lb.	4
Sack, Large	Medium	2 lbs.	4
Sack, Small	Small	1 lb.	3
Clothing			
Clothes, Outdoor	Medium	4 lbs.	8
Clothes, Extravagant	Medium	6 lbs.	16
Jumpsuit, Smart	Medium	4 lbs.	20
Computers and Electronics			
Datapad	Tiny	1 lb.	14
Power Cell	Tiny	.1 lb.	10
Power Cell Charger	Small	2 lbs.	18
Medical Equipment and Pharmaceuticals			
Air-Hypo	Small	1 lb.	16
Antitoxin	Tiny	—	12
Bandage, Aerosol	Small	2 lbs	12
Boost	Tiny	—	14
Clean Out	Tiny	—	12
Regen	Tiny	—	18
Total-Med	Tiny	—	20
Survival Gear			
Dome, Sealed Environment	Large	20 lbs.	22
Nano-Swarm Repellant Field Generator	Small	2 lbs.	25
Personal Environment Suit	Medium	10 lbs.	20

and nanotech weapons. It provides energy resistance 5 and a +5 equipment bonus on Fortitude saves versus all environmental effects and energy types, even when not powered. When the suit is powered, the wearer is immune to environmental effects. A personal environment suit has a hardness of 5 and 20 hit points. Like the SED, it possesses a self-repair system that regenerates 5 hit points per round. If an attack or environmental effect overcomes the suit's energy resistance, the character is exposed for one round to any environmental effects. The power cell, which operates the filtration systems and EM pulse, lasts for 100 continuous hours.

VEHICLES

Travel is both difficult and dangerous in the Gamma Age. Vehicles allow individuals to travel more efficiently, quickly and safely.

Different vehicle types require different feats and skills to use effectively. Each vehicle type below lists the appropriate feats and skills for controlling the vehicle.

ARCHAIC VEHICLES

Most archaic vehicles are muscle-powered: carts, wagons,and sleds drawn by animals, robots or even sentient beings. When using muscle-powered vehicles, skills such as Handle Animal are used to control the vehicle through the creature(s) drawing it. In the case of a vehicle carried or pulled by sentient beings, the Intimidate skill is used instead. Wind-powered vehicles, such as sailing ships and sand runners, use the Pilot (Sail) skill and require the feat Surface Vehicle Operation (Wind-Powered) for effective use.

Cart: A two-wheeled vehicle drawn by a single horse (or other beast of burden). It comes with a harness.

Longship: A 75-foot-long ship with forty oars and a total crew of fifty. It has a single mast and a square sail. It can carry fifty tons of cargo or 120 soldiers. A longship can make sea voyages. It moves about 3 miles per hour when being rowed or under sail.

Rowboat: An 8- to 12-foot-long boat for two or three people. It moves about 1 1/2 miles per hour.

Sailing Ship: This larger, more seaworthy version of the coaster (a kind of sailing ship) is 75 to 90 feet long and 20 feet wide. It has a crew of twenty. It can carry cargo up to 150 tons. It has square sails on its two masts and can make sea voyages. It moves about 2 miles per hour.

Sand Runner: This wheeled vehicle has room for two passengers. A light frame with broadly placed wheel or skids allow it to moved over sand or other even ground swiftly. A sand runner uses a single sail and is powered by the wind. In gusty conditions, it can reach speeds up to 20 miles per hour.

Sled: This is a wagon on runners for moving through snow and over ice. In general, two horses (or other beasts of burden) draw it. It comes with a harness.

Wagon: This is a four-wheeled, open vehicle for transporting heavy loads. In general, two horses (or other beasts of burden) draw it. It comes with a harness.

PRE-WAR VEHICLES

The vehicles listed in *d20 Modern* represent a broad cross section of the vehicles used during the Pre-War era. Such vehicles are no longer common, but some can still be found in advanced

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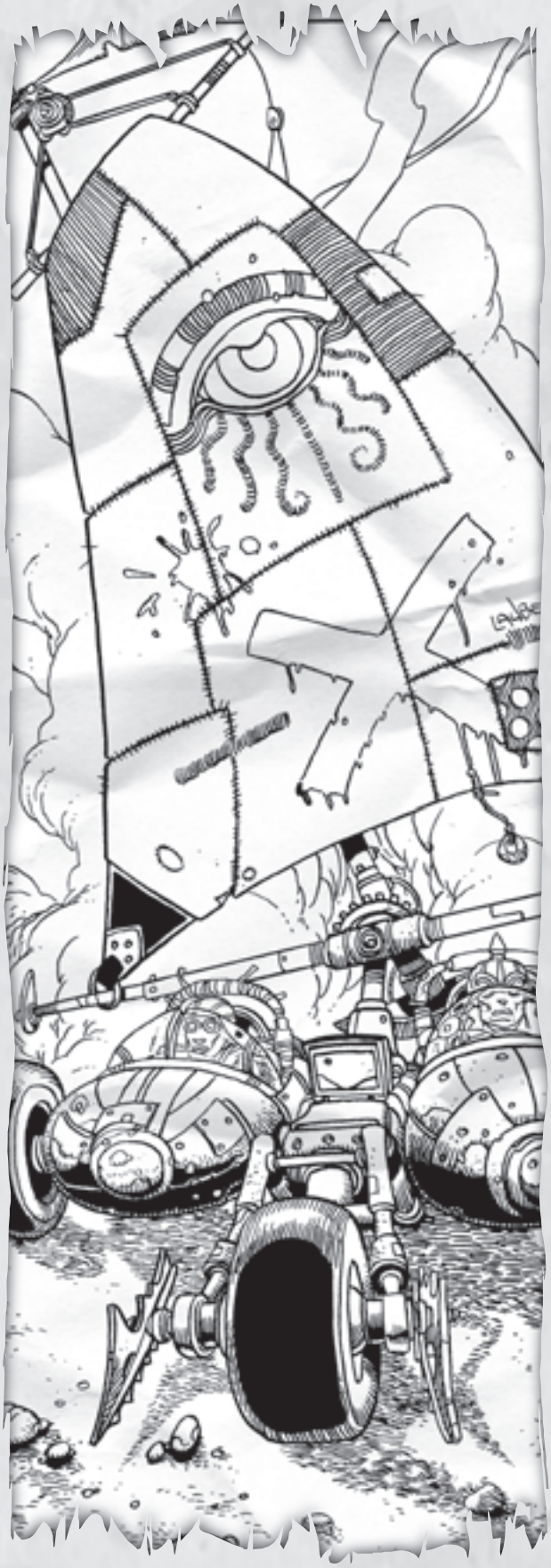

communities. More often, the remains of Pre-War vehicles are repaired and modified to meet the needs of the Gamma Age: Alternate fuel requirements, the addition of vehicular weaponry on civilian vehicles and modification for off-road travel are all common changes made to Pre-War vehicles. In terms of game mechanics, Pre-War vehicles remain unchanged from those listed in *d20 Modern*.

ADVANCED VEHICLES

The Final Wars era saw an explosion of military vehicle technology, some applications of which filtered down to the civilian vehicle market. Most advanced vehicles are built for war and require the same skills and feats listed for military vehicles in *d20 Modern*. Exceptions are listed below.

Hovercraft: Not a specific vehicle type but a modification made during the end of the Final Wars era, a hovercraft uses powerful magnetic coils (rather than true anti-gravity) to lift the vehicle from the surface of the earth and turbines or propellers for movement. An example of nearly any surface vehicle from the Pre-War era can be found modified with hovercraft technology. Hovercrafts possess the same statistics as their Pre-War counterparts, save for the following changes:

Reduce the vehicle's Cargo capacity by two-tenths.

Increase the vehicle's Maneuver rating by +2.

Increase the vehicle's Top Speed rating by one-tenth.

Increase the vehicle's purchase DC by +5.

Hovercrafts require the feat Air Vehicle Operation (Hovercraft) to offset non-proficiency penalties, but use the Drive skill rather than the Pilot skill to operate.

Dropship: A dropship is a thrust-powered aircraft, 30 feet long and 15 feet wide, used primarily for troop transport. It can hover and possesses vertical take off and landing capabilities. Wing-mounted missiles, three on each side, and both forward- and rear-facing plasma cannons allow the crew to clear drop zones. The dropship can carry 20 soldiers, one Huge vehicle, two Large vehicles or four Medium vehicles.

Walker, Assault: Walkers are heavy armored vehicles that use articulated legs rather than tires or treads for locomotion. While slower than other vehicles, they are more adept at traversing uneven terrain. The assault walker is the smallest of these vehicles, 10 feet tall with two legs and a compartment for a single pilot. Assault walkers carry a single plasma

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TABLE 2–7: VEHICLES

Vehicle	Crew	Passengers	Cargo	Init.	Man.	Top Speed	Defense	Hardness	Hit Points	Size	Purchase DC
Archaic Vehicles											
Cart	1	4	1,000 lbs.	–2	–4	*	2	0	20	Large	12
Longship	50	120	50 tons	–4	–4	6	0	5	35	Gargantuan	30
Rowboat	2	2	500 lbs.	–2	–4	4	6	0	20	Large	12
Sailing Ship	20	300	150 tons	–4	–6	4	6		40	Gargantuan	40
Sand Runner	1	1	300 lbs.	+0	–2	35(4)	9	0	25	Large	14
Sled	1	6	1 ton	–4	–4	*	4	0	28	Large	16
Wagon	1	6	1 ton	–4	–4	*	4	0	28	Large	16
Advanced Vehicles											
Dropship	2	20	5 tons	–2	–2	300(30)	10	5	46	Gargantuan	50
Walker, Assault	1	—	1000 lbs.	–2	–2	20 (2)	4		36	Large	32
Walker, Transport	2	12	6 tons	–4	–2	10(1)	10		40	Huge	36

*Muscle-powered vehicles have a top speed based on the animal that pulls it. Carts, sleds and wagons weigh approximately one-tenth of their cargo limit plus the weight of the cargo itself for determining the animal's encumbrance level. If multiple animals pull a single vehicle, divide the total weight of the vehicle, its passengers, and its cargo among the animals to determine each animal's encumbrance level.

cannon (see Advanced Weapons above) and an integrated targeting system that provides a +2 equipment bonus on attack rolls using the plasma cannon. An assault walker is a Large vehicle.

Walker, Transport: This four-legged walker is 20 feet long, 15 feet wide and stands 15 feet tall. A two-man crew, pilot and gunner, sits in a forward-facing "head"; up to 12 fully equipped soldiers can ride in the transport area of the walker. Passengers may exit through a bottom hatch or a rear ramp. The transport walker is equipped with a forward-mounted microwave gun and a turret-mounted missile launcher (see Vehicle Weapons below). A transport walker is a Huge vehicle.

VEHICLE WEAPONS

Any vehicle may have a weapon mounted on it, and many do. A vehicle can have one mounted weapon of one size category smaller than the vehicle, two weapons two size categories smaller, four weapons three size categories smaller, and so on. Mounting a weapon onto a vehicle requires a Craft (mechanics) check (DC 15). If the weapon has an electronic or computerized targeting system, an additional Craft (electronics) check (DC 20) must be made.

Ion Cannon: An ion cannon delivers a powerful stream of charged particles to the target. The damage inflicted by an ion cannon is considered electrical damage.

TABLE 2–8: VEHICLE-MOUNTED WEAPONS

Weapon	Damage	Critical	Dmg. Type	Range	ROF Inc.	Mag.	Size	Weight*	Purchase DC
Ion Cannon	10d10	20	Electrical	100 ft.	Single	—	Huge	—	25
Missile Battery	by missile	—	by missile	by missile	S	6	Huge	—	30
Missile Launcher	by missile	—	by missile	by missile	Single	—	Large	20 lbs.	22

*For the ion cannon and missile battery, the weapon's weight is considered to be included in the vehicle's weight.

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PURCHASE DCS FOR PRE-WAR EQUIPMENT

The equipment presented in *d20 Modern* represents items that were in wide use during the time just before the Final Wars began. While much of that equipment can be found in the Gamma Age, the availability and value of the equipment has changed. Working electronic devices are both rare and expensive since they tend to be fragile. Pre-War era firearms are common, due largely to their durability and the increasing desperation of the Pre-War societies that over-produced them in order to feel safe against an increasingly unstable world.

RANGED WEAPONS PURCHASE DCS

For personal firearms, including both handguns and longarms, reduce the purchase DC by –4. (Personal firearms can be found in *d20 Modern*, Chapter Four: Equipment, "Ranged Weapons," *Table 4–4: Ranged Weapons*.) For example, a Glock 17 Autoloader has a purchase DC of 14 in the Gamma Age.

The heavy weapons found on the same table were not so widely distributed, and many were destroyed on the battlefields of the Pre-War era. The purchase DCs for these weapons remains unchanged.

The remaining *d20 Modern* ranged weapons purchase DCs can be found on Table 2–9 in this chapter.

AMMUNITION PURCHASE DCS

While firearms can be found nearly anywhere in the Gamma World, finding bullets is a little more difficult. Increase the purchase DCs for all ammunition types except for arrows and crossbow bolts by +1, and reduce the purchase DCs for arrows and crossbow bolts to 5 each. (Ammunition types can be found in *d20 Modern*, Chapter Four: Equipment, "Ranged Weapons," *Table 4–5: Ammunition*.)

EXPLOSIVES AND SPLASH WEAPONS PURCHASE DCS

Explosives from the Pre-War era are perhaps hardest to come by, due to their instability. Increase the purchase DC for explosives by +2, except for mild acid, which remains a common if dangerous substance. (These weapons can be found in *d20 Modern*, Chapter Four: Equipment, "Ranged Weapons," *Table 4–4: Explosive and Splash Weapons*.)

MELEE WEAPONS PURCHASE DCS

The purchase DCs for all *d20 Modern* melee weapons are reduced by –2.

PRE-WAR ARMOR PURCHASE DCS

Pre-War era body armor was uncommon in its own time and is even more so in the Gamma Age. Explorers and archivists sometimes find caches of Pre-War armor with Pre-War weapons, however. The purchase DCs for *d20 Modern* armor are increased by +4, except where noted on Table 2–2: Armor in this chapter.

GENERAL EQUIPMENT PURCHASE DCS

Adjust the purchase DCs in *d20 Modern* as follows, depending on the type of equipment:

TABLE 2–9: GENERAL PRE-WAR EQUIPMENT PURCHASE DCS

Type	Purchase DC
Bags and Boxes	–2
Clothing	–2
Computers and Consumer Electronics	+6
Surveillance Gear	+6
Professional Equipment	+4
Survival Gear	+2
Weapon Accessories	+0

Missile, Anti-Tank: This missile is designed to penetrate armor. An anti-tank missile ignores 10 points of vehicle hardness. In addition, if the damage done by the missile bypasses the vehicle's hardness, the occupants of the vehicle take one-half the total damage suffered by the vehicle. An anti-tank missile may be fired from a missile battery or a missile launcher.

Missile, Heat-Seeking: Heat-seeking missiles possess a targeting system designed to track high-temperature signatures. Against vehicles and anything else with a high-temperature signature, heat-seeking missiles gain a +4 circumstance bonus on attack rolls. A –4 penalty is applied if there is a high-temperature source other than the target within 50 feet of the missile's launch point or target.

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Multiple heat sources stack penalties, up to a maximum of –12.

Missile, High-Explosive: A high-explosive missile is designed to do maximum damage, both direct and collateral.

Missile, Plasma: Upon detonation, a plasma missile explodes with superheated gas. The damage done by a plasma missile is considered fire damage.

Missile Battery: A missile battery holds six missiles, of different types or the same type, which may be fired independently or simultaneously. The missile battery may be mounted on any Huge or larger vehicle, and it must be controlled through a targeting system.

Missile Launcher: A missile launcher holds a single missile. It may be mounted on a vehicle or used a shoulder-mounted weapon.

SYNTHETIC UPGRADES

As artificial constructs, synthetic characters may purchase upgrades that alter their structure, capabilities and even ability scores.

PURCHASING UPGRADES

In order to purchase an upgrade, the synthetic character must find a scientist both capable of upgrading the character and willing to do so. Only communities that possess the Advanced Engineering community feat (see Chapter Four) have the resources and personnel necessary to perform synthetic character upgrades. The purchase DCs listed for each upgrade are the minimums for upgrade services in such communities. Often the cost is higher, and the scientist may require more than mere funds to perform the upgrade. Upgrades also take time, as listed on table 2–10: Synthetic Upgrades.

PERFORMING UPGRADES

Synthetic characters or their associates may attempt to perform the upgrades themselves. While this is less expensive (reduce the purchase DC of listed upgrades by –5), it requires time, tools and skill. Table 2–10: Synthetic Upgrades lists the time necessary to perform the upgrade and the Craft check DCs for performing the upgrades.

All synthetic upgrades require a Craft (mechanical) check and a Craft (electronics) check at the listed DC. If either check fails, the upgrade fails and must be attempted again. If either check fails by more than 5, the upgrade itself is damaged and must be repaired or replaced before it can be applied to the synthetic. If both Craft checks fail by 10 or more, the synthetic character is damaged and takes 1d6 points of temporary ability damage in a randomly rolled ability score (roll 1d6: a 1 results in Strength damage, a 2 results in Dexterity damage and so on). Note that the usual Craft DC modifiers for unfamiliarity, inappropriate tools, and so on apply to these checks (see Chapter Six).

SYNTHETIC UPGRADES

The following upgrades are examples of the kind of alterations that can be made to synthetic characters. The GM should use his judgment when permitting any of these upgrades, and carefully oversee any player-created synthetic character upgrades.

Ability Increase: This upgrade allows a synthetic character to permanently increase one of the following ability scores by +2: Strength, Dexterity or Intelligence. This upgrade may be purchased multiple times, but a different ability must be chosen each time it is purchased.

TABLE 2–10: SYNTHETIC UPGRADES

Upgrade	Purchase DC	Craft DC	Time
Ability Increase	26	30	48 hours
Armor Integration	*	25	12 hours
Backup CPU	28	22	6 hours
Equipment Integration	*	20	6 hours
Extended Reach	24	25	12 hours
Extra Manipulator	20	20	12 hours
Hoversystem	26	25	24 hours
Secondary Processor	26	30	24 hours
Treads	18	20	12 hours
Weapon Mount	20	25	12 hours

* See the upgrade description for the purchase DC of this item.

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Armor Integration: A suit of armor is attached directly to the synthetic character and cannot be removed. All the normal bonuses and penalties for wearing armor apply, and the synthetic must possess the appropriate Armor Proficiency feat. The purchase DC for this upgrade is (the purchase DC of the armor + 5).

Backup CPU: This integrated item allows the synthetic to make a copy of its current programming to an extremely durable, internal hard drive. Making a copy requires 1 hour per character level, during which time the synthetic is unable to communicate or act in any way. If the synthetic is ever killed, the backup CPU can be installed in another synthetic body, essentially resurrecting the character at the point it was last copied. The backup CPU must be retrieved from the remains of the destroyed synthetic; it has a hardness of 20 and 10 hit points.

Equipment Integration: Tiny and Small non-combat equipment, such as a datapad or an air-hypo, can be built directly into the synthetic, eliminating the need to hold the item in order to use it. The purchase DC for this upgrade is (the purchase DC of the item + 5).

Extended Reach: The synthetic's manipulators are extended to increase the character's reach to 10 feet.

Extra Manipulator: The synthetic possesses an additional arm or other manipulator. This is considered an off hand (see *d20 Modern*, Chapter Five: Combat, "Actions in Combat," *Full-Round Actions*). This upgrade may be purchased multiple times.

Hoversystem: The synthetic's normal means of locomotion are replaced by magnetic lifting coils and thrusters, allowing the character to float up to 5 feet from the ground. The character's movement remains the same, but it does not suffer from penalties for uneven ground and similar circumstances and may move over bodies of water or other liquids.

Secondary Processor: This upgrade allows the character to take an additional move action each round. The character may not actually move, but may draw or reload a weapon or use an integrated device (see above).

Treads: The synthetic's legs are replaced by treads. The character's movement is increased by 10 feet per round and any penalties for overland movement based on terrain type (see Chapter Four) are halved. Characters with treads suffer a –8 penalty on Climb and Swim checks.

Weapon Mount: A Small or Medium weapon may be mounted directly onto the synthetic character. The synthetic no longer needs to hold the weapon to use it and the weapon is always considered ready. Attacking with the mounted weapon is considered an off-hand attack and requires the use of the full attack option. Only Pre-War and advanced ranged weapons may be attached to the weapon mount, though weapons may interchanged with a full round action (which provokes an attack of opportunity).

ADVANCED CLASSES

The Gamma Age presents characters with many opportunities for specialized development that just didn't exist in the world before the Final Wars, the discovery of the Pennon Sequence and all the rest. Players whose characters meet the requirements of an advanced class described in *d20 Modern* may take it, subject to GM approval, but they also have these Gamma World-specific possibilities.

CYBERCOLOGIST

The Cybercologist may be any sort of human, mutant or synthetic. Regardless of his own origins, he has a profound grasp of the synthetic mind: the programming that allows for cognition; the parameters shaping a particular entity's outlook; and the processes by which it perceives, remembers and interprets the world. With these insights, the Cybercologist can unlock the secrets of soultech far more efficiently than others, and apply his insights to dealings with aware constructs of all kinds.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a Cybercologist, a character must fulfill the following requirements:

Skills: Computer Use (artificial intelligence) 6 ranks, Knowledge (technology: advanced) 6

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ranks, and either Craft (electronic) 6 ranks or Disable Device 6 ranks.

CLASS INFORMATION

Hit Die

The Cybercologist gains 1d6 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies as usual.

Action Points

The Cybercologist gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half his character level, rounded down, every time he attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills

The Cybercologist's class skills are:

Bluff (Cha), Computer Use (artificial intelligence) (Int), Craft (electronic, mechanical, nanotech) (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disable Device (Int), Intimidate (Cha), Investigate (Int), Knowledge (technology: advanced) (Int), Research (Int), Sense Motive (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 7 + Intelligence modifier

CLASS FEATURES

Analysis

The Cybercologist has an intuitive sense of how soultech works, and can pick up on subtle cues of behavior and design when studying unfamiliar devices. He can add half his class level, rounded up, as a bonus to all analysis rolls involving soultech (see Chapter Six).

Sympathy

At 2nd level, the Cybercologist can add his class level, rounded up, as a bonus on all Charisma checks involving efforts to persuade and negotiate with soultech if the target isn't fully analyzed. He can add his undivided class level as a bonus on Charisma checks involving such efforts directed at devices he has fully analyzed.

Bonus Feats

At 3rd, 6th and 9th level, the Cybercologist gets a bonus feat. It must be selected from the following list, and the character must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.

Builder, Focused, Gearhead, Nanotech Attunement, Studious, System Familiarity, Tech Familiarity (Advanced).

Intimidation

The Cybercologist learns how to exploit the weaknesses and vulnerabilities he identifies in aware constructs. At 4th level, he can add half his class level, rounded up, as a bonus on all Charisma checks involving efforts to scare or intimidate soultech if the target device isn't fully analyzed. He can add his undivided class level as a bonus on Charisma checks involving such efforts directed at devices he has fully analyzed.

Dissonance

The Cybercologist can use his insights to disrupt the mental processes of soultech. He can take one standard action to communicate with a target device and insert phrasing or comments that the device finds unusually hard to properly interpret. He must make a Bluff check against DC (15 + the number of analysis layers in the device [or the intelligence modifier of a synthetic]). If he succeeds, the device suffers a penalty equal to the Cybercologist's class level on all its actions for a number of rounds equal to the Cybercologist's Intelligence modifier.

Add Allegiance

At 7th level, the Cybercologist may combine logic and rhetoric with programming techniques to create a new allegiance in soultech. This requires success at both a Diplomacy check and a Computer Use (artificial intelligence) check, each against DC (20 + the number of analysis layers in the device

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TABLE 2–11: THE CYBERCOLOGIST

Class Level	BAB	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Analysis	+1	+1
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Sympathy	+1	+1
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	bonus feat	+2	+2
4th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Intimidation	+2	+2
5th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Dissonance	+3	+3
6th	+3	+2	+2	+5	bonus feat	+3	+3
7th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Add Allegiance	+4	+4
8th	+4	+2	+2	+6	Remove Allegiance	+4	+4
9th	+4	+3	+3	+6	bonus feat	+5	+5
10th	+5	+3	+3	+7	Shutdown	+5	+5

[or the Intelligence modifier of a synthetic]), and takes (15 – Cybercologist's class level) hours. At the end of the process, the target device has a new allegiance as described above, with the general parameters specified by the Cybercologist. Individual devices do retain the freedom to interpret their allegiances in various ways based on their underlying personalities, so this feature can't create completely subservient drones.

Remove Allegiance

At 8th level, Cybercologist may apply his techniques to *remove* a basic compulsion from target devices. This requires him to succeed at both a Diplomacy check and a Computer Use (artificial intelligence) check, each against DC (25 + the number of analysis layers in the device [or the Intelligence modifier of a synthetic]), and takes (15 – Cybercologist's class level) hours. At the end of the process, the allegiance has been deleted from the target device; the Cybercologist may choose whether to remove the memories of having had that allegiance as well.

Shutdown

At 10th level, the Cybercologist may apply a more extreme version of the techniques he's learned to induce disorientation. He can take one standard action and make an opposed check of his Diplomacy check result against a target device's Sense Motive check result. If he succeeds, the soultech is locked in a profound cognitive disturbance and is both unaware of the world and unable to act for a number of minutes equal to the Cybercologist's Intelligence modifier x 10.

LEADER

The Leader is just what his title implies: someone gifted with the ability to understand the workings of a group, whether it's a small band of individuals or a whole community, and to give a group effective direction. Similar skills apply to leadership of many sorts, even though the actual work of leading a nomadic tribe is quite unlike the work of managing a high-tech enclave or settled low-tech village.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a Leader, a character must fulfill the following requirements:

Abilities: Charisma 13+

Skills: Diplomacy 6 ranks, Sense Motive 6 ranks.

CLASS INFORMATION

Hit Die

The Leader gains 1d10 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies as usual.

Action Points

The Leader gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half her character level, rounded down, every time she attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills

The Leader's class skills are:

Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Investigate (Int), Knowledge (behavioral sciences,

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business, Earth and life sciences, gossip, history, politics) (Int), Perform (any) (Cha), Read/Write Language (none), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (none).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Intelligence modifier

CLASS FEATURES

Coordination

The Leader may take a full action to study the behavior of his allies and call out brief instructions. If he succeeds in a Diplomacy check against DC 18, all characters who share a particular allegiance with the Leader and who are within 10 x the Leader's class level in feet may act in coordination. They may all act on the highest initiative result rolled for any of them, and may subtract half the Leader's class level (rounded up) from penalties for actions that might endanger another member of their group, such as shooting into melee.

Voice of Authority

At 2nd level, the Leader may add the population level of the community he leads to his skill rating for social interactions in which he can draw on his authority. This bonus comes from the faction's size, whether of a small group within the community, or from the community as a whole if he is chief, vizier high priest or some other sort of recognized authority for the entire population.

Bonus Feats

At 3rd, 6th and 9th level, the Leader gets a bonus feat. It must be selected from the following list, and the character must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.

Attentive, Confident, Focused, Frightful Presence, Guide, Iron Will, Renown, Trustworthy, Windfall.

In Front

When a Leader of 4th level or above puts himself in a visible, forward position of risk, his followers take heart from his example. For each point by which he voluntarily reduces his Defense bonus, followers in the same fight who can see or hear him get a +1 bonus on their initiative and attack rolls. In addition, for each attack of opportunity he incurs while advancing on enemies or while defending a follower, each of his followers may add an additional +1 circumstance bonus on a single attack roll.

Nudging the Community

At 5th level, the Leader may intervene in the flow of change in his community. Once every (11 – class level) days, the Leader may shift the weight

of a single link in the community by one level, up or down. This action requires the expenditure of an action point. He can use this feature on any particular link only once each month. See Chapter Four for the details of this process.

Directing the Community

At 7th level, the Leader may directly change the rating of any one community factor. Once every (11 – class level) days, the Leader may change the factor rating up or down by his class level + Charisma modifier. This action requires the expenditure of an action point. The community reverts to its old ways in ten days, or when he uses this feature again, whichever comes first. He can use this feature on any particular factor only once each month.

Preserving the Community

At 8th level, the Leader may exert his force of will to strengthen his followers' will to resist change. Once every (11 – class days), he may reduce any one link weight to slight. This lasts for 24 hours, and requires the expenditure of an action point. He can use this feature on any particular link only once each month.

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TABLE 2–12: THE LEADER

Class Level	BAB	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+0	+1	+0	+1	Coordination	+1	+1
2nd	+1	+2	+0	+2	Voice of Authority	+1	+2
3rd	+2	+2	+1	+2	bonus feat	+2	+2
4th	+3	+2	+1	+2	In Front	+2	+3
5th	+3	+3	+2	+3	Nudging the Community	+3	+3
6th	+4	+3	+2	+3	bonus feat	+3	+4
7th	+4	+3	+3	+3	Directing the Community	+4	+4
8th	+5	+4	+3	+4	Preserving the Community	+4	+5
9th	+6	+4	+4	+4	bonus feat	+5	+5
10th	+7	+5	+4	+5	Growing the Community	+5	+6

Growing the Community

At 10th level, the Leader may make permanent changes in the community. Once each month, he may spend 1 action point and permanently change a factor rating by 10 + (2 x Charisma modifier), or permanently change a link weight up or down one level.

NANOSMITH

The Nanosmith has an intuitive knack for working with nanotechnology of all kinds. She has unusual control over her own nanounits and gets greater than usual information about nano activity in her vicinity.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a Nanosmith, a character must fulfill the following requirements:

Skills: Either Search 6 ranks or Spot 6 ranks.

Feats: Nanotech Attunement.

CLASS INFORMATION

Hit Die

The Nanosmith gains 1d6 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies as usual.

Action Points

The Nanosmith gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half her character level, rounded down, every time she attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills

The Nanosmith's class skills are:

Concentration, Craft (nanotech), Knowledge (all), Research, Speak Language.

Skill Points at Each Level: 5 + Intelligence modifier

CLASS FEATURES

Nanotech Intuition

The Nanosmith may add her class level as a bonus on all nanotech Concentration and control rolls.

Quick Recovery

The Nanosmith's subconscious connections to her nanounits let her regain spent nanounits as if she were in an area with one level higher nano density than it actually has, starting at 2nd level.

Bonus Feats

At 3rd, 6th and 9th level, the Nanosmith gets a bonus feat. It must be selected from the following list, and the character must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.

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Attentive, Builder, Focused, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Mutation Resistance, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Psionic Potential, Scavenger, System Familiarity, Toughness.

Blocking

At 4th level, the Nanosmith may use her nanounits and unsecured units in the area to interfere with others' nanotech efforts. She may attempt an opposed Craft (nanotech) check against the opponent's Craft (nanotech) check result. If she succeeds, the result of her roll is the new DC for the opponent's Concentration and control rolls for a number of rounds equal to her class level.

Specialty

At 5th level, the Nanosmith may choose one type of nano effect — perception, preservation, creation or destruction — as a focus of her interest. She subtracts half her class level, rounded up, from the DC of effects in that area. At 8th level, she adds a second, different type (she may not select the same specialty twice).

Area Exploitation

At 7th level, the Nanosmith may draw on nanounits she hasn't fully internalized yet. She can apply the area's nanounit bonus as a bonus on any nanotech-related skill check, or subtract the nanounit bonus from the nanounit cost of any nanotech effort she makes.

Nanotech Mastery

At 10th level, the Nanosmith may take 10 or take 20 on any nanotech Concentration or control roll, even in circumstances where it would normally be prohibited.

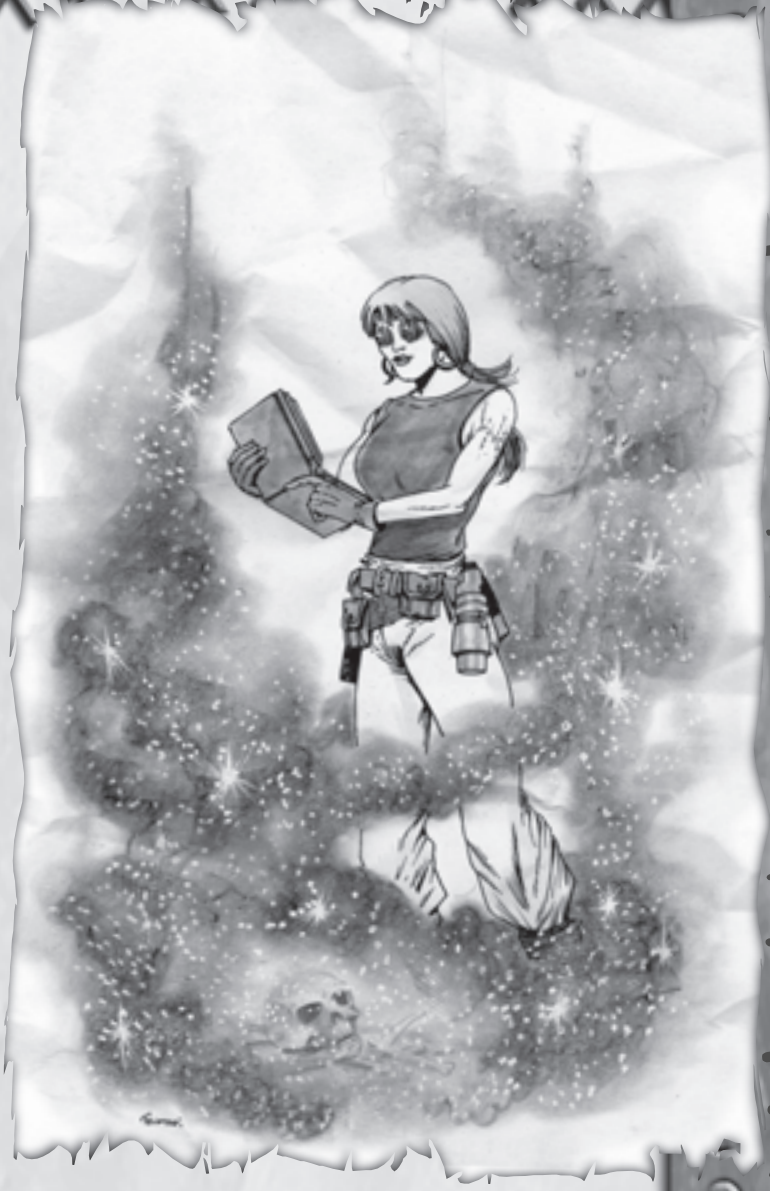

TABLE 2–13: THE NANOSMITH

Class Level	BAB	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+0	+1	+0	+2	Nanotech Intuition	+0	+1
2nd	+1	+1	+0	+3	Quick Recovery	+1	+1
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	bonus feat	+1	+2
4th	+2	+2	+1	+4	Blocking	+2	+2
5th	+2	+2	+1	+4	Specialty #1	+2	+3
6th	+3	+2	+2	+5	bonus feat	+2	+4
7th	+3	+3	+2	+5	Area Exploitation	+3	+5
8th	+4	+3	+2	+6	Specialty #2	+3	+6
9th	+4	+3	+2	+6	bonus feat	+3	+7
10th	+5	+4	+2	+7	Nanotech Mastery	+4	+8

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PROPHET

Prophets have unique insights into the workings of the world around them. They see with fewer preconceptions than other people and draw richer conclusions from the available evidence. They seldom literally "see the future" (though some Prophets are precognitive); they simply understand more deeply than the people around them.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a Prophet, a character must fulfill the following requirements:

Skills: Two of the following: Gather Information 6 ranks, Investigate 6 ranks, Sense Motive 6 ranks.

CLASS INFORMATION

Hit Die

The Prophet gains 1d8 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies as usual.

Action Points

The Prophet gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half his character level, rounded down, every time he attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills

The Prophet's class skills are:

Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Investigate (Int), Knowledge (behavioral sciences, business, gossip, history, politics, streetwise) (Int), Perform (all) (Cha), Read/Write Language, Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language, Survival (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 5 + Intelligence modifier

CLASS FEATURES

Clearsightedness

At 1st level, the Prophet may choose one class skill and receive a bonus equal to half his class level, rounded up, on all checks involving it.

Probing

At 2nd level, the Prophet develops a talent for drawing more and more information out of sustained study and interaction. When analyzing phenomena with more than one analysis layer that involves conscious minds (whether biological or otherwise), the Prophet gets +1 per layer successfully analyzed on subsequent checks to understand the remaining layers.

Bonus Feats

At 3rd, 6th and 9th level, the Prophet gets a bonus feat. It must be selected from the following list, and the character must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.

Alertness, Confident, Deceptive, Focused, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Nanotech Attunement, Psionic Potential.

Anticipation

At 4th level, the Prophet may apply half his class level (rounded up) as a modifier to his initiative rolls. The player decides whether and how much to adjust his initiative for a particular fight *after* initiative checks are made.

Judgment

At 5th level, the Prophet may make a Sense Motive check (DC 15) against a single sentient target. If it succeeds, he gets a circumstance bonus equal to half his class level (rounded up) as a modifier on a

TABLE 2–14: THE PROPHET

Class Level	BAB	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+0	+1	+0	+1	Clearsightedness	+0	+1
2nd	+1	+1	+1	+1	Probing	+1	+1
3rd	+1	+2	+1	+2	bonus feat	+1	+2
4th	+2	+2	+1	+2	Anticipation	+1	+2
5th	+2	+3	+2	+3	Judgment	+2	+3
6th	+3	+3	+2	+3	bonus feat	+2	+4
7th	+3	+4	+2	+4	Warning	+2	+5
8th	+4	+4	+3	+4	Inspiration	+3	+6
9th	+4	+5	+3	+5	bonus feat	+3	+7
10th	+5	+5	+3	+6	Foresight	+4	+8

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follow-up Intimidate or Diplomacy check, drawing on his insights into the target's motives and nature.

Warning

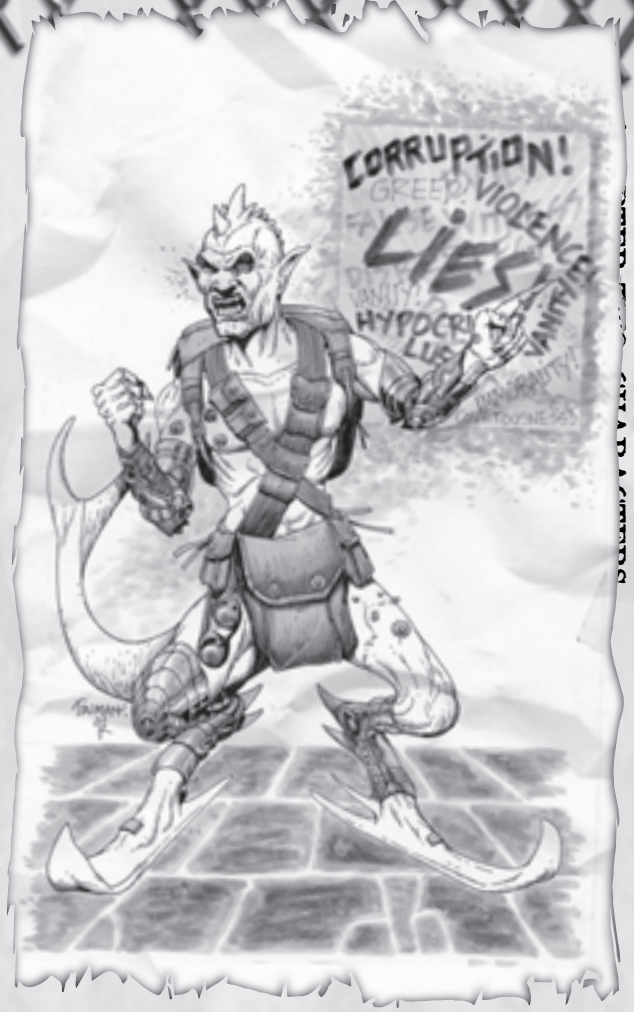
At 7th level, the Prophet develops an awareness of emerging changes in his community. Any change that has just begun and will shift the factor at the far end of the link to the triggering circumstance gets his attention if the final change will total more than 20 – (2 x Wisdom modifier) points. The Prophet can take countering action before the instigating change is applied.

Inspiration

At 8th level, the Prophet may spend a full 10 minutes exhorting his fellow adherents to a particular allegiance, then make a Diplomacy check (DC 20). If he succeeds, the any bonuses provided by the allegiance are doubled for the next 24 hours for those who hear his exhortation and share the allegiance. Non-adherents may choose to join the allegiance immediately, though they don't get the doubling benefit.

Foresight

At 10th level, the Prophet may spend a full day (24 hours) studying his community (or any other single community) or a single sentient target. At the end of the study period, he must make a Concentration check against DC 20. For every increment of 5 by which the check succeeds (rounded up), his target gains one action point to use sometime in the next year to guard against outside forces that would interfere with her ability to uphold her allegiances. The Prophet himself need not share all the target's allegiances, but must at least respect her goals to some degree or the action points are not transmitted. In the case of a community, the action points must be used by someone accepted as a Leader by the community's members.



SURVIVOR

Survivors thrive in circumstances that would jeopardize and discourage others. They first learn how to maximize their own chances of survival, then how to help those they choose to associate with.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a Survivor, a character must fulfill the following requirements:

Abilities: Constitution 13+.

Feats: Survivalist.

CLASS INFORMATION

Hit Die

The Survivor gains 1d10 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies as usual.

Action Points

The Survivor gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half her character level, rounded down, every time she attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills

The Survivor's class skills are:

Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Handle Animal (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Move Silently (Dex), Repair (Int), Ride (Dex), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str), Treat Injury (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Intelligence modifier

CLASS FEATURES

Favored Environment

At 1st level, the Survivor may choose one of the environments listed at the beginning of Chapter Four as

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a personal favorite. The Survivor receives a bonus equal to half her class level, rounded up, on all checks related to survival and safety in that environment, and she never takes more than the minimum damage from environmental effects there. She may choose another favored environment at 4th level and a third at 7th level.

Favored Prey

At 2nd level, the Survivor may choose a particular species (or a group of related species like "spiders") as particular targets of her ire and expertise. She receives a bonus equal to half her class level, rounded up, on Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot and Survival checks involved with hunting that prey, and on her damage rolls against it. At 8th level, she may choose a second sort of prey and receive the same benefits.

Bonus Feats

At 3rd, 6th and 9th level, the Survivor gets a bonus feat. It must be selected from the following list, and the character must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.

Acrobatic, Action Hero, Alertness, Animal Affinity, Athletic, Combat Reflexes, Guide, Heroic Focus, Mutation Resistance, Nanotech Attunement, Psionic Potential, Run, Scavenger, Toughness, Track.

Hunt Leader

At 5th level, the Survivor may share some of her expertise with others. She can attempt to instruct one accompanying individual per class level. If she wins an opposed roll of Will saves, the other individual gets half of the bonus, rounded up, that the Survivor enjoys for favored environment and prey as long as they continue to work together

TABLE 2–15: THE SURVIVOR

Class Level	BAB	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+1	+1	+1	+0	Favored Environment #1	+1	+0
2nd	+1	+2	+1	+1	Favored Prey #1	+1	+1
3rd	+2	+3	+2	+1	bonus feat	+2	+1
4th	+3	+3	+2	+2	Favored Environment #2	+2	+2
5th	+4	+4	+3	+2	Hunt Leader	+3	+2
6th	+5	+4	+3	+3	bonus feat	+4	+3
7th	+6	+5	+4	+3	Favored Environment #3	+5	+4
8th	+7	+5	+4	+4	Favored Prey #2	+6	+5
9th	+8	+6	+5	+4	bonus feat	+7	+6
10th	+9	+6	+5	+5	Surviving Community	+8	+7

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on their shared goal. Those she successfully instructs get a minimum +1 bonus in each regard.

The Surviving Community

At 10th level, the Survivor may take temporary charge of a community to prepare it against some threat. She must spend 24 hours in instruction and planning, and spend an action point. For the next seven days, the whole community, up to a limit of her class level + Charisma modifier in population levels, gets the same benefits described in Hunt Leader.

WAR CHIEF

The Leader of a community must oversee all the functions of the community, both peaceful and violent. The War Chief specializes in violence. Whether he's called the chief of security, commander of armed forces, or just "the toughest fighter we've got," the War chief dedicates his life to preparing against the harm others might inflict on the community and to dishing out his own harm to those who threaten it.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a War Chief, a character must fulfill the following requirements:

Base Attack Bonus: +3.

Skills: Intimidate 6 ranks, Knowledge (tactics) 6 ranks.

CLASS INFORMATION

Hit Die

The War Chief gains 1d12 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies as usual.

Action Points

The War Chief gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half his character level, rounded down, every time he attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills

The War Chief's class skills are:

Demolitions (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disable Device (Int), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (history, tactics) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Ride (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), Survival (Wis), Treat Injury (Wis), Tumble (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Level: 5 + Intelligence modifier

CLASS FEATURES

Crushing the Enemy

Whenever the War Chief inflicts enough damage to reach his opponent's massive damage threshold, his victim must make a Will save against DC (15 + the War Chief's class level) to avoid becoming panicked for the War Chief's class level in rounds (see *d20 Modern*, Chapter Five: Combat, "Injury and Death," *Character Condition Summary* for panicked and other adverse conditions).

Driving the Enemy

At 2nd level, the War Chief may unleash a special demoralization assault. He makes an Intimidate check (DC 15). If he succeeds, enemies within a radius of 5 feet per class level must make a Will save(DC 15) to avoid becoming panicked for the War Chief's class level in rounds, or until they move out of the area of effect. Those who fail by 10 or more become stunned for one round for every two of the War Chief's class levels, rounded down. The War Chief may use this feature a number of times per day equal to his Charisma modifier.

Bonus Feats

At 3rd, 6th and 9th level, the War Chief gets a bonus feat. It must be selected from the following list, and the character must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.

Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Blind-Fight, Brawl, Cleave, Exotic Melee Weapon Proficiency, Exotic Firearms Proficiency, Improved Damage Threshold, Improved Mutation Resistance, Mutation Resistance, Nanotech Attunement, Psionic Potential.

Joy in Lamentation

At 4th level, the War Chief develops a knack for discerning the mental state of his opponents and using it to his advantage. Any time within 24 hours of fighting a particular enemy who has suffered significant injury (one-quarter or more of the fighting force lost one-half or more of their hit points), he may make an opposed Sense Motive check against an enemy leader. If he has some way of understanding the foes' language and he wins the contest, he comes away with fresh insights into the losses they suffered. He may then inspire his own allies with a Diplomacy check against DC 15. Success on this roll grants his allies a bonus equal to half his class level (rounded up) on initiative and damage rolls the next time they fight those foes.

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Depending on the circumstances, the War Chief may have to use stealth and other skills to get close enough to the defeated foes to hear their lamentations. The GM should treat this as an opportunity for more cool dramatic adventures, not as a chance to screw the War Chief's player out of an advantage.

Strength in Pain

At 5th level, the War Chief may draw inspiration out of physical suffering for both himself and his allies. When he uses Treat Injury to restore hit points, each hit point healed gives the patient a +1 morale bonus she may apply on any single initiative, attack or damage roll in her next fight. Each patient may have no more than her character level in bonuses stored up, and they are all lost after the next fight. This feature requires that the War Chief say a few inspiring words about overcoming adversity and getting back at those responsible for the patient's suffering.

Force of Nature

At 7th level, the War Chief may cow others even more, with the help of nature. In any fight where he suffers damage from an environmental hazard like fire, acid or electricity and continues fighting in full view of his allies and enemies, he may make a Fortitude save against DC (15 + [6 – dice of damage suffered]) — the Force of Nature effect becomes easier to invoke the more damage the War Chief takes. If it succeeds, he and his allies get a bonus on their initiative and attack rolls equal to half the war chief's class levels, rounded down, for the rest of the fight. This feature works once in any given fight, and it does apply to self-inflicted damage: If the War Chief sets himself on fire and charges into the fray, he can make the save just as he could if lightning struck him or he plunged off a high tower and got up to rejoin the battle.

Returning

At 8th level, the War Chief becomes very, very hard to kill. If reduced to disabled or dying status, he can spend an action point to return to

TABLE 2–16: THE WAR CHIEF

Class Level	BAB	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Crushing the Enemy	+1	+1
2nd	+2	+2	+1	+1	Driving the Enemy	+2	+1
3rd	+3	+3	+2	+1	bonus feat	+2	+2
4th	+4	+3	+2	+2	Joy in Lamentation	+3	+2
5th	+5	+4	+3	+2	Strength in Pain	+3	+3
6th	+6	+4	+3	+3	bonus feat	+4	+3
7th	+7	+5	+4	+3	Force of Nature	+4	+4
8th	+8	+5	+4	+4	Returning	+5	+4
9th	+9	+6	+5	+4	bonus feat	+5	+5
10th	+10	+7	+5	+5	Perfect Commander	+6	+6

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immediate consciousness with his class level + Charisma modifier in hit points. At the GM's discretion, enemies who see this feature in operation may need to make a Will save against DC 15 or more to avoid panicking.

Perfect Commander

At 10th level, the War Chief can effectively command the military activities of an entire community when he's in charge. The community often occupies more space than he can visit personally while a siege or other battle is in progress, but he can relay his encouragement and directions through messengers each time he succeeds at a Diplomacy check (DC 18). If the check succeeds, he can pass along one-half of his ability modifiers, rounded down, as a bonus to the community's abilities: his Strength bonus to its Force, and so on; if it succeeds by 10 or more, he can pass along his undivided ability modifiers as a bonus to the community's abilities. Trusted couriers repeat the War Chief's words and actions so vividly that it's as if he were there beside his allies in the struggle.

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CHAPTER THREE

FM

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Long before your litter was born, little whiskers, we too had a mother.

She was wild, yes, and no smarter than our wild cousins, but we loved her. She was our mother, even if her care for us had more to do with instinct than emotion. She didn't love us back; she didn't know how. This we accepted; it was our lot. We don't know what touched her when we were still in her womb, but all it gave her was a cancerous growth that killed her soon after we were born.

It gave us something else. Even when we were inside her, we felt each other. There were fifteen of us to begin with. We traveled, and our number grew smaller. Two of us were like our mother, albeit without the growth, and our paths soon parted; where we went, they could not follow. We were sad to see them go, but they had no names and talked only in the dull-witted squeaks of the primal tongue, and could have no place among us. One of us disappeared. Two of us were killed in defense of their kin, and we honor their bravery. One of us ate something that warped both her mind and body, and three of us died killing her. But six of us made it here, into this ancient nest hidden away in the mountain, and here we found the hairless apes, who had made the nest their own. They had it all, and understood nothing.

We came and observed, and moved silently among them, and they all thought that we were like our cousins, deaf and dumb and obtuse... but we saw and heard all, and we could understand the ancient writings and instructions. Deep into the bowels of the machinery we went, gnawing our way inside, and we watched and touched and learned. We wrapped our tails together into a tight coil and we understood everything, in our silent, wordless speech of shared comprehension. And we knew what we had to do to make this place ours.

We killed the apes.

When we turned on the machines and the nest shuddered with power that had not been felt for centuries, the apes were frightened. We knew these machines, knew how they worked. We had been blessed with quicksilver minds and bodies far more powerful than those of our cousins; the apes did not know this, and thought we were amusing when we skittered across control panels and reconnected cables.

There was no laughter, when we closed the doors. No screams, either, for vacuum carries no sound.

When they were dead, we let the air in again, and we feasted on them, and wrapped our tails together and planned some more. Some of us were thick with life already, and we could feel the stirring of nascent brightness within. We knew that we must build to ensure our survival, and build we did.

The hairless apes used to live in this nest.

But things change.

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CELLULAR TRANSFORMATION

Cellular transformation (CT) is a catch-all term for biological effects that alter humans (or, indeed, any living beings), for better or for worse — transformations that occur on a cellular level, altering the very building blocks of our bodies in a fundamental way.

In Gamma World, environmentally caused cases of CT are extremely commonplace, thanks to the plethora of radiation of different types, genetic engineering, toxic materials and other agents with potential for altering — and often damaging — organisms. Indeed, while the majority of humans alive are still recognizable as human, it's not uncommon for members of two separate gene pools to appear very different from each other — there's a great deal of variance in height and weight, not to mention other aspects, such as strange hair patterns, features reminiscent of animals (some of which may have been extinct for centuries), skin that appears to be almost scaly and many other, seemingly random traits. Indeed, "normal," i.e, pure-strain humans are the exception!

In Gamma World, most people don't even bat an eye at this variance in appearance; it's no more significant than variances in skin or hair color would be to the denizens of the early 21st century. While it certainly provides atmosphere and excellent roleplaying opportunities, mutation on this level is, in most cases, inconsequential as far as actual game mechanics are concerned.

However, some types of CT are far more drastic — they can change a human being significantly. Whether "natural," purposefully induced or caused by biotechnological enhancements, these changes can be beneficial or harmful.

MUTATION

In every one of the trillions upon trillions of cells in every human being — indeed, any living organism — there is a winding string of nucleic acids known as DNA, packed with information. In simple terms, our DNA is a blueprint of our entire bodies — it determines the color of our hair, skin and eyes, the shape of our nose, the length of our fingers, our sex, every physical attribute imaginable.

Mutation occurs when something external interrupts and changes the DNA coding of an organism, redirecting natural development down a new path. Mutation is a cornerstone of evolution; while "survival of the fittest" is still the determining factor in which species survive and which do not, without mutation there would be no evolution in the first place, no change in the various species that would make some life forms more viable than others.

In **Gamma World**, mutation is far more powerful and frequent than it was hundreds of years ago. It works quickly and has drastic, even amazing results.

MUTATION AT CHARACTER CREATION

See Chapter Two for the details of creating mutant characters. Most mutants begin with one major positive mutation, three minor positive mutations and one minor negative mutation. Some have a different mix of major and minor mutations and/or more, at the cost of reduced flexibility in other regards.

MUTAGENS

A mutagen is an external agent that increases the rate of mutation in organisms. Certain types of radiation, chemicals and viruses are all potential mutagens, but in some instances, nanotech may also cause mutation by rearranging the subject's DNA on a molecular level.

While the actual nature of the mutagen is important to the story and atmosphere, all of them have rather straightforward game-mechanical effects. There are four types of mutagens: weak, moderate, strong and intense. When a character encounters a mutagen, he makes a Fortitude save using the following table. Pure-strain humans are automatically immune to the effects of weak mutagens, and receive a +5 bonus to their saves against moderate and strong mutagens.

Mutagen Level	DC	Examples
Weak	5*	Particularly strong background radiation, residue of mutagenic chemicals
Moderate	10	Nearby source of significant radiation, presence of mutagenic chemicals in the area
Strong	15	Close contact with a source of radiation, airborne mutagenic chemicals
Intense-automatic failure	**	Exploding or badly leaking reactor, falling into a vat of mutagenic chemicals

* Pure-strain humans are immune to weak mutagens.

** Pure-strain humans resist intense mutagens at DC 25

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If he succeeds at the save, the mutagen has no effect on him. If he fails, he undergoes a random mutation. Roll 1d12 and consult Table 3–1: Mutagen Result Table. Depending on the result, roll d% and consult either Table 3–2: Minor Mutation Table or Table 3–3: Major Mutation Table.

Any single mutagen source can affect a subject only once within a 12-hour period unless the re-exposure is of an intense level. Successful resistance to a mutagen's effects gives the character a +1 bonus on saving throws against other mutagens for the next 12 hours, representing the continuing effects of heightened immune system activity. The benefit from successful resistance to multiple mutagens is cumulative, up to a total equal to the character's Constitution bonus (minimum of +1). It is therefore possible (if risky) for characters to partially inoculate themselves against moderate and strong mutagen effects by intentionally exposing themselves to weak mutagen forms.

Mutagens aren't uncommon in **Gamma World**, but intense exposure to them is still very rare. Even though sources of intense mutagens aren't too hard to locate, only a fool would willingly be exposed to them. While the rewards can be great, the danger of turning into a monster is too great for most beings to be flippant about the threat. Even most animals sense the danger and keep away from such areas.

Most mutations are very quick; they tend to happen in the course of minutes or even seconds, though in some cases a mutation can manifest itself after a considerable delay — the exact time frame in question is up to the GM's sense of drama more than anything else.

BIOTECHNOLOGY

Beneficial mutation is undeniably a great advantage, but mutation has two problems. It's unpredictable, which makes it dangerous, and more often than not, it's quite irreversible. While the idea of becoming faster, stronger and smarter, and perhaps gaining truly superhuman powers is appealing, the idea of turning into a terrifying monster is not. The stakes being as high as they are, few feel like willingly taking the chance.

Luckily, there is always biotechnology — living organisms that have been engineered to function like machines and that can, when properly used, greatly enhance the user in many different ways.

Biotechnology comes in two forms. There are *implants*, which are inserted into the host organism and become an integral part of it, and *grafts*, which attach themselves to the host organism's surface but connect themselves to the neural pathways in the host.

Implants are more reliable and powerful, but inserting them properly requires effort, tools and expertise, and the host body is eager to reject them during installation. Also, implants cannot be removed without surgery. Grafts, on the other hand, can be attached and removed relatively easily. On the downside, they have a limited life span, they aren't as powerful and they cannot produce as wide a range of effects as implants. They are also more prone to malfunctions.

Not all types of CT effects can be attained with biotechnology, and many of those that could be accomplished never are simply because there is little demand for them — while it would certainly be possible for someone to duplicate the unfortunate effects of an unpleasant mutation generally known as the Stench, who would want to do so?

Of course, even if someone wanted to create a biodevice that would accomplish that effect — nobody can. Creating new biotechnology is a lost art, and those who tamper with it are usually stopped, as there have been too many incidents where experiments went out of control with disastrous, almost cataclysmic results. Too much of the necessary data and technology have been lost: It's possible to grow implants and grafts, but the secrets of connecting them to the human nervous system remain buried in yet-undiscovered vaults.

A character may have a number of biotech devices installed in his body equal to (Constitution/2) + (character level/3), both rounded down. Thus a 1st level character with Constitution 10 can have five devices (10/2 + 1/3 = 5 + 0 = 5), while a 4th level character with Constitution 12 can have seven (12/2 + 4/3 = 6 + 1 = 7).

INSTALLING BIOTECHNOLOGY

Before a character can even start to think about inserting something into her body, she has to figure out what the strange, organic item she found is actually supposed to do. This analysis requires two Knowledge: (technology: Pre-War) rolls (see Chapter Six for the details of investigation).

First the character must determine whether the implant is a minor or major one (DC 15). Once she has done that, she must determine what it actually does and where it should be installed. This is DC 20 for minor devices, DC 30 for major ones. Biotech comes in many makes and models, and it's not at all unusual for someone to fail to recognize a minor biodevice that augments physical strength, even if she's seen a dozen of them before. After all, there are

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TABLE 3–1: MUTAGEN RESULT TABLE

Weak Mutagen	Moderate Mutagen	Strong Mutagen	Intense Mutagen	Result
1–6	1–5	1–4	1–3	Minor positive mutation
7–12	6–10	5–8	3–6	Minor negative mutation
—	11	9–10	7–9	Major positive mutation
—	12	11–12	10–12	Major negative mutation

TABLE 3–2: MINOR MUTATION TABLE

POSITIVE MINOR MUTATION

d%	Mutation
01–40	Ability Enhancement
41–45	Claws
46–50	Flexible Bones
51–55	Improved Hearing
56–60	Improved Vision
61–65	Inkwell
66–70	Metabolic Boost
71–75	Nimble Fingers
76–80	Parasite
81–85	Poison Touch
86–90	Strong Grip
91–00	Toughened Skin

NEGATIVE MINOR MUTATION

d%	Mutation
01–40	Ability Degradation
41–45	Bum Leg
46–50	Cowardice
51–55	Cracking Joints
56–60	Glass Jaw
61–65	Greedy Metabolism
66–70	Malformed Mouth
71–75	Soft Skin
76–80	The Hirsute Horror
81–85	The Stench
86–90	Tribal Mentality
91–95	Weakened Hearing
96–00	Weakened Vision

TABLE 3–3: MAJOR MUTATION TABLE

POSITIVE MAJOR MUTATION

d%	Mutation
01–09	Arachnofiber Production
10–18	Fire Lungs
19–27	Frog Legs
28–36	Harmonious Pheromones
37–45	Mental Overdrive
46–54	Psychic Aptitude
55–63	Quantum Action
64–72	Solar Discharge
73–81	Sonic Scream
81–90	Stinger
91–00	Wings

NEGATIVE MAJOR MUTATION

d%	Mutation
01–10	Blind Rage
11–20	Discordant Pheromones
21–30	Gills
31–40	Half-Life
41–50	Loose Joints
51–60	Mental Degeneration
61–70	Monster
71–80	Nervous Spasms
81–90	Radiation Leak
91–00	Tumorization

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usually no telltale forms and shapes to recognize, just strange and organic shapes and moist colors. However, the GM may wish to grant a bonus of +4 on the latter roll in case of certain biodevices: If it has eyes, claws or other blatantly obvious features that clearly hint to its function, that considerably narrows down the list of possibilities.

Failing the analysis roll by more than 15 (for minor biodevices) or 10 (for major ones) leads to a critical analysis error and quite possibly useless surgery, the exact end results of which depend on how nasty the GM wants to be. Having the amazing ability to spit industrial strength acid into one's own upper intestines can be a less than empowering sensation.

The human immune system tends to reject biotech. Before the Final Wars, biotechnology was so commonplace and medical science so advanced that even the most demanding biodevice could be installed in a few hours without fear of rejection, but much of that knowledge has been lost. Now those interested in enhancing themselves must make do with what they have.

Once the biodevice is ready to be installed, the person installing it makes a Treat Injury check (the Surgery feat is required to avoid a –4 penalty on the check). Surgery is required for both implants and grafts, but the skill check for grafts is made with a +4 bonus, as they are considerably easier to attach — a few cuts to expose the nervous system are required, but this is easily accomplished even by inexperienced medics. A character cannot install implants on herself but she can install grafts, provided that they are attached to a location she can easily reach and has both of her hands free for the operation. Surgery used for this purpose does not restore any hit points to the character.

If the check is successful, the biodevice is now properly in place. However, the patient's immune system still needs to be dealt with, and that is where immuno-suppressants come in.

Immuno-suppressants are fairly common drugs and can usually be found in the remains of decently stocked medical facilities, as well as from trading posts and other similar locations. They are also relatively easily manufactured — purchase DC 15 for the materials, Craft (pharmaceuticals) check DC 20, production time 6 hrs.

Object	Size	Weight	Purchase DC
Immunosuppressants (five doses)	Tiny	0.5 lb.	15

Each dose of immuno-suppressant chemicals automatically inflicts 1d2 points of temporary Constitution damage, and another 1d2 points of temporary Constitution damage if the recipient fails a Fortitude save (DC 20). The recipient needs to reach a temporary Constitution modifier of –1 for grafts (Constitution 8–9), or of –2 for implants (Constitution 6–7); particularly tough patients may need multiple doses of immuno-suppressants to reach this state. This Constitution damage heals at twice the normal rate: 2 points per day rather than 1.

The character runs a risk of rejection if she takes damage while the immuno-suppressants remain in effect. If her hit points reach negative (1 + permanent Constitution bonus), she must make a Fortitude save for one of her implants, chosen at random. The DC of this save is 15 for minor modifications, 25 for major ones. The rejected biotech is intact and can be reinstalled later unless the Fortitude save is a natural 1, in which case the device is trashed and useless. Each additional hit point lost after reaching the rejection risk threshold requires another save for another randomly selected implant, until the character has died, healed enough to get above the threshold or made a save (successful or not) for each of her implants.

Naturally, performing these operations in an area where diseases are common and hygiene is poor is a really bad idea — without a working immune system, even a common flu can prove to be lethal. A subject with a suppressed immune system should spend her time in as sterile an environment as possible. If she is in a non-sterile environment, she must make a Fortitude save each day or become ill. Engaging in combat is particularly dangerous, since while wounds still heal, they do so slowly and the body's natural defenses cannot fight infection.

The following table features the DC of the save in broad strokes. The GM should feel free to adjust the DC in either direction, depending on the exact circumstances, though some example modifiers are included:

The actual details of illness are left up to the GM (see *d20 Modern*, Chapter Seven: Gamemastering, "The Modern World," *Disease* for general disease rules). In most cases, even minor wounds get easily infected; fever is common; and influenzas, coughs, stomach bugs and other similar problems become serious problems. They begin to clear up soon after the subject's immune system starts functioning again, but prolonged suppression can easily lead to death.

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Environment	DC	Example
Normal	10	Sitting around in an ordinary, decently cleaned room.
Risky	20	Talking to someone who has the flu, staying in a building with vermin in it.
Hostile	30	A plague pit, a room with a rotting corpse in it.
Bruised	+2	Bruises, but no broken skin or serious wounds.
Wounded	+5	Wounds that bleed.
Seriously wounded	+10	Lost more than two-thirds of total hit points.
Disinfected	–5	The patient is thoroughly cleaned with disinfectants on a regular basis.

IMPLANTS

Implants are biotechnological units inserted into a host body, designed to significantly enhance the host's capabilities. Installing an implant always requires surgery, since the implant has to be inserted into the proper place in the host body. Once there, the implant's instincts take over and it bonds itself with the neural system, so the surgeon only needs to get it in the right position and stitch the patient up afterwards. In-depth knowledge of neurology is not required.

While the implant is being inserted into the body and for a short period of time afterwards, the subject usually experiences strange sensations in the area around the implant. The implant is attaching itself to the nervous system, which results in mixed signals. It's not uncommon to feel as if the body part in question is strangely hot, cold or itchy, and slight involuntary movements and muscle twitches are inevitable. The experience isn't usually at all painful, just strange. At the GM's discretion, characters attempting particularly demanding tasks may need to succeed in a Concentration check first, with the standard difficulties given in *d20 Modern*.

Once the immuno-suppressants wear off and the implant has been accepted by the host body, it starts to function. What this means in practice depends on the implant. Some implants only have a localized effect, such as modifying blood chemistry when needed, whereas others set to work transforming an entire aspect of the host body. Some implants even

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metastasize themselves all over the body in order to influence large portions of it.

Once installed, an implant cannot be removed without surgery; it becomes an integral part of the host body. Once removed from the host, the implant can be used again, though a failed surgery attempt will destroy the implant. After the implant itself is removed, any new organs it created (including any metastasizing it may have done) and other physical changes imposed by it are quickly reabsorbed by the host body.

The appearance of implants varies wildly, but all of them look like bizarre internal organs, complete with all the slime and naked, moist flesh one would expect from such things. They need to be stored in special containers that provide them with nutrients and protect them from the environment. If left out of their containers for extended periods of time, they will die.

Implants that grant minor modifications take 36 hours after the immuno-suppressants wear off to adjust to the host body, whereas implants that grant major modifications require a 72-hour adjustment period.

GRAFTS

While implants are located inside the host's body, grafts are simply attached to skin or other external features. Most of the time, grafts are clearly visible on the host body, but they can be worn under loose clothing. The nature of the graft usually dictates its location; if not, the graft can be attached anywhere on the body. Grafts that are designed to filter out poisons, for example, are attached to the midsection, while enhanced hearing biotechnology is usually attached to the subject's head, and so forth. Some grafts come in several parts that need to be attached in different locations — grafts that improve the user's vision are a good example of this.

Grafts appear very different from implants. It's easy to tell that grafts are living organisms. Most of them are covered with a flexible skin or a chitinous shell, and they tend to feel warm to the touch. The underside of a graft, the part of its surface that is designed to attach itself to a host, feels soft, flexible and slightly slimy. A closer inspection reveals hundreds of small, almost transparent tendrils, the tips of which reach through the membrane and slowly sway in the air currents. These are the nerve fibers that link the graft to the host's nervous system.

Grafts have the advantage that they are more easily installed and removed than implants, but they aren't as powerfu. While grafts can grant the user specific abilities, they can't give the user the kind of across-the-board improvements implants are capable of. (In other words, grafts grant the user specific powers or increases to specific skills, but they cannot raise the subject's abilities, Defense or provide other generic improvements.)

Unlike implants, grafts don't need special containers; they can enter a state of hibernation when they are not in use, and thus survive even for centuries.

Attaching a graft is not very difficult. As with implants, the subject's immune system must be suppressed, but since grafts simply merely insert their tendrils into the host and use them to interface with the nervous system instead of actually becoming a part of the host the way implants do, the risk of rejection is far smaller. The process is not at all painful, though as with implants, strange sensations aren't uncommon while the graft is being attached.

Grafts are easily removed. A character with the Treat Injury skill can make a check to do so against DC 10. The character can even do it herself without any penalties, if the graft is in an easily accessible position that leaves the character's hands free. Removing the graft takes 1d6+4 minutes, and it can then be used again. If the check fails, the graft is still removed, but is destroyed in the process.

Grafts can simply be torn off. This takes a single full-round action, and it is excruciatingly painful. The tendrils are torn out of the host's nervous system. While this doesn't cause any actual damage, it still hurts like hell; if the host is unlucky, the graft sends a wave of stunningly powerful signals through the host's nervous system. The host must make a Fortitude save (DC 25) or become stunned for 1d6+3 rounds. If the save is successful, there are no ill effects besides the terrible but brief pain. Most users prefer to keep their grafts hidden under clothing when possible — in a combat situation, the results of someone tearing a graft off can be disastrous. Note that grafts are considered to be well secured, and thus the target gets a +4 bonus on his Defense roll. Regardless of whether the Fortitude save is successful, the graft is destroyed.

If the host is attempting to quickly tear the graft off herself, she must first make a Will save (DC 15). Failure means that the pain is too much for her and she cannot bring herself to remove it.

In any case, a graft has a limited lifespan; unlike non-living technology, it ages and grows tired. In game terms, whenever the character activates the graft, the player marks the occasion down on his character sheet or a piece of paper. For every 10 uses of the graft, he must make a Fortitude save for the

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graft. The base Fortitude save DC is 2: The DC is increased by +2 for every 10 uses of a graft that grants a minor modification, and by+5 for every 10 uses of a graft that grants a major modification.

If the save fails, the graft has been exhausted (though there's still enough energy left for this one last use). When this happens, the graft simply disconnects itself and drops off. The tendrils wither away and die, and the now-consumed graft itself becomes nothing more than a lifeless chunk of biomass.

Grafts only require 12 hours to adjust to the host body, regardless of their power level.

CELLULAR TRANSFORMATION EFFECTS

When it comes to CT caused by random mutation, the GM should always bear in mind that mutations are fairly common in **Gamma World**, and the characters should probably face them on a somewhat frequent basis, particularly if they're traveling. There are always old, rusty and leaky barrels of ancient chemicals lying around; malfunctioning nanomachines floating in the wind, looking for a bit of random cell structure to alter; and ancient satellites finally streaking down as fiery, terribly irradiated comets when their decaying orbits finally bring them down to terra firma….

Common or not, mutations certainly shouldn't be everyday things accepted with a shrug and a bit of scribbling on the character sheet. Good or bad, a mutation is always a strange, wondrous and highly personal event, and the GM is encouraged to describe them in detail and even come up with his own, if the ones presented here aren't to her liking. A mutation is never just a simple bonus or penalty to a die roll; it always changes the character physically and/or mentally, and often permanently.

Players, for their part, should accept the fact that their characters are likely to change rapidly once the game gets underway — more rapidly, in fact, than characters in most other games do. Don't worry about it. This is a key part of what makes playing **Gamma World** such an exciting experience! Negative mutations can often seem crippling, but bear in mind that what doesn't kill you, makes you stronger — and with a bit of luck, there are plenty of opportunities for you to become much stronger.

CT effects can be positive or negative in overall effect and minor or major in strength. Note that characters may well encounter a mutation that is clearly the exact opposite of a previous mutation. In such cases, one mutation counters the other, returning the character back to his original state (as far as that particular mutation is concerned, anyway). It's also possible that a mutation counteracts the effects of a graft or an implant, in which case the biotechnology in question is, in fact, the only thing keeping the character from feeling the full effects of the mutation (though physical changes associated with the mutation are still likely to occur).

HARMFUL OR BENEFICIAL?

In this text, positive and negative mutations are labeled as such according to their most basic and obvious applications. However, situations may well arise where an otherwise crippling mutation may prove to be extremely useful, and vice versa. A horribly ugly mutant may well get an Intimidate bonus, and a power like Gills, despite its obvious drawbacks on dry land, is extremely useful in the water. Mutations are often mixed blessings.

In the following pages are listed a number of CT effects. Here is the format for CT effect descriptions:

CT EFFECT NAME

Description of what the effect does in plain language, with no game mechanics.

Type: Whether the modification is positive or negative.

Effect: What the game mechanical results of the modification are.

Biotech: The type of biotechnology that can be used to attain this effect, if any. Note that this indicates whether biotechnology *can* duplicate the effect, not whether such a biodevice is actually likely to be found anywhere.

MINOR MODIFICATIONS

Minor CTs, while noticeable, are still relatively insignificant — at least on the grand scale of mutations — and a single effect of this level isn't likely to change the character in truly major ways. Also, while many of these effects change the subject's physical appearance, the results are rarely drastic enough to make the character appear truly inhuman.

You should also bear in mind that in most cases, the physical results are highly individualized. One mutant with Toughened Skin may have fine, flexible scales covering

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his body; another's complexion resembles an elephant's; and a third one appears quite normal, if somewhat weather-worn. The GM and the player should work out the exact appearance (if any) of the mutation together.

Unless noted otherwise in specific descriptions, the subject may undergo these mutations multiple times, which can naturally lead to very interesting results. However, this *only* applies to mutations. Implants and grafts cannot be "stacked." If the subject already has a certain power or quality through an implant but now receives it again via mutation, the biodevice is automatically rejected, and the character gains the ability as an innate power. The exception to this rule is that if the character had a previous negative mutation that is now countered by a new positive mutation, then the biotech stays in place, and now provides a positive effect (as opposed to merely canceling out a negative one).

If the player and GM prefer, mutations that offer multiple options within a single category may complement rather than cancel each other. A character with both Ability Enhancement and Ability Degradation could choose the same ability for each and end up back where he started, but he could also have one ability rise and another fall so that each mutation has a distinct and noticeable effect.

ABILITY CHANGES

When reading through the CT effects, it soon becomes obvious that, particularly with major modifications, a character can quickly become extremely powerful or extremely weak in certain abilities. This condition is not likely to be permanent, as new mutations or applications of biotech can further change the abilities in question.

When an increase in character level allows the player to increase an ability (4th, 8th, 12th, 16th, 20th), players may choose to increase an ability that has been brought particularly low by a mutation. Bear in mind that this doesn't cancel the generic effects of the mutation. Rather, it's an indication that even characters brought down by bad luck can still aspire to win with the cards they have been dealt. Thus, if someone is unlucky enough to get hit by Mental Degeneration and his Intelligence drops to 3, he can increase his Intelligence if his new level allows him to do so. Of course, an Intelligence score of 4, while a vast improvement over his previous state, still isn't very good. It is likely to take another mutation or some other external factor to restore the character back to normal levels of intelligence.

ABILITY DEGRADATION

Ability Degradation is a catch-all term for a mutation that negatively affects one of the character's abilities.

Type: Negative

Effect: When the character receives this mutation, roll 1d6 to randomly determine which one of her abilities is affected. The exact effects depend on the ability in question, as follows. Roll 1d6. Assign the mutation to the following ability: 1, Strength; 2, Dexterity; 3, Constitution; 4, Intelligence; 5, Wisdom; 6, Charisma. If the character already has this mutation and the roll for the new result indicates a currently modified ability, the player may choose to add another level of mutation to that ability, or to modify the roll by +/–1 and apply the level of mutation to the other ability instead.

• *Strength:* The subject's muscles waste away and lose strength. The target's Strength decreases by –1.

• *Dexterity:* Neural pathways degrade and wither away, causing the subject's reflexes and hand-eye coordination to suffer. The subject's Dexterity decreases by –1. Also, if the subject mutates in this fashion twice, her speed decreases by –5 ft.

• *Constitution:* The mutation causes the subject's body to become weaker and more susceptible to harm. The subject appears slightly thinner and paler than before. Light hair loss, annoying but harmless skin conditions and other similar side effects are common. The subject's Constitution decreases by –1.

• *Intelligence:* The subject's intelligence becomes dulled as his very brain structure warps and degrades into a less-efficient form. The subject's Intelligence decreases by –1. Note that if the subject's Intelligence becomes lower than 3, he loses the ability to form coherent thoughts and becomes little more than an animal, though he may still retain some understanding of the social relationships he used to entertain. Feelings of affection and loyalty (or fear and hatred) tend to remain, as well as certain skills, such as the ability to use simple melee weapons. Whether a subject thus mutated retains skills, tendencies, affiliations or other qualities is up to the GM, but PCs reduced to this level should probably be placed under GM control. The change in Intelligence affects the number of skill points available at new levels beginning with the next level increase. Characters who choose this as part of character creation apply the change to their 1st-level skill points and all levels thereafter.

• *Wisdom:* In the subject's brain, highly localized areas are twisted and consumed by mutation, causing the subject to become less adept at understanding her

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surroundings. The subject's Wisdom decreases by –1. If the subject tries to remember something she should know but doesn't ordinarily think about on a regular basis (the name of a childhood friend or the exact layout of the home village left behind months ago, for example) she must make a Will save against DC 5. If she suffers this mutation multiple times, the DC is increased by +5 every time. Note that information or skills vital to the character's survival, or encountered or practiced on a regular basis — how to fight, names of friends, often used security procedures, etc. — remain unaffected.

• *Charisma:* Minute changes in brain chemistry lead to the emergence of a new personality— and unfortunately, it is less pleasant than the original. While the subject retains all memories, opinions, allegiances and other relevant features of his old personality, he simply no longer possesses the social skills he used to — he becomes less suave, his self-confidence appears to be lacking, and presenting his views and thoughts is no longer as simple as it used to be. Quite simply, his potential for diplomacy or pleasant conversation is significantly reduced. The subject's Charisma decreases by –1, and the player should roleplay out the change in personality towards a less pleasant type.

Biotech: No

ABILITY ENHANCEMENT

This is a catch-all term for a mutation that positively affects one of the character's abilities.

Type: Positive

Effect: When the character receives this mutation, roll 1d6 to randomly determine which one of her abilities is affected. The exact effects depend on the ability in question, as follows. Roll 1d6. Assign the mutation to the following ability: 1, Strength; 2, Dexterity; 3, Constitution; 4, Intelligence; 5, Wisdom; 6, Charisma. If the character already has this mutation and the roll for the new result indicates a currently modified ability, the player may choose to add another level of mutation to that ability or to modify the roll by +/–1 and apply the level of mutation to the other ability instead.

• *Strength:* The subject's muscles swell with newfound power! The subject's Strength increases by +1.

• *Dexterity:* The subject's nervous system is greatly enhanced and improved. He now reacts faster and move with greater accuracy than before. The subject's Dexterity increases by 1. Also, if the subject mutates in this fashion twice, his speed increases by +5 ft.

• *Constitution:* The subject's bone structure becomes stronger and her immune system grows more potent. She appears to be more vital and healthier than she was before. The subject's Constitution increases by +1.

• *Intelligence:* Intellectual potential is greatly increased as the subject's brain spawns new neurons and opens new pathways, thus allowing the subject to process information far more efficiently. His Intelligence increases by +1. If his Intelligence score exceeds 18, visible physical transformations are inevitable: His cranium bulges as bone structure is altered to make space for increased intellectual capacity. Subjects with animal-level intelligence can gain self-consciousness and the capability for abstract reasoning if they undergo this mutation. The change in Intelligence affects the number of skill points available at new levels beginning with the next level increase. Characters who choose this as part of character creation apply the change to their 1st-level skill points and for all levels thereafter.

• *Wisdom:* Inside the subject's skull, brain cells multiply rapidly and reconfigure themselves, granting the mutant a greatly improved capacity to perceive the minute details the world she lives in. Wisdom increases by +1. If the subject already suffers from the negative counterpart of this effect, the DC for Will saves made in order to remember things is decreased by –5.

• *Charisma:* The subject's brain chemistry is altered, and that in turn affects his personality in a drastic way — it is greatly improved towards a more likeable type. The subject retains all memories, opinions, allegiances and other relevant features of his old personality, but through a combination of improved self-confidence, increased charisma and natural people skills he becomes a more affable and pleasant person, at least in potential (there is, of course, nothing to keep him from appearing rude if he so desires). The subject's Charisma increases by +1, and the player should roleplay out the change in personality toward a more charming type.

Biotech: Implant

ADRENALINE BOOST

The subject's adrenal gland starts to secrete a far more potent type of adrenaline, enabling her to react to threats faster.

Type: Positive

Effect: The character gains a +2 bonus on her initiative checks and a +1 bonus on her Reflex saves.

Biotech: Implant, Graft

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BUM LEG

One of the character's legs is weakened by mutation, causing her to move more slowly. The mutation tends to manifest as slightly shriveled muscles on one of her legs, but it may also appear to be a tumor or some other impediment that causes her to limp.

Type: Negative

Effect: The character's speed is decreased by –5. There are no combat penalties, but the GM may wish to impose a –2 circumstance penalty on any check or action where a bad leg would clearly be an impediment, including most Jump checks, certain types of Climb checks, or Disguise, if the character is attempting to fool people who know that she has a limp (or that the person she's impersonating doesn't).

If the mutant gets two Bum Legs, her movement speed is cut in half, and the penalty on appropriate checks is –4. Unless the mutant has more than two legs, she can only be hit by this mutation twice. If the mutation comes up a third time, simply reroll it.

Biotech: Implant

CLAWS

The subject's hands now have tough, bony claws. Whether they sprout from fingertips, the back of the hand or even the side of the hand is up to the player, as is their exact appearance.

Type: Positive

Effect: The subject may now cause lethal damage with unarmed attacks, and is never considered unarmed. She now does 1d6 points of damage with punches.

This mutation can only occur once. If the character already has Claws, reroll the mutation.

Biotech: Implant, Graft

CRACKING JOINTS

The mutant's joints emit loud, cracking and grinding noises whenever he moves, particularly if he bends his joints. This painless and harmless, but somewhat unnerving to others. Moving quietly becomes very difficult.

Type: Negative

Effect: The character receives a –3 penalty on all Move Silently checks. When he is not attempting to move silently, his enemies receive a +3 bonus on Listen checks made to determine surprise (do not apply both the penalty and the bonus to the same situation). Obviously, if the character is lying in wait with a sniper rifle, it doesn't matter that his finger may make a cracking noise when he pulls the trigger — at that point, the targets are likely to be alarmed anyway.

Biotech: Implant

COWARDICE

The character's natural "fight or flight" instincts become more powerful, with a heavy emphasis on the latter. Even small threats can make the mutant run away in blind terror, and initiating battles is extremely hard for her, even when it would be tactically advantageous. On the other hand, when confronted with a threat she cannot escape from, she fights like a cornered beast. Sadly, that doesn't make her a particularly dependable ally.

Type: Negative

Effect: The character is automatically shaken in combat (–2 on attack rolls, saving throws and skill checks). At the end of each round in which the character has taken damage from any source, she must make a Will save (DC 15) or become panicked, fleeing as fast as possible until out of line of sight of the source of the damage. While panicked, she can attack but not defend.

If she fails the save but is in a situation where she cannot escape without attracting attacks of opportunity — backed in a corner, for example, or surrounded by enemies so that she cannot withdraw from combat — a fear-fueled rage comes over her, and she gains +3 on all attack rolls until she can flee.

Biotech: No

FLEXIBLE BONES

The subject's bones become slightly flexible and can be bent at will — not much, but enough to make it easier to squeeze into small spaces.

Type: Positive

Effect: The character gains a +3 bonus on all Escape Artist checks, including opposed checks to escape a grapple or a pin. The character can now fit into smaller spaces, but within reason — a slight flexibility like this may be enough for an adult to squeeze through an opening only a child could normally use, but it won't help him get through a locked door or a gap a few inches wide.

If the mutant receives this power twice, even his skull can now be flexed at will, and he can now fit into any space he could ordinarily get both his fists into, though moving through such a space is extremely slow and unpleasant. His speed is reduced to 5 feet when pushing through such a small space, and it takes a full action to squeeze his head into that space. A mutant cannot receive Flexible Bones a third time — if that happens, simply reroll the mutation.

Biotech: Implant

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GLASS JAW

The mutation causes the character's brain to become more vulnerable to certain types of damage and shock, causing him to be more likely to pass out when damaged or influenced by outside forces seeking to disable him.

Type: Negative

Effect: The character's massive damage threshold is effectively reduced by –4 against nonlethal damage. He also receives a –2 penalty on all Fortitude saving throws made to see if he remains conscious.

Biotech: Implant

GREEDY METABOLISM

Greedy Metabolism manifests itself as a constant feeling of hunger. The character's metabolism is *too* efficient for her own good, as all of the food she consumes is quickly used up. Typically, characters with this mutation are extremely thin: Not skin and bones, necessarily, but there is very little in the way of fat, and any bulging muscles are quickly replaced by wiry strength. Mutants with Greedy Metabolism also tend to suffer from constant low blood sugar, which makes them easily irritated.

Type: Negative

Effect: The subject is constantly hungry, and needs to eat four times as much food as a normal human. If she cannot eat enough, she becomes fatigued until she gets enough food. In a situation where starvation is a risk, she deteriorates four times faster than a character with a normal metabolism (see *d20 Modern*, Chapter Seven: Gamemastering, "The Modern World," *Starvation and Thirst*). If a mutant goes longer than 3 hours without eating, she becomes extremely irritable. This should largely be roleplayed out, but the GM may call for Will saves to determine whether the character becomes angry or snaps at people at particularly critical junctures.

If the mutant already has Greedy Metabolism, reroll the mutation.

Biotech: Implant, Graft

HEARING, IMPROVED

The subject's ears become sharper.

Type: Positive

Effect: The subject gains a +3 bonus on all Listen checks.

Biotech: Implant, Graft

HEARING, WEAKENED

The subject's hearing becomes weaker.

Type: Negative

Effect: The subject gains a –3 penalty on all Listen checks. When in noisy environments, particularly in combat, he must now make Listen checks (DC 15) to hear noises that people with normal hearing can hear automatically.

Biotech: No.

THE HIRSUTE HORROR

All of the character's body hair starts to grow at a tremendous rate; even the lightest and thinnest hairs gain thickness and volume. She attains a five o'clock shadow in minutes and has hair pouring out of her sleeves in hours. Shaving in the morning can take a good while. The character leaves large clumps of cut hair wherever she goes, and the effect can easily cause social problems. Appearing neat for extended periods of time is effectively impossible.

Type: Negative

Effect: If the character goes for longer than 6 hours without attending to her body hair by cutting off the excess, it starts to get in the way of normal movement, giving a –1 penalty on all actions that require quick movement and accuracy. Combat in particular is affected, but other attempts at physical activities may also suffer. Movement speed is decreased by –5 feet. The GM may impose other penalties as he sees fit, particularly in social situations, where a –2 circumstance penalty will often apply.

These penalties double every 6 hours. Thus, 24 hours without cutting away hair means a –8 penalty on all physical actions that require quick movement and accuracy, and speed would be decreased by –40, slowing most humans down to a stumbling crawl — no wonder, considering the massive amounts of hair trailing after the poor mutant.

Cutting the excess hair is simple enough, and can be done in 3 rounds, regardless of its length — provided that the character has a sharp blade at hand and that she doesn't mind looking like a badly trimmed poodle.

Biotech: Implant

INKWELL

The mutant can instantly spit out a cloud of black, oily smoke around her, effectively blinding everyone within.

Type: Positive

Effect: The cloud spat out by the mutant instantly engulfs everything around her within a radius of 25 feet, and remains in effect for 1d6+1 rounds, after which it disappears almost instantly. The cloud blocks all light in its confines, granting the mutant (and

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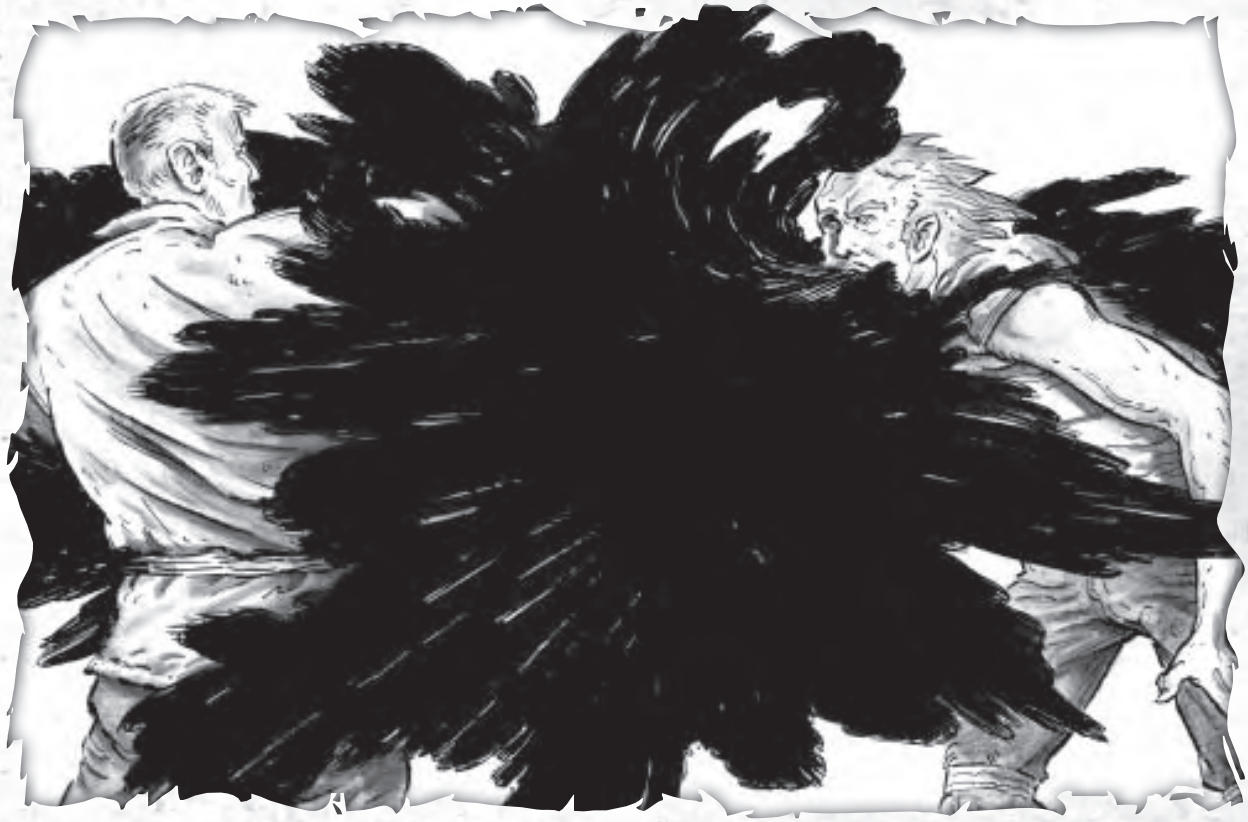

everyone else in the cloud) total concealment; all attacks suffer a 50% miss chance, and the attacker must guess at his target's location to even make an attack. Light-intensifying methods of darkvision don't work, since there is no light to intensify.

The mutant cannot see in her own ink cloud, but she is immune to attacks of opportunity made within the cloud except from opponents who can somehow see within the cloud or can use a sense other than sight for targeting.

Biotech: Implant, Graft

MALFORMED MOUTH

The character's mouth becomes less flexible and the muscles around it become twisted and subject to minor yet noticeable spasms. Not only does this make eating somewhat difficult, but the character's speech is also impaired. She can still communicate with others, but speaking clearly is difficult.

Type: Negative

Effect: The character gains a –2 penalty on all checks to influence others by talking to them. It's hard to appear convincing when others have trouble understanding what's being said to them. There's an additional –1 penalty if the character attempts to speak quickly, particularly if those she's talking to are in great hurry to go elsewhere or are distracted by something else.

Biotech: Implant

METABOLIC BOOST

The character's metabolism is more efficient than a normal human's. While this means that the character needs a bit more food than others, on the upside the character also heals faster than normal humans.

Type: Positive

Effect: Whenever the character regains hit points (through natural healing, uses of the Treat Injury skill or through some other means), he regains 2 extra hit points. However, he also needs to eat twice as much as normal humans, and can only survive half as long without food and drink before he starts to starve (see *d20 Modern*, Chapter Seven: Gamemastering, "The Modern World," *Starvation and Thirst*).

If the mutant already has Metabolic Boost, reroll the mutation.

Biotech: Implant, Graft

NIMBLE FINGERS

The subject's fingers become faster and more accurate, and his sense of touch is greatly enhanced.

Type: Positive

Effect: The subject gains a +2 bonus on all skill checks involving Craft (electronic, mechanical), Demolitions, Disable Device, Gamble, Perform (keyboards, percussion instruments, stringed instruments, wind instruments), Repair, Sleight of

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Hand and Treat Injury, but only when those skills are used in a situation where success is determined by manual dexterity. (For example, a character using Gamble while rolling dice gets the bonus, but another picking out numbers for roulette does not.)

Biotech: Implant, Graft

PARASITE

The mutant gains the ability to latch onto the "life force" of other beings and transfer some of it to his own body. The exact science behind this power is unknown, but it has been theorized by some of the more adventurous scholars that those with this power can somehow refocus the target's morphogenic field to regenerate parts of his own body with energy stolen from the target. The fact that sometimes the target's personality traits become manifest in the mutant might support this admittedly wild theory.

Type: Positive

Effect: The mutant must touch his target to use this power. The target makes a Fortitude save against DC (10 + 1/2 the mutant's character level + his Charisma bonus). The target suffers 1d8 points of damage, which the mutant receives as healing; the damage is halved if the save succeeds. This can take the mutant beyond his normal hit point total; the excess are lost in 1 hour. However, if the character uses this power more than once a day on a single target, he automatically acquires the dominant features of his victim's personality, although his loyalties and motivations remain unchanged. This effect lasts for the next 1d6 hours.

Biotech: Implant, Graft

POISON TOUCH

Poison glands grow in the subject's body, allowing him to secrete a potent toxin from his hands at will.

Type: Positive

Effect: The subject makes a touch attack, and if successful, inflicts poison damage on the target. However, if the target is wearing a containment suit or is otherwise protected from physical contact, this power is ineffective.

The poisoned individual must make an initial Fortitude save (DC 15). If he fails, he takes 1d2 points of temporary ability damage. Whether he succeeds or fails he must save again (Fortitude save DC 15) against the poison's secondary damage, another 1d2 points of temporary ability damage. The ability affected by the poison is one of Strength, Dexterity or Constitution, depending on the type of Poison Touch. The affected ability is determined randomly in case of mutation; if this power is granted by biotech, the type is predetermined for each implant or graft. (See *d20 Modern*, Chapter Seven: Gamemastering, "The Modern World," *Poison* for more detailed poison rules.)

This power can be used three times a day. After that, 8 hours of rest are required to refill the poison glands.

If the mutant already has Poison Touch, reroll the mutation.

Biotech: Implant, Graft

PSYCHIC APTITUDE

The subject's brain reconfigures its neural pathways, and in a flash of firing neurons the character gains the ability to access the psionic wavelength — or, if she already has that capability, becomes more adept at accessing it.

Type: Positive

Effect: If the character wasn't capable of using psionic powers before, she now gains that ability (see Psionics, below), as well as one basic psionic power of her choice. If she already had that capability, and gains this power by mutation, she immediately gains a +10 bonus on her next roll to learn a new psionic talent.

If induced by biotech instead of mutation, this effect is unique in that once installed, it becomes permanent, even if the biodevice causing it is removed — once the brain becomes capable of accessing the psionic frequencies, the capability cannot be suppressed. Indeed, biodevices that bestow this capability to their hosts are often referred to as jump-starters. However, the biodevice is drained completely of all psionic energy during installation; therefore, only a single recipient can benefit from these unique biodevices.

Biotech: Implant, Graft

SKIN, SOFT

The subject's skin becomes softer and more pliable, resembling the skin of a newborn baby, making him more vulnerable to damage.

Type: Negative

Effect: The subject's receives a –1 penalty to his Defense.

Biotech: No

SKIN, TOUGHENED

The subject's skin becomes tough, almost leathery or pelt-like, granting increased protection against damage.

Type: Positive.

Effect: The subject gains a +1 bonus to her Defense.

Biotech: Implant

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THE STENCH

This mutation causes the character's sweat, breath and other similar sources of body odors to become extremely strong. While the Stench isn't unbearable, it's definitely unpleasant enough for people to avoid spending much time around the character if they can help it, and to maintain a bit of a distance when talking to her.

Type: Negative

Effect: Whenever the character is attempting an action where the outcome depends on peoples' reactions, she suffers a –2 penalty on the check. If she is meeting the other party for the first time (and thus making a first impression), the penalty is –4. If the character is communicating with someone at a distance — shouting to someone across a river or talking on the radio, for example — the penalty doesn't apply.

Anyone trying to track the character by scent gets a +4 circumstance bonus for the Stench.

If the mutant already has the Stench, reroll the mutation.

Biotech: Implant, Graft

STRONG GRIP

The muscles in the character's hands become stronger. This is particularly useful when wrestling with someone or doing something else that requires a strong handhold.

Type: Positive

Effect: The character receives a +2 bonus on all grapple checks, as well as on all skill checks in situations where the strength of the character's grip is an issue. It does not provide a bonus on efforts to gain leverage, lift heavy objects and the like, but it does enhance efforts to climb safely, to hold onto a rope or lasso in slippery circumstances, and other tasks where there's a risk of losing hold of something. This includes resisting disarm attempts.

He also receives a +1 bonus on all damage rolls against grappled opponents.

Biotech: Implant, Graft

TRIBAL MENTALITY

The mutant's natural tendency to follow the lead of those he considers his tribesmen or allies careens out of control, and he finds it increasingly hard to maintain his identity and self-control while in a group of people. It is exceedingly difficult for him to lead others, and even voicing his own opinions is hard. Should he fall in with a bad crowd, the results can be very unpleasant.

Type: Negative

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Effect: If the character is in a group of more than four people, he automatically starts to agree with them, follow their lead and do as they do.

If he wants to resist the effects, he needs make a Will save against DC 10. Add +1 to the DC for every person in the group beyond the first four, to a maximum of 25. If he is merely trying to voice an opinion but not actually resisting the urge to follow the group's initiative, he receives a +5 bonus on his save. If he actually tries to lead the group, the DC increases by +5, to a maximum of 30.

Biotech: No

VISION, IMPROVED

The subject's vision becomes unusually acute.

Type: Positive

Effect: The subject gains a +3 bonus on all Spot checks.

Biotech: Implant, Graft

VISION, WEAKENED

The subject's vision dims noticeably.

Type: Negative

Effect: The subject gains a –3 penalty on all Spot checks. She also gets a –1 penalty on all ranged attack rolls.

Biotech: No.

MAJOR MODIFICATIONS

Major cellular modifications always result in great changes to the character, and almost always change the character's physical appearance enough for the change to be instantly noticeable and, more often than not, quite outlandish. While beneficial mutations of this level can be a great boon to the character, the flip side of the coin can be horrifying — the results of a major CT gone wrong can be frightening, crippling or sometimes, when circumstances are against the subject, even lethal.

Only major mutations that grant a direct bonus to abilities can strike the same target twice — mutations that grant special powers, attacks or other qualities can only occur once. (Gills, below, are an exception.) Reroll any invalid duplicates.

ARACHNOFIBER PRODUCTION

Spidersilk has the highest tensile strength of any natural substance known to man. This mutation causes the character to generate a similar substance within her body which she can spin, creating beautiful and durable strands she can shape at will. The process is strange and — some think — somewhat disturbing, but no one can deny the beauty of it. The mutant produces thin and silvery yet extremely strong filaments.

Type: Positive

Effect: The character becomes capable of spinning two types of silk — sticky and non-sticky strands — and the character may spin either at her discretion. The former is used to spin webs that can catch and trap unwary enemies, and the latter is particularly useful for descending great distances, constructing barriers, or simply spinning out extremely lightweight and durable rope. In either case, the strands are quite flexible, yet extremely strong; the strands have 14 hit points and a break DC of 30.

The character may spin her silk at a rate of 20 feet per round, up to a 100 feet of strand before her supply runs out. The fluid is naturally replenished at a rate of 20 feet of silk per hour. The character can instinctively build webs or other structures out of the silk, and she can easily attach strands to objects or specific spots, as long as she can reach them. It takes 20 feet of silk to block an entire 5-foot square so that no one can pass through without destroying the webbing first or becoming caught in it

While the webbing is not hard to spot under good lighting conditions, in badly lit areas it blends into the darkness, making it very difficult to spot (Spot checkDC 25). A victim who stumbles into the web must make a Reflex save against DC 25 or become entangled. If he fails the roll by more than 10, he is held so immobile that he is effectively grappled. He remains grappled until he manages to either extract himself from the webbing, or break the strands that hold him. The mutant can never be entangled in her own webs.

The silk starts to lose cohesion after 48 hours, losing –5 from its break DC every 6 hours, until it becomes nothing more than dry and almost insubstantial wisps of fragile silk. Where exactly the silk is secreted from depends on the type of mutation or biodevice — it may come from the subject's chest, mouth, hands or even her backside, as if the character were a spider. In any case, the character needs her hands free to shape the solidifying fluid into a strand.

Biotech: Implant, Graft

BLIND RAGE

Wracked by constant pain caused by the everlasting nuclear fire that scorches every nerve ending in her body, the character is driven nearly insane, ready to snap at the slightest provocation. While she still retains her basic personality and doesn't necessarily want to hurt anyone, the constant pain is often simply too much for her, and she lashes out indiscriminately. While this makes her a

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formidable opponent in combat, it poses serious problems for her social life.

Type: Negative

Effect: Whenever the character faces an obstacle — be it a locked door, a missed transport, an obnoxious bouncer or a bandit — she makes a Will save against DC 25. If she succeeds, she keeps her temper and can deal with the situation in a rational manner. If she fails, she goes berserk and attempts to solve the problem by taking her rage out on everything nearby, starting with the offender and making her way to everyone else — people or inanimate objects. She always uses lethal force and cannot hold back; and owing to her unparalleled rage and savagery, her Strength increases by +2, and she gains an additional +2 bonus to all melee attacks and damage. She cannot use nanotechnology or ranged weapons, but she can draw or change weapons if doing so enables her to do more damage.

The rage persists until the original instigator has been destroyed or removed from the character's vicinity; after that the character may make a Will save against DC 20 to calm down. If she fails, she continues on to other targets in an order of convenience — whatever or whoever is closest to her is her next target, though people are preferred over inanimate objects. She may continue to attempt to make the Will save every round until she calms down; the DC decreases by –1 every round. If someone attempts to calm her down with a Diplomacy check (DC 20), she gets a +2 circumstance bonus to the next Will save. If something knocks her unconscious, she is calm again when she wakes up.

While berserk, the character cannot become cowered, dazed, nauseated, panicked or shaken, and even if her hit points fall below 0, she remains conscious and continues to take actions normally until she calms down or dies.

Biotech: Implant, Graft

FIRE LUNGS

Somewhere in the mutant's lungs, sacs of volatile chemicals hang. At will, the mutant may squirt these chemicals up into his mouth and spit them at his enemies. Once the chemicals mix together and encounter oxygen, they ignite in a stream of intensely hot, bright-green fire. The subject's lips and the interior of his mouth appear thick, almost waxen, and his breath always has a sharp smell reminiscent of gasoline.

Type: Positive

Effect: This ability functions like a flamethrower, doing 3d6 points of fire damage in a 15-foot cone or 5d6 points of fire damage in a 40-foot line, as the mutant chooses. Targets in the affected area may make a Reflex save against DC (10 + 1/2 the mutant's character level + the mutant's Charisma bonus) to take half normal damage.

The sacs only contain enough chemicals for three fiery shots, but they naturally refill themselves at a rate of one shot per hour.

Biotech: Implant, Graft

FROG LEGS

The mutant's leg muscles and bone structure gain amazing strength, enabling her to make great leaps. Despite the name, the appearance of the mutant's legs varies from case to case, though they are always grotesquely muscled and obviously inhuman in appearance — indeed, wearing conventional pants or boots isn't possible, though custom-made clothing is naturally an option.

Type: Positive

Effect: The character has a +30 bonus on all Jump checks. There is no maximum height for her jumps — she soars high as well as make long low jumps.

Biotech: Implant, Graft

GILLS

The character grows a pair of gills on the side of her upper neck, just below the jawline, and while she retains her lungs, they are no longer capable of extracting from air the oxygen she requires to sustain herself. Instead, she is now "breathing" water.

In order to survive, she must find a significant body of water, such as a river, pond, lake or sea. While a character stranded on dry land could certainly buy herself an extra five minutes by sticking her head into a bathtub full of water, she couldn't subsist on it for much longer than that (unless the bathtub was fitted with a water recycler to re-oxidize the water and remove excess carbon dioxide). A bucket of water might yield enough oxygen for the character to take the equivalent of a single breath; after that, the water would have to be replaced.

If fitted with a custom-made water-filled helmet that recycles the water, she can still venture into the atmosphere, though she obviously cannot easily communicate with people while wearing the helmet.

A more advanced version of this mutation bestows amphibious qualities upon the character.

Type: Negative

Effect: The character now requires water to survive the way she formerly required air. A character who mutates into this form on dry land with no water in sight is in mortal danger: She risks suffocating

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exactly the way a normal human would when underwater (see *d20 Modern*, Chapter Seven: Gamemastering, "The Modern World," *Suffocation And Drowning*). However, she can survive underwater indefinitely.

If the character is lucky enough to undergo this mutation twice, she mutates further and now becomes an amphibian, able to function on land as well as underwater without technological assistance. However, she now must return to water in order to breed, and can only procreate with beings who also have Gills through mutation. As a result of this complication and her greatly altered body chemistry, she loses all romantic and sexual interest in humans who do not share her particular mutation, though other social structures and interests remain intact.

Note that when this enhanced condition is granted by biotech, it is bestowed by a separate biodevice that can only be applied to a character who already has Gills through mutation or biotech. In such an instance, the limits on attraction and procreation don't apply.

Biotech: Implant, Graft

HALF-LIFE

Radiation takes a terrible toll on the subject and leaves her a mere shadow of her former self. Her skin becomes a dry mass of flaking skin; her hair falls off; and her eyes gain a piercing, green glow but recede deep into her skull. Loose, yellowing teeth rattle behind dry and cracked lips. She becomes unable to obtain sustenance from food or drink, but insteads draws power from radiation. Mutants cursed with this affliction often mutate more and more, as they constantly seek out new sources of radiation.

Type: Negative

Effect: All of the character's abilities decrease by –2. The character becomes immune to all damage and poisoning from radiation, as well as all radiation-based mutagens that aren't of intense level — indeed, instead of being harmed, she needs to spend time close to a source of radiation to survive, or die of the equivalent of starvation. It's not uncommon for these mutants to carry isotopes or other sources of radiation around with them to provide them with sustenance.

The mutant also gains the ability to automatically locate sources of radiation within a 10-mile radius around her and gauge their strength, as well as a psychological compulsion to seek them out — the stronger the source, the harder it is to resist its siren call. When encountering a source of radiation, the mutant is compelled to bask in its radioactive glory; to resist it, she must make a Will save at the same DC she would use when resisting mutation. (Thus, a character who encounters a source of intense radiation cannot help but seek it out, and will inevitably mutate further unless someone restrains her and removes her from the range. The character will fight those who try to keep her from reaching her destination.)

The character always receives a +2 circumstance bonus on Intimidate checks due to her horrifying condition.

Biotech: No

LOOSE JOINTS

The subject's joints becomes extremely loose, making him reminiscent of a human rag doll. So extreme is his condition that every joint in his body suddenly becomes so flexible as to be able to twist in any direction without any pain or resistance. Knees bend in the wrong direction so easily that the character has more trouble keeping his legs properly erect than demonstrating this ability to someone; even picking up a cup of hot beverage from a table can seem like an insurmountable problem when his grip holds, but his elbow simply bends in the wrong direction as he tries to raise the cup from the table! Indeed, talking to the character can be a strange experience, as even keeping his head properly upright often becomes a chore.

Type: Negative

Effect: Whenever the character attempts a physical action, such as climbing, running or fighting, he has to make a Reflex save against DC 20. (To speed combat, the player can roll a distinct Reflex save die along with her attack roll or check.) If he fails the save, the action fails because his joints refuse to lock in place and instead flail loosely back and forth; he spends a good deal of time falling down and picking himself up again. His speed is cut to one- third (round up). He gains a –3 penalty to Defense, due to his inability to move quickly and accurately.

While this condition makes it difficult for the character to act efficiently, particularly in close-combat situations, it does have a few advantages. All blunt impact damage — from punches, blunt melee weapons or even falls — is automatically halved, thanks to the character's tendency to flip this way and that when pushed. It's as if the character had a natural ability to roll with punches — or at least fold with them. Ranged and edged weapons do normal damage.

The looseness of his joints makes him a difficult opponent to control when wrestling, and thus he also gets a +2 bonus on grapple checks. The character also gains a +3 bonus on all Reflex saves where success

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means taking only half damage from an attack, and his extremely flexible body gives him a +4 bonus on all Escape Artist checks (this does not stack with his bonus on grapple checks). The character can fold himself into very small spaces and odd shapes if need be without suffering any ill effects.

MENTAL DEGENERATION

Radiation is not a gentle mistress, and it tends to take its toll. A mutant who suffers from this mutation has his brain so completely scrambled that he is only barely capable of abstract reasoning, and while he still retains his memories and skills, forming any even remotely complex thought is a painfully slow and laborious process for him. His personality, while basically intact, suffers a great deal; nearly all of his processing power is now devoted to comprehending the suddenly intimidating complexities of everyday situations. Much like a child, the mutant often asks questions that are completely obvious to people with normal intelligence.

Type: Negative

Effect: The character's Intelligence immediately drops to 3. While the game mechanical results of this are obvious, the player should also roleplay the results of this mutation — it should be a frightening experience to suddenly be unable to comprehend things, particularly so when your memories indicate that this should not be the case.

Ordinarily, this condition can only occur once to the character — if it happens again, reroll and pick another mutation. However, if the character regains his normal Intelligence, he once again becomes susceptible to this mutation.

Biotech: Implant

MENTAL OVERDRIVE

The character's brain mutates under the barrage of radiation, enabling her to process information far more efficiently than before and possibly turning her into a genius of positively superhuman caliber.

Type: Positive

Effect: The character's Intelligence is immediately increased by +6 (or to a minimum of 11, if her original Intelligence is lower than 5). If the subject's Intelligence is thus raised beyond 18, her skull visibly bulges and swells as her brain cells multiply rapidly.

Biotech: Implant

MONSTER

The mutation that made a monster out of man! Muscles swell beyond belief and the subject's entire body is transformed into something bigger, stronger and hardier; a mild-mannered adventurer becomes a veritable monster in a matter of minutes as clothes tear under the inexorable swell of flesh and bone — even the toughest of worn armor is destroyed during the transformation, though items kept in pockets, backpacks or other locations will most likely stay intact unless they are particularly brittle.

Type: Negative

Effect: Both the character's Strength and Constitution are increased by +3, to a minimum of 15. However, if the character's previous Strength or Constitution score was lower than 12, it becomes 18. Also, the character's Dexterity is decreased by –3. The character grows at least 4 inches, and gains at least 150 lbs. He also immediately gains 5 permanent hit points. At the same time, the character loses at least –3 points of Intelligence and Wisdom, reducing both scores to a maximum of 9 (or lower).

The subject's entire body grows bigger and somewhat disproportionate. Hands and feet in particular become very big, which can cause problems with certain tools or weapons that require human-sized hands. Generally speaking, the subject receives a –4 penalty on all actions that concern using a tool or weapon that has been designed for normal humans — trigger guards, grips, keypads and other features aren't usually made with fingers the size of cucumbers in mind. He is now considered to be a Large opponent.

Biotech: Implant

NERVOUS SPASMS

This mutation causes the character's neural system to become scrambled, as the biochemical electricity of the brain misfires on a regular basis. This results in constant muscle tics and jerking movements in the character's limbs, but it also means that occasionally strange feedback loops form and disable the character entirely for short periods of time if he encounters loud noises or bright lights. Obviously, this makes combat a notably risky proposition for the character.

Type: Negative

Effect: The character receives a –4 penalty on all actions that require steady hands and physical concentration, including using all ranged weapons. If he encounters particularly loud noises or bright, flashing lights, he must make a Will save against DC 15 or go into a seizure or become paralyzed (determine effect randomly). If the character is tired or stressed at the time, increase the DC by +5. If he is surprised by the stimuli, further increase the DC by +5.

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A seizure does no actual damage, but it lasts for 1d6+1 rounds, during which the character goes unconscious while his entire body jerks uncontrollably. He is rendered stunned for 1d3 rounds afterwards. If the character becomes paralyzed, the condition lasts for 1d8 +1 rounds. During this time, the character remains aware of his surroundings, but cannot move or communicate — he becomes entirely limp and slumps to the ground.

Biotech: Implant, Graft

PHEROMONES, DISCORDANT

The mutant's pheromones cause human beings in her vicinity to automatically dislike or even outright despise her. This mutation can be a terrible curse, as even former friends tend to avoid the mutant — they may respect her or consider her a useful member of the community, but that doesn't mean they want to spend time with her. Few mutants thus afflicted can avoid becoming outcasts and hermits, and maintaining romantic relationships becomes practically impossible.

Type: Negative

Effect: Whenever the mutant attempts to interact with others, either through Diplomacy or some other suitable skill, she receives a –6 penalty on all dice rolls. When she first meets people, their attitudes are automatically negatively adjusted by one step (see *d20 Modern*, Chapter Two: Skills, "Skill Descriptions," *Diplomacy*), unless they have specific and very significant reasons to like and respect the character (if this is the case, the conflicted emotions they feel may well lead to trouble — they aren't immune to the effect, they just respect the character or her status despite a strong urge to dislike her).

See Harmonious Pheromones for more information about the range and qualities of pheromones.

Biotech: Implant, Graft

PHEROMONES, HARMONIOUS

The mutant's pheromones — chemical compounds secreted by animals that affect other members of the same species and influence their behaviour — become more potent and, perhaps more importantly, quite enticing, making those close to him strongly predisposed towards liking him. In addition to the obvious advantages when it comes to finding companionship, it greatly reduces the risk of conflict with others, and makes the mutant a natural people person, leader and negotiator.

Type: Positive

Effect: The mutant gains a +6 bonus on all attempts to actively influence or coerce people. When first meeting people, their attitudes are automatically positively adjusted by one step (see *d20 Modern*, Chapter Two: Skills, "Skill Descriptions," *Diplomacy*), unless they have specific and significant reasons to be hostile or unfriendly towards the character (if this is the case, the conflicted emotions they feel may well lead to trouble — they aren't immune to the effect, they just hate the character despite a strong urge to like him).

Bear in mind that Harmonious Pheromones is not a mind control power. If the character asks others to jump off a cliff, they won't do it, no matter how much they like him. However, requests for assistance are likely to be well-received, and talking people into doing things they are reluctant to do is far easier than it otherwise would be.

As pheromones only affect members of the same species, highly mutated and intelligent animals or other, similar beings remain unaffected (supposing, of course, that the being with the Harmonious Pheromones is a human in the first place). A containment suit or any situation where there isn't shared atmosphere also nullifies the power.

The effect doesn't exactly have a range as such, since the chemicals drift around the characters, borne by air currents; assume that anyone within 30 feet of the character is affected in reasonably calm weather. In enclosed spaces, the range may well be higher. Also, wind conditions may carry the scent towards people — or away from them.

Biotech: Implant, Graft

QUANTUM ACTION

The mutant gains a subconscious quantum ability to assess and revise probabilities in her immediate surroundings. When faced with a difficult situation and looming, inevitable failure, she may instantly access the probability matrix of the action she is attempting and lift from it the circumstance where everything is otherwise identical with her own, but the action in question is successful. She then transmits that very difference from the matrix of potential outcomes and uses it to overwrite the reality of the situation at hand, thereby succeeding in the attempt. The only person aware of the difference is the mutant herself, and even she may not be entirely sure how she turned what she thought was a certain failure into a success.

However, there's a flip side to this power. Out of a little understood need for balance between the

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probability matrix and unfolding events (indeed, even at the height of human achievement, the very concept of the probability matrix and its implications were still largely theoretical), one of the actions the mutant undertakes afterwards becomes a disastrous failure. Still, in a desperate situation, this power may be quite the life-saver.

Type: Positive

Effect: The mutant may, after a failed die roll, declare that she uses this power. She then succeeds automatically in the action she was attempting, and the result is as good as it can possibly be under the circumstances. If the action in question is an attack, she automatically scores a critical hit. This power may only be used once every 24 hours. The player must make a Will save for the character against the same DC as the check affected by Quantum Action; if it fails, this use of Quantum Action costs 1 action point. If the mutant has already spent an action point during the round, she cannot use Quantum Action.

Biotech: No

RADIATION LEAK

The mutant becomes a walking source of radiation, lethal to all those around him. While this obviously makes him a dangerous enemy, it also makes leading a social life a supremely difficult and dangerous proposal. It's not uncommon for a character with this mutation to look relatively normal, except he is extremely pale and gaunt, and he glows very softly in the dark.

Type: Negative

Effect: The mutant emits damaging radiation in a 30 foot radius. Living beings take 1 point of radiation damage each round, and must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) against radiation poisoning. In addition, the mutant acts as a moderate mutagen to those he touches (a victim need only save once every 12 hours against this effect). Radiation resistance 1 or higher blocks the damage and protects the individual from the accompanying poison and mutation effects.

The mutant gains radiation resistance 10, and is immune to all mutation effects from radiation and radiation-based mutagens of less than intense level.

The mutant may choose to wear a containment suit to protect those around him and maintain social ties to his friends and companions. He may also suppress the effects of this mutation at will, though at a cost — the radiation now ravages his own insides. The character must first succeed in a Concentration check against DC 20. If successful, the radiation effects of are suppressed for a number of rounds equal to (2d6 + the mutant's Wisdom modifier). The GM determines the duration of the suppression in secret, so the character cannot be sure how long he can maintain his control, though he may choose to let the radiation flow freely again even before his time is up.

Each round the character suppresses the radiation, he takes 1d6+3 hit points of damage, plus an additional point of damage for every round he has already spent suppressing the effects. If he takes damage or is otherwise disturbed during this time, he must make a new Concentration check against DC 15, or release the pent-up radiation immediately.

When he finally releases the radiation, the effect's range is temporarily increased by 5 feet for every round he has spent suppressing the effect. The radiation damage is also increased by +1 per round of suppression, or by +2 for those who are touching the mutant. At GM's discretion, nearby flora and fauna may well mutate into strange and terrible forms, and an impressive light show is very likely to occur, though individual effects always vary depending on the circumstances.

Biotech: No

SOLAR DISCHARGE

A mutant with this power is capable of storing up the very power of the sun and releasing it from her eyes in a searing burst of brilliant heat. Starting fires, boiling water or roasting enemies is all in a day's work for a solar-powered character.

Type: Positive

Effect: The mutant can discharge concentrated, stored sunlight. The discharge emerges as a ray of medium range (100 ft. + 10 ft./character level), inflicting up to 6d6 points of fire damage (Reflex save DC [15 + the mutant's Constitution modifer] for half). The mutant decides at the time of discharge how many dice of damage to unleash. She makes a ranged touch attack against her chosen target; every individual in a direct line between her and her target is subject to the damage and fire effects. This effect cannot inflict a critical hit.

The mutant re-accumulates two dice worth of energy every hour she spends in direct sunlight, or one die each hour under overcast skies. For every 12 hours she goes without spending at least half an hour in natural daylight (overcast conditions suffice), her reserve diminishes by one die; if her reserve reaches zero, she becomes fatigued until she manages to regain at least one die of charge. Her reserve holds a maximum number of damage dice equal to her Constitution modifier + 12.

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SONIC SCREAM

Both the character's lungs and vocal chords mutate, allowing her to not only compress the air in her lungs, but also exhale it through her enhanced vocal chords with such force that she emits a powerful sonic scream. The scream either damages an opponent or interferes with the functionality of his inner ear, causing his sense of balance to fail. The character's neck usually swells noticeably with this mutation.

Type: Positive

Effect: This transformation encompasses two distinct effects. When the character receives it as a mutation, roll 1d6. On a result of 1–3, her vocal chords emit an audible scream; on a 4–6, her vocal chords emit a subsonic scream. A character with one of these effects cannot manifest the other; reroll if Sonic Scream comes up twice. Biodevices grant one predetermined effect or the other.

Upon mutation, the character gains the ability to emit a scream so loud as to shatter eardrums. The power causes 3d6 points of sonic damage and affects all individuals with unprotected hearing in a 60-foot cone (Fortitude save DC 20 for half). Those who fail also lose their hearing for 2d6+3 rounds. Characters with the Improved Hearing mutation get a –5 penalty on the Fortitude save, whereas characters with the Weakened Hearing mutation get a +5 bonus. Deaf characters are immune to this power.

Alternatively, the character emits a scream at a low frequency inaudible by normal humans, but which interferes with the inner ear (the system that regulates a human's center of balance). Individuals with unprotected hearing in a 60-foot cone must make Fortitude saves at DC 25 or lose their sense of balance for the next 1d6+4 rounds. For the duration of the effect, they are at a –4 penalty on all actions that require a functional sense of balance, and actions that require hand-eye coordination more complex than picking something up from the ground (the penalty also applies to Reflex saves)., The penalty increases to –6 if the character attempts to move at a pace faster than normal walking speed. The victim's speed is reduced by –10 feet. Individuals without inner ears are immune to this power.

As a side effect of the mutant's improved lungs, she can now hold her breath twice as long as a normal human.

Biotech: Implant, Graft

STINGER

The subject sports a tail reminiscent of a scorpion's, starting from his lower back and and arcing overhead, the poisonous sting floating above him. Almost 9 feet in length and as wide as the character's back at its base, the tail cannot be concealed under clothes; off-the-rack containment suits or other similar protective garments do not fit.

Type: Positive

Effect: The mutant's tail is quick and agile. Every other round, he can make a full attack action that includes a tail attack at his full base attack bonus. In addition, he can make an extra attack of opportunity every round with the tail. When it hits, it inflicts 2d6 points of damage and delivers a poison (DC 15; 1d2 points of initial, temporary ability damage; 1d3 points of secondary, temporary ability damage). This poison targets Strength, Dexterity or Constitution, determined randomly at the time of mutation or specified by the designer for biotech implants and grafts.

In addition to the combat advantages, the agile tail is also useful in other ways. It can make climbing certain surfaces or balancing on narrow spaces easier, and the character can use it to brace against an object. In instances where the GM feels that a tail may make life easier for the character, a +2 circumstance bonus is in order. However, due to its size, the tail also gives the mutant a –2 penalty on all Hide attempts, and using donning a disguise is nearly impossible.

The mutant's poison can be extracted. The extraction requires a Craft (pharmaceuticals) check against DC 18; each successful extraction yields 1d3 doses. Each dose harvested this way neutralizes the mutant's ability to deliver poison (but not to use any of the tail's other features) for 1 hour.

Biotech: Implant, Graft

TUMORIZATION

Anyone unlucky enough to suffer this mutation is a terribly cursed man indeed — his entire body becomes a hotbed of cancerous growth, turning him from a man with a tumor into a tumor with some humanoid characteristics — a hugely malformed being that constantly grows and swells. The body cannot maintain such a vast bulk, and thus much of the tissue on the mutant's outer surface grows necrotic and is constantly shed off in large flakes of rotting flesh. Yet, despite his truly horrifying appearance and the incessant pain caused by the condition, the mutant remains alive, intelligent and even mostly functional. Movement is difficult but not impossible, and his arms, protruding from the mass of tumors and necrotic flesh, remain capable of manipulating objects.

Type: Negative

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Effect: The character's Strength decreases by –4 and his Dexterity decreases by –6, to a minimum of 3. His movement speed is cut to one-third normal (round down). However, his Constitution increases by +6. The character can no longer wear any clothes but tent-like robes and cloaks, and armor is completely out of the question: As the mutant's shape is constantly shifting, even customized gear tends to become unusable in a few days. His monstrous appearance gives him a –4 penalty on attempts to engage in social activities, and on first encounters, NPCs' attitudes are automatically negatively adjusted by one step (see *d20 Modern*, Chapter Two: Skills, "Skill Descriptions," *Diplomacy*) unless they have prior reason to trust or respect him.

Despite the many drawbacks of this condition, the mutant is surprisingly healthy — he never becomes fatigued, he gains a +5 bonus on Fortitude saves, and his rapid cell growth even grants him the ability to regenerate one hit point per round.

Biotech: Implant

WINGS

Powerful wings sprout from the character's back, and he gains the power of flight. While obviously useful, Wings cannot be concealed, and normal clothing or armor cannot be worn over the torso — he has to resort to custom-made outfits to cover himself. When opened, Wings have a wingspan of about 15 feet, though they can be folded to a more manageable size.

Type: Positive

Effect: The character can now fly at a speed of 60 feet (average) (see *d20 Modern*, Chapter Eight: Friends and Foes, "How to Read a Creature Description," *Speed*). The character's wings are not as efficient as a bird's: He may carry light loads at this speed, and medium loads at one-half speed. He cannot carry heavy loads at all.

If the character becomes stunned or is knocked unconscious, he falls from the skies and takes normal falling damage.

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NANOTECHNOLOGY

Nanotechnology experiments began in the 20th century, and some visionaries soon realized the enormous potential in controlling matter on the molecular level. At first their efforts at making actual molecular machines ended in failure, and even the first genuine successes created nanomachines that were stupid and inefficient. But progress came with sustained effort. Soon what had originally started out as experiments under carefully controlled circumstances became an everyday phenomenon.

By the late 21st century, the very air itself was full of tiny machines that drifted on air currents, and it was impossible for any being on Earth to avoid contact with them. They were everywhere, and while nobody could see them, their effects were far less inconspicuous: Bonded with humans, they enhanced the host's capabilities or instantly healed injuries; computing power and data storage reached a level where there was no longer any point in improving them further; entire buildings appeared to simply grow out of nowhere; tiny dismantlers proved to be more efficient (and environmentally friendly) weapons than the dirty and inconvenient nuclear weapons of yesteryear, at least if you didn't mind *everything* in the area turning into gray and formless sludge….

HOW SMALL IS REALLY SMALL?

All right, so nanomachines are really small, that much is obvious. Indeed, most of them are just a few dozen nanometers across, if that, and even the most complex ones are rarely larger than a few hundred nanometers across. But what does that mean?

One nanometer is approximately a 100,000th of the width of an average human hair: enough space for about a dozen hydrogen atoms, or a few smallish molecules. Thus, even the largest nanomachines are invisible to the naked eye, completely undetectable by any unaided human sense. You could swallow a thousand of them and never notice a thing.

In fact, in the Gamma Age people do it all the time.

The days of obedient and easily controlled nanotechnology are long gone now. When civilization collapsed, so did control over these now-errant workhorses. Nanomachines build nanomachines which in turn build other nanomachines. Not all of them were particularly well-designed in the first place, and many of them weren't even tested properly under controlled circumstances before they were released into the wild. Some of them were never meant to be released at all, but whatever safeties they were locked away under are now long gone.

Each iteration of this cycle only brought more chaos into the world, and the nanosphere of Earth is now a wild and unpredictable place, as runaway nanomachines mindlessly continue the tasks they were originally set to — the results are just as chaotic as one might expect. Some of them attack other nanomachines, while others simply try to take them apart to build things that have not been required for ages. Some of them have run out of power, and others simply float around, attempting to fulfill specific instructions in a world so completely incompatible with their goals as to render them completely useless and lost. Tiny corpses of destroyed nanomachines litter every part of the world.

The biggest problem with nanomachines is that as individual beings, they are rather dumb. They have a small, limited set of instructions; most of them have been built to do one thing. This is not a problem, as long as there's something controlling them, telling them when and where to work, and even more importantly, when to *stop*. However, problems can arise if, for example, a nanomachine originally designed to convert carbon dioxide into oxygen gets released into the wild and goes out of control, pumping more and more oxygen into the local atmosphere, creating a locale where a single spark can transform great areas into instant infernos.

NANOTECHNOLOGY AND SOCIETY

The very basic principles of nanotechnology have become a matter of global folklore and legend. Everyone knows that there are small machines that do things, even if you can't see them; questioning this is not unlike questioning the fact that most of the time, things fall down if you pick them up and let go or that only a fool takes a leisurely walk alone through the woods at night. Indeed, the evidence is there for all to see, and, disturbingly often, feel. Active nanomachines operate in a fog or dust cloud that sparkles with countless tiny flashes created by stray energy released in microscopic explosions. When they power down, their remains drift out of the sky as a dull grit scarcely distinguishable from ash or common dust.

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Impressions about the actual nature of these machines — who created them, what powers them and whether they should be used or shunned, feared or trusted — vary wildly. There are deeply religious societies that would torture to death any blasphemer foolish enough to claim that the nanomachines were originally man-made. Some believe them to come from beyond the stars, and still others believe them to be little demons. Still, practically everyone knows of their existence, even though many are unclear on the details.

There are some ignorant tribes and enclaves that have so lost their way that no the oral tradition or written record remains, so that they remain ignorant of even the most basic features of the world they inhabit. They may well consider demonstrations of nanotechnology to be magic or divine intervention, just as they would think of anything else outside their current worldview. Neither argument nor evidence can prevail when people are sufficiently determined to believe that something must or must not be.

APPLICATIONS OF NANOTECHNOLOGY

Despite appearances, nanomachines can't simply conjure something out of nothing. In the end, all they can do is take combinations of atoms apart in one spot and put them together again in another, albeit with great speed and accuracy. Also, nanomachines are single-minded creatures, and they can't improvise.

Still, for all its unpredictability, nanotechnology remains a potent tool when placed in the hands of one who knows how to control it. In the Gamma World, control over industrial nanotechnology has been more or less lost, and in any case, taking advantage of it is a slow and difficult process. The control apparatuses were destroyed a long time ago, and the machines, while plentiful, are drifting across the nanosphere aimlessly, constantly building and dismantling fixtures without any actual goals. Harnessing their power is complicated, if not effectively impossible.

AMBIENT NANOTECH LEVELS

In most cases, the power of personal nanotech is mostly determined by environmental conditions. Simply put, in areas where there's a great deal of nano present, nanotech is very powerful. Conversely, in less nano-enriched areas, nanotech is weaker.

Most of personal nanotech isn't so much about using nanomachines to fashion things out of other materials as it is about using control over nano to

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command and restructure nanomachines that are already in the environment. There are a number of reasons for this; chief among them are convenience and availability. While advanced nanomachines certainly work relatively quickly, the time it would take for them to construct something useful would still be impractical for most situations, especially combat.

Certainly, large numbers of very advanced, industrial nanomachines could build entire skyscrapers in weeks if provided with enough building blocks of raw material, but personal nanotech doesn't work on that scale. Instead, it takes advantage of ambient nano levels and presses the nano found in any given area into service. This kind of drafting tends to be hard on the machines; they are often taken apart by each other in order to build the devices required to produce the effects the user desires, not to mention to produce the kind of high energy levels many nano effects require. Nanomachines used for parts or energy are rarely put together again. Indeed, it's quite possible for a nano-rich area to be practically devoid of nanotechnological activity by the time someone is finished working there.

Of course, there's little chance of the ambient nanotechnology ever actually running out — there is too much nano on the planet constantly producing more of the machinery, and even simple weather conditions can turn a formerly barren spot into a hotbed of microscopic activity.

There are two types of nano-rich areas: fixed and moving areas. The former are areas where a large group of nanomachines have "taken root," often hard at work at some pointless and long-forgotten project, such as extracting useless minerals from rock, or even constructing now-useless household appliances. The latter are much harder to spot and nearly impossible to track and follow; clouds of nanomachines come and go, traveling in air currents or under their own power.

To identify a nano-rich area, the character makes a Survival check; the DC is based on the intensity of nano activity in the area (see table below). If the character is equipped with a nano detector, he gains a +5 equipment bonus on the check. (Note that the GM determines whether there's anything to be found. A successful check does not conjure a nano-rich area out of the blue. Obviously, very rich areas are much rarer than low-nano areas.)

Normal areas have standard amounts of nano. This is quite a bit (unless the GM specifically chooses otherwise for her campaign), just nowhere near enough to be of interest to those who wish to exploit nanotech's potential to its fullest.

Nano Level	DC	Nanounit Bonus	Nanounit Recovery Rate
Normal	—	+1	+1
Low	30	+2	+1
Moderate	25	+4	+2
Abundant	20	+8	+4
Rich	15	+12	+8

It is possible to locate so-called nanoblocks that were originally manufactured to help people on the move do their work efficiently, particularly in low-nano areas. With suitable equipment and some engineering skills, characters may even learn to compress the nano found in nano-rich areas into nanoblocks that can be carried with the user, but generally speaking, the richer an area is in nano, the more powerful effects a nano-enhanced being can create.

Nanoblocks can also be constructed, if one has a machine for the process. Constructing a nanoblock machine requires both Craft (electronic) and Craft (mechanical) checks (DC 30). Construction requires a total of 90 hours of time, and the raw materials have a combined purchase DC of 30. Once constructed, these machines are too large and heavy to be transported without the help of a vehicle of some sort. To operate a nanoblock machine, the character must make a Computer Use (operation systems) check against DC 20; each success produces one nanoblock.

A single nanoblock contains 30 nanounits and weighs 0.1 lb. For every ten uses of a nanoblock machine (regardless of success, since unsuccessful attempts also use up the nanomachines being processed), the area's nano level is decreased by one. Nanoblocks cannot be created in normal areas.

It is possible for characters to enter areas that are essentially devoid of useful nano. Areas with completely controlled atmospheres that filter out anything that might float in are extremely rare, but not unheard of. There are old complexes that, for reasons of research and security, had completely separate atmospheres from the outside world, and neutralization systems set up so that those who entered did not bring any of the nanogunk from the outside world in with them.

In such environments, characters can still usually employ nanotechnology, at least for a short while, but their capabilities are severely limited if they do not bring their own source materials with them. Furthermore, as long as they are in such an area, they can't recover spent nano.

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GETTING NANOTECH

It is impossible to simply buy nanotech or decide to pick it up somewhere. There's nano everywhere, and some of it has been designed to bond with humans. Thus, the process is actually reversed: Nanotech picks humans, not the other way around. When that happens, things get interesting.

Unbonded personal nanotech looks for both particularly strong and particularly weak hosts; in this instance, to be of average physical condition is not much of a blessing. The character makes a nanotech contact roll as follows:

1d20 + 1/2 character level (round up)
+ (2 x absolute Constitution modifier)

The DC of this roll is 20 if the character has the Nanotech Attunement feat, 30 if not.

"Absolute Constitution modifier" refers to the number part of the character's Constitution modifier, regardless of whether it's positive or negative. A character with a Constitution modifier of –2 adds (2 x 2), or 4, to the roll for nanotech contact just as a character with a Constitution modifier of +2 does.

If the roll is successful, the character gains the ability to use nanotech. Once joined with a human host, it becomes effectively impossible to separate the nanomachines from living flesh. They bond with their host; indeed, they *become* their host, forming the blood in his veins and the fibers in his muscles.

The nanotech contact roll can be made in an area where there are significant reservoirs of unassigned nanounits — usually this is an area with an abundant or rich nano level, but it is never an area with normal levels. The roll can be made once per character level, plus a number of times equal to the character's absolute Constitution bonus.

Personal nanotech is extremely user-friendly. Since it has been designed to bond with humans, it comes with sort of built-in instruction manual. The exact nature of the instructions depends largely on the type of nanite in question and who manufactured it in the first place. Some use narration, others influence the bioelectrical impulses coursing through the optic nerves to project a demonstrative slideshow into a corner of the character's field of vision, but the end result is always the same. Once bonded with the host, the nanotech quickly teaches its new user how it works.

Similar instructions also accompany many nanotech-granted abilities. In general, practically all nano-created effects include some kind of visual cues, the exact nature of which depends on the effect in question. Crosshairs, gauges, vectors, sensor data listings and other visual indicators routinely appear in the character's field of vision. Aural cues are also common, such as alarms and synthesized voices that give status reports.

USING NANOTECH

Thanks to the user-friendliness of nanotech, employing it requires little or no training. Some nanotech has chemical triggers and can activate in response to certain changes in body chemistry; typically, nanites of this type work to enhance the human body. When adrenaline starts to pump, the nanites set to work, temporarily enhancing neural pathways and improving reaction speed, for example. Others take hold of the human brain and start to scan for telepathic wavelengths and, upon encountering a special command, they activate. The host merely has to think about the desired effect to activate it. Some rely on a combination of the two methods.

Whatever method a particular nano system uses, the game mechanics are the same. It takes two rolls to produce a nanotech effect:

- Make a Concentration check against DC 15, or 10 if the character is psionic or has a major mutation that affects the brain. (If both of these apply, the DC remains at 10; the benefits don't stack.) Apply a +2 synergy bonus for every 5 ranks of Craft (nanotech) the character possesses, rounded down. Success on this check activates the nano system and readies it for use. The character becomes surrounded by a cloud of twinkling dust or fog, extending out in all directions for 10 feet. Others notice it if they succeed on a Spot check against DC (5 + 1 for every 5 points by which the player exceeded on the DC of the Concentration check).
- Make a nanotech control roll. This is:

1d20 + base attack bonus + Wisdom modifier
(+ 5 if character has Nanotech Attunement)

The DC depends on the particular effect as described below. Success means that the desired effect happens as long as the character has enough nanounits to provide for it. If she lacks them or if the roll fails by 15 or less, nothing happens. If the roll fails by more than 15, the nanomachines do something similar to their programming but without proper guidance. At the GM's discretion, this might include attacking the wrong target (including the character!), or spreading the effect around so many targets that each one gets barely measurable help or harm. In addition, the nanounits spent on the effect are permanently lost to the character.

Attacks are straightforward enough, but as nanofabricators are extremely versatile, the GM should always consider the nature of the effect in question. For example, a character using nanotech to

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regenerate destroyed tissue may well end up causing uncontrollable tissue build-up, which may not be fatal, but will still require surgery to remove. In that vein, a nano-created force field generator might project the force field in the wrong direction, blocking an escape route; an attempt to neutralize knockout gas might turn it into poison; and so forth. The GM is encouraged to be as imaginative as he can.

NANOUNITS

Nanounits are the currency that nano users "pay" for the activation of nano effects. A character who has just achieved nanotech activation has the following number of nanounits at her disposal:

20 + 1/2 character level (rounded up) + area bonus

The character can store a maximum of twice this initial number of nanounits. Any extra nanounits bleed off into the environment at a rate of 5 per round. Each act of nanotech use the character performs depletes her store by one or more units. There's more out in the environment, but it takes time for a character to gather back in nanounits she's discharged and/or accumulate a fresh store from the free-floating nano around her. Every 10 minutes, the character regains the number of nanounits indicated in the nanounit recovery rate column of the nano area table, above. (Characters with the Nanotech Attunement feat double the usual recovery rate.) Carried nanoblocks do not count against the character's personal total. Normally personal reserves get consumed first, but the character may direct nanomachines to use one or more nanoblocks first, if she prefers.

Characters who have lost some capacity because of particularly bad luck with nano use, as described above, must succeed in a Craft (nanotech) check against DC 20 with the aid of a nanoblock machine. Success repairs a number of damaged nanounits equal to the area bonus.

NANO EFFECTS

Thanks to the supreme versatility of nanotechnology and the highly developed user interface, there are two determining factors in any use of personal nano: the limits of the user's imagination, and whether he can actually control the nanomachines well enough to pull off the trick he's thought of.

Each use of nanotech requires the user to determine the effect's scope, power and type, as indicated on Table 3–4. These factors set the difficulty of the attempted effect and its cost in nanounits.

TABLE 3–4: NANOTECH EFFECT PARAMETERS

	Effect Parameter	DC	Nano Cost
Scope	Internal	+2	1
	Non-combat external	+4	2
	Combat external	+6	2
Power	Minor	+1	2
	Moderate	+3	4
	Major	+6	6
Type	Perception	+2	1
	Preservation	+4	3
	Creation	+8	8
	Destruction	+8	4

SCOPE

Scope determines whether the target is just the user himself, or the environment around him. An effect can only have a single scope parameter — it cannot be internal and combat external, for example.

• *Internal* effects only affect the user. Healing damage by using nanobots to stitch the wound back together, temporarily improving abilities by slipping a group of nanites into your body to work alongside the muscles, neutralizing poisons by charging the machinery in your bloodstream with the task of disassembling toxins and other similar effects are all internal. Sensory effects are also considered to be internal. While the character may well send nanomachines out to map out the surrounding area, the data they relay is only received by him, and the environment remains unaffected. Internal effects are usually rather easy to pull off.

• *Non-combat external* effects affect the space around the user (though the actual range is determined by the effect's power). Using nanotech to purify water; sending a swarm of nanobots to knit your friend's shattered bones back together; or severing the molecular bonds of the metal the lock is made of, causing it to lose cohesion and turn it into a cloud of dust are all non-combat external effects. They are easier to pull off simply because the user has an easier time concentrating on the task at hand and usually has a bit more time to prepare.

• *Combat external* effects are created under combat conditions and often (though not necessarily) cause damage to enemies. Examples include commanding nanobots to form a floating lens through which sunlight can be collected; focused and amplified

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into a laser; dispatching a cloud of nanites to intercept and destroy incoming projectiles, or severing the molecular bonds in an enemy's containment suit and thus breaching it.

POWER

This parameter determines how powerful the effect is. Attacks and other similar applications only have a duration of a single round, whereas effects such as enhancements to the user's abilities and senses can have a longer duration.

• *Minor* effects are reasonably simple. Most sensory effects are minor effects, adding up to +5 on skill checks using a single sense. Minor effects can cause or heal 1d6 hit points of damage, and they have a maximum range of 150 feet. Minor effects can be used to create up to 1 lb. of material. Effects only have a duration of a single round.

• *Moderate* effects can cause or heal 3d6 points of damage. Their maximum range is 1,000 yards. Fire, freezing, corrosive and electrical effects are always at least moderate effects. Moderate effects can create up to 10 lbs. of material. A moderate effect can temporarily increase abilities by +1; they have a maximum duration of 6 rounds. The effect can increase the target's speed by 20 feet. Enhancing *all* of the character's senses by +5 is a moderate effect.

• *Major* effects can cause or heal 5d6 points of damage. Major effects can be used to create up to 50 lbs. of material. Their maximum range is 1 mile, and their maximum duration is 1 minute. The effect can increase the target's speed by 50 feet.

If an effect has a numeric value — if it causes damage, heals damage, or protects the user from damage — that number is determined by a roll of the dice, as dictated by the power level. For example, a moderate effect could project a force field that offered 3d6 additional, ablative hit points, or create a mass driver that caused 3d6 points of damage damage, or heal someone for 3d6 hit points.

While a nano effect can only have a single power parameter, there are several modifiers that can further fine-tune it (see the table below) or increase its efficiency from the standard parameters shown above. For example, by agitating molecules, thus causing them to generate a great deal of heat, the user can cause a fire effect; by slowing them down, she effectively lowers the temperature and creates a cold effect. The energy damage options all work as described in *d20 Modern* (see Chapter Seven: Gamemastering, "The Modern World"), they just have an unusual origin.

• *Extra damage/healing*. For each count of this parameter, increase the damage or healing power of the effect by +1d6. This modifier can only be added to effects that are already of major power.

• *+100 yards of range*. Increase the range of an effect. This can be added to any power parameter.

• *+50 lbs. of material*. This can only be added to effects that are already of major power.

• *+30 feet of speed*. This can only be added to effects that are already of major power.

• *Fire*. Attack now causes fire damage. This parameter can only be added to effects of moderate or major power.

• *Freezing*. Attack now causes cold damage. This parameter can only be added to effects of moderate or major power.

• *Electricity*. Attack now causes electricity damage, or the effect can be used to power certain devices. This parameter can only be added to effects of moderate or major power.

• *Corrosive*. Attack now causes acid damage. This parameter can only be added to effects of moderate or major power.

• *Radiation*. Attack now causes radiation damage and radiation poisoning, and may cause mutations; each instance of this modifier added to the nano effect also adds another level of intensity to the mutagenic effect. This modifier can only be added to effects that are already of moderate or major power. When this parameter is added to a major power, the target must add a +4 bonus on the roll to see whether the any mutation received as a result of this exposure is minor or major.

Modifier	DC Modifier	Nano Cost
+1d6 damage/healing	+5	4
+100 yards range	+1	1
+50 lbs. material	+1	5
+30 ft. of speed	+3	4
Fire	+4	2
Freezing	+4	2
Electricity	+4	3
Corrosive	+4	4
Radiation	+6	8
+1 to ability	+2	3
+1 round of duration	+2	2
Per 5-foot square affected	+5	8

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• _*+1 to ability*. The character's ability (or several abilities, if she takes this modifier repeatedly) are increased. This modifier can only be added to effects that are already of moderate power.

• _*+1 round of duration*. The duration of the effect is increased. This modifier can only be added to effects that are already of moderate power.

• _*Per 5-foot square affected*. The effect can now affect an entire area, the size of which depends on the user's wishes and the level of power at his disposal. Everyone in the area is affected by the effect.

TYPE

This parameter defines the nature of the effect. An effect can only be of a single type.

• *Perception* relates to sensory effects. For example, the user may command nanites to pick up radio transmissions and transmit them directly to other nanites that in turn manipulate the tympanic membrane within the user's ear, causing her to "hear" the radio traffic. Nanites might form a tiny airborne camera that floats in the air above the character's immediate vicinity, transmitting the image to a small nanocluster in her optic nerve, manipulating the bioelectrical impulses passing through it, and superimposing the image directly into the user's field of vision. An industrious group of nanomachines may even retrieve data from an ancient computer's hard drive by going through its surface track by track. The user may never directly affect the outside world in any way through use of perception effects; they can only be used to receive information about something.

• *Preservation* effects are used when a group of nanites is instructed to maintain something in its current state. For instance, nanites can be commanded to preserve food supplies by destroying bacteria, or the user may direct them to build a force field projector that deflects incoming projectiles, while nano floating in the user's body may be charged with the task of maintaing cells in their current condition, essentially fixing any damage the character receives even as he receives it. (Note that this is not the same thing as healing damage that has already been received.)

• *Creation* effects form something out of nothing. For example, the character might instruct nanites to start building molecules using a ratio of two hydrogen atoms for each oxygen atom, effectively creating pure water out of thin air. Far more complex effects are also possible — the user might command nanobots to build handcuffs around the wrists of an enemy. While very useful, creation effects tend to use up ambient nano at a great rate. Healing effects are

NANOTECH AND CONSTRUCTING ITEMS

Sooner or later, someone's going to want to use nanotech to create something, whether it's as simple as a wrench or as complex as a laser cannon. It's a perfectly valid use for nanotech, but it's not particularly easy. Using personal nanotech to create a laser beam is one thing. The nanofabricators have been preprogrammed to reconfigure themselves for a wide variety of effects, and usually the user doesn't need to know the how, as long as he knows the what. However, if he wants to engage in actual engineering and construction, things change.

The user must make a Craft check just as if he was building the item normally by hand, since he needs to give good instructions to his nanofabricators. However, he doesn't need any tools, since nano does all of the work. He does need suitable raw materials, but they don't need to be in a proper form. If he already has a gun, for instance, he can use it as suitable raw material for another weapon. Nanomachines aren't bothered by small details like form.

He must make a control roll as per normal. The roll is made for a non-combat external creation effect, with the effect's power determined by the weight of the final object. (Complexity is not an issue. That is taken care of by the Craft check; the nanites merely do as they're told.) Success means that construction begins; construction time is cut in half, and the character doesn't need to do anything once the process is underway. He can sleep, talk to his friends, or even fight someone, but he must remain in the area where construction is taking place. If he leaves, so do his personal nanofabricators.

If the character is attempting to replicate an existing piece of biotech or cybertech, he first needs to make successfully analyze the object to determine its properties and construction (see Chapter Six). Then he must make a Craft check against DC (DC of the analysis roll +10). These devices are so complex that replicating their exact function is very hard. If successful, the character can set his nanites to work. If he fails the check, he cannot try again; that particular device is simply too complex for him.

As an optional rule, the GM may make the Craft roll for biotech and cybertech. If it's not successful, installing the end result may have terrible results. And finding someone to be the guinea pig may be an interesting challenge....

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creation effects, as are effects that cause the character to move from one place to another. Standard effect duration doesn't affect creation effects when they are used to create permanent items or material — it refers to how long the nanites work, not to the results of their labors.

• *Destruction* effects take things apart, either by directly dissembling them or by building something with the power to destroy something else. Examples include building a swarm of monofilamented nanites that cut enemies into pieces; having nanomachines completely dehydrate a wooden door, causing it to become extremely brittle; or even instructing nanites to attack and destroy the white blood cells in an enemy's bloodstream, disabling her immune system. Destruction effects aren't quite as heavy on nanoresources as creation effects are. After all, the nanites don't need to work nearly as hard to simply sever molecular bonds as they would to assemble molecules and attach them to each other. Destruction effects are permanent like creation effects.

OPPOSING NANOTECHNOLOGY

Sooner or later a situation will surface where one nano user is attempting one thing and another is trying to oppose him, by either intentionally countering a particular effect, or attempting something that doesn't have an end result compatible with the other attempt.

The user whose effect uses a higher power parameter always wins. A moderate effect beats a minor one, and a major effect beats a moderate one (supposing, of course, that the effect is successful to begin with; the user still has to succeed in his control roll).

If both of the effects have the same power parameter, and both of the users succeed in their control rolls, make an opposed control roll, using all DC modifiers applied to the initial roll as a *penalty* on the roll. Characters with the Nanotech Attunement feat get a +2 circumstance bonus on this roll. In case of a tie, the character with the higher modifiers (base attack bonus + Wisdom modifier) wins. If they're still tied, make an opposed Will save. The one whose willpower proves stronger manages to control his nanofabricators with a greater degree of accuracy and wins the contest.

PREPARING EFFECTS

Preparation is key in many things. Personal nanites can easily be programmed to do things, and preprogrammed effects can make the difference between life and death. The character can keep a number of preprogrammed effects at hand equal to twice his Intelligence modifier (minimum of 1). These effects are normal nano effects that have simply been placed in storage, ready to be launched at will. These effects are otherwise handled like all nano effects, but the control roll for them is made with a +2 bonus. The prepared effects aren't "spent" in any way when they are used; the character can keep on using them as long as he has enough nano to power them.

Prepared effects can be changed with a Concentration check against DC equal to the difficulty of the control roll of the new effect. This takes a single round per effect.

NANOTECH AND BREEDING

Nanotech tends to be hereditary. Once bonded with a human being, the nanites infest the human sperm and ova; it's not at all impossible for a developing fetus to be nano-enhanced even before birth. Should this become an issue in play, have the newborn make a Fortitude save against DC 20 if both parents are nano users, or against DC 10 if only one parent has personal nanites. If the infant fails the roll, he's been "infected" with nano from birth.

In certain instances, if the characters come from suitable backgrounds, the GM may wish to have all characters make this roll to determine if they have inherited the trait from their parents.

EXAMPLE EFFECTS

Here is a selection of examples of what kind of nano effects nano users can create. The following format is used:

EFFECT NAME

Description of what the effect does in plain language, with no game mechanics.

Scope: Internal, non-combat external or combat external

Power: Minor, moderate or major.

Type: Perception, preservation, creation or destruction

Nano Cost: How many nanounits the user must pay to activate this effect.

DC: The DC for the control roll.

Effect: What the game mechanics of the nano effect are.

Game Mechanics: A brief explanation of how the DC and nano cost are figured and a few suggestions as to how the effect could be modified. The format for the figures is (DC/nano cost).

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The "game mechanics" section in the effect descriptions is particularly important to new players, as it serves to demonstrate the versatility of nanotechnology. Players are encouraged to come up with their own effects! Also, bear in mind that if these effects have been prepared by the character prior to use, the character receives a +2 bonus on the control roll.

ATTRIBUTE INCREASE

Thousands upon thousands of nanites swarm into the character's body and start improving it. Whether they are building new muscle fiber, strengthening bones with alloys, building new neural pathways or even reshaping the user's facial bone structure, the end result is a temporary increase in one of the character's abilities.

Scope: Internal

Power: Moderate

Type: Creation

Nano Cost: 13

DC: 11

Effect: An attribute of the character's choice is increased by one. The effect lasts for five rounds.

Game Mechanics: This is an internal (+2/1), moderate (+3/4) and creation (+6/8) effect, for a total DC of 11 and a nano cost of 13. The character could, if he wished, increase the effect's duration (which would increase the DC by +2 and the nano cost by 2) or its effectiveness (which would increase the DC by +2 and the cost by 3) — or both. He could also direct the effect at his friend during combat (+6/2), for a total DC of 15 and a nano cost of 14.

FLIGHT

The user's nanites form an anti-gravity field projector or a rocket pack that gives him the ability to defy gravity at will.

Scope: Non-combat external

Power: Moderate

Type: Creation

Nano Cost: 14

DC: 13

Effect: The character may now fly for 5 rounds, but cannot engage in combat. His normal speed is increased by 20 feet.

Game Mechanics: Non-combat external (+4/2), moderate (+3/4) and creation (+6/8), for a nano cost of 14 and DC of 13. The character could increase the flight's duration by a round or two, or increase his flight speed by using a major effect. Of course, using a combat external effect instead would enable flight in combat.

FORCE FIELD

The character's nanomachines reconfigure themselves into powerful field projectors that assume strategic positions around him and project an invisible wall of force between him and his enemies.

Scope: Combat external

Power: Moderate

Type: Creation

Nano Cost: 14

DC: 15

Effect: A 5-foot-square-wide force field that offers 3d6 additional, ablative hit points appears next to the character, facing a heading of his choice.

Game Mechanics: Combat external (+6/2), moderate (+3/4) and creation (+6/8), for a total DC of 15, and nano cost of 14. If the character wanted to protect the entire 5-foot square (and everybody in it) from all sides, he could add the area effect modifier (+5/8).

INDUCE MUTATION

This frightening effect is caused by nanites that transmit waves and particles of hard radiation with unerring accuracy. It allows the character to bathe herself in the fierce glow of untamed radiation and take any mutations — in addition to the damage — the effect may bring, beneficial or harmful. Only a very optimistic — or foolish — person would subject herself to this effect, but there are those who are willing to take great chances for great power.

Scope: Internal

Power: Major

Type: Creation

Nano Cost: 22

DC: 24

Effect: The user suffers 5d6 points of radiation damage and has to succeed in a Fortitude save against DC 10 or suffer a mutation. If she mutates, she must take a +4 bonus on the roll to see whether the mutation is minor or major.

Game Mechanics: Internal (+2/1), major (+6/6), creation (+6/8), and radiation (+6/8), for a total DC of 20 and nano cost of 23. This effect could be directed at others by increasing the scope to combat external (+6/2) .

PLASMA BLAST

A cluster of highly specialized nanites form a powerfully magnetic, bottle-shaped field. Other nanomachines pump in highly pressurized gases — typically hydrogen — and then ionize it, turning it into plasma and trapping it within the field. A simple

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manipulation of the field then causes the plasma to jet out and horribly burn the user's enemies.

Scope: Combat external

Power: Major

Type: Destruction

Nano Cost: 14

DC: 18

Effect: The discharge of plasma inflicts 5d6 damage on an enemy of the user's choice.

Game Mechanics: Combat external (+6/2), major (+6/8) and destruction (+6/4), for a total DC of 18 and nano cost of 14. Not an easy trick to pull off, but very effective in combat. A less effective (but easier) version would have moderate power (+3/4). A plasma attack designed to set the target on fire is an increase of (+4/3).

TISSUE REPAIR

Combat situations often take a nasty turn — high-powered weapons can turn a man into a slowly expiring wreck in seconds. In such instances, it's good to have a medic around, but it's even better to have a friend with a good command of nanotech. With this effect, a cluster of nanofabricators descend on the wounds and start the healing process. They close open veins, preventing further blood loss; start replicating the existing cell structure, effectively regenerating the wound; anesthetize and reattach the broken nerve endings; and generally accomplish in seconds what would take a skilled doctor hours.

Scope: Non-combat external

Power: Moderate

Type: Creation

Nano Cost: 14

DC: 13

Effect: The user can instantly heal 3d6 points of damage suffered by someone else.

Game Mechanics: Non-combat external (+4/2), moderate (+3/4), creation (+6/8), for a total DC of 13 and nano cost of 14. This effect could also be done in the middle of a combat situation (+6/2); or with a greater efficiency as a major effect (+6/6), in which case the character could heal 5d6 points of damage. Self-healing with an internal effect (+2/1) would be very simple indeed — and even mass healing might be an option, if the user is willing to deal with the challenges of an area effect (+5/8).

TOPOGRAPHICAL IMAGING

Mapping out the wasteland can be a daunting task — there's such a great deal of space and so much to be found that it's not difficult to simply walk through

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an area and not realize that just behind that hill, beyond those woods, lies an ancient wonder just waiting for someone to find it. Yet searching every place in detail takes a long, long time, and there's no guarantee of a payoff. Sending a cloud of nanobots high up into the air to scout the area ahead and beam a detailed topographical image of the surrounding area down to the user can save a lot of shoe leather.

Scope: Internal
Power: Minor
Type: Perception
Nano Cost: 4
DC: 5
Effect: The character sees a real-time map of the surrounding area for 1 round, giving him valuable tactical data, as well as a +2 circumstance bonus on all Survival and Navigate checks made in the area. Other bonuses may well apply, depending on the circumstances.

Game Mechanics: Internal (+2/1), minor (+1/2), perception (+2/1), for a total DC of 5 and nano cost of 4. Turning the effect into a non-combat external (+4/2) would enable the character to create a holographic image so his friends could also see the map and make informed decisions as a group, whereas turning the image into a moderate effect (+3/4) would let the character continue observing the entire surrounding area for up to 5 rounds.

WATER PURIFICATION

Impurities in water found in the environment can be deadly, but a proper application of nanotech soon breaks them down into their component parts and eliminates them from the liquid, leaving only pure H2O.

Scope: Non-combat external
Power: Minor
Type: Destruction
Nano Cost: 8
DC: 11
Effect: A quantity of contaminated water is made drinkable.

Game Mechanics: Non-combat external (+4/2), minor (+1/2) and destruction (+6/4), for a total DC of 11, and nano cost of 8. If the nano user found herself in an environment that had no water to purify, she could still get a refreshing drink by turning this into a creation effect, combining hydrogen and oxygen atoms to produce water for the additional cost of 4 nanounits.

CYBERNETICS

Contrary to the predictions made in popular culture, the art of fusing mechanical and electronical devices with human flesh and bone never proved to be extremely popular. While it certainly had its applications and proponents, most people felt that biotechnology was faster, safer and easier to use. Certainly, in many cases, linking meat to metal simply failed to produce satisfactory results, particularly as cybertechnology featured often problematic power requirements and had to be regularly maintained.

Furthermore, from a psychological standpoint, many users found the idea of complex inanimate objects lodged in their bodies disturbing. Biotechnology, at least, was natural in *some* sense of the word, whereas having an arm made of superlight and durable plastics, steel, servos and pistons was hard to get used to. Many felt such devices were too alien to be comfortably used, even though technology had advanced to the point where senses could be effectively transmitted from artificial limbs.

Cybertech must be analyzed before it can be used (see Chapter Six). Cybertech is always considered to be hardtech. Cybertech items always have an analysis DC of 25, though the GM may modify this in cases of the more obvious devices. Failing the check by 10 or more leads to a critical error, the exact nature of which depends on the nature of the device. Simply put, installing an enhanced hearing module to someone's groin, for example, may have bad consequences.

Installing cybertech requires surgery and a successful Treat Injury check (characters without the Surgery feat suffer a –4 penalty on the check). Unlike biotech, cybertech doesn't have a rejection risk, so immuno-suppressants are not required. All cybertech devices come with standardized access ports that are used for maintenance and recharging, and these ports need to be placed on the outside of the body to ensure easy access, even though the actual device is embedded in the body. The exact shape and size depends on the device and its make, but most of them replace about a palm-sized area of the host's skin.

Finding cybertech lying around isn't particularly uncommon, but finding some that actually functions is another question altogether. Time has taken its toll, and much of this sensitive equipment has been destroyed by combat and environmental factors, or

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simply by the ravages of time. It's not very common to find places that have preserved cybertech in good condition through the generations — and even if one finds such a place, getting in is often an enormous challenge; after all, there's a reason why the contents remain undisturbed. Even if someone were to find of a cache of still-functional cybertech, it's not too often she knows what to do with it — or how to install it, if he know what it's for. Then again, the PCs are likely to be a little more resourceful than the average traveler.

CYBERTECH AT CHARACTER CREATION

The player may trade one of his starting feats to start out with a cybertech item of his choice. The GM has every right to veto such a decision, though; obtaining something as advanced and rare as Cybernetic Synapse Control, for example, can be difficult to justify in terms of the character's background, and may throw a beginning campaign completely off-course before it even properly begins.

Characters may also buy cybertech items if their community has access to advanced technology. The purchase DC is equal to ([recharge DC + the number of charges] – 5), with a minimum purchase DC of 5.

POWER CONSUMPTION

Cybernetics require power to run. Biotech is powered by the host body, but cybernetics require external power to operate properly. Different devices have different power demands, but if their power cells are drained, they cease to function entirely until they are recharged.

Luckily, cybertech has been designed to recharge itself. The process is not perfect, however. The original designs were made at a time when recharging was as simple as plugging a special adapter into a wall socket. That was convenient at the time, but these days, finding a working adapter is extremely unlikely, and even that difficulty pales on comparison with the task of finding a live wall socket.

All cybertech devices have a recharge rate that consists of a recharge roll DC and how much power a successful roll provides. For example, a device with a recharge rate of 15/2 faces a DC of 15, and provides two points of charge on a successful roll. A recharge roll is 1 d20, and the roll can only be made once a day.

The character gains a +2 bonus on the roll if he doesn't use the device in question at all during that 24-hour period. To gain the recharge bonus for devices that allow ability increases or other permanent effects, it's a question of exertion — with physical enhancements, the character can act reasonably normally, but cannot engage in combat or other strenous activities, or in case of cerebral enhancements, in serious research or thinking that taxes that particular sense (typically, any action with a DC higher than 10). The character cannot take 10 or 20 on a recharge roll.

Uninstalled, drained cybertech can still be useful — there may not be enough power in the system to power the device, but the power can still be siphoned off to existing systems. The character must have proper tools and cables to transfer the power. A Repair roll made at DC 20 allows the character to scavenge 1d3+1 power from a depleted system. When attempting this, you can take 10, but you can't take 20.

Completely depleted cybertech is what many techs refer to as "cranky" — it's not eager to boot up again, even when the power is again flowing freely. A successful Repair check against DC 25 is required to bring a once-depleted system back on-line. Again, you can take 10, but you can't take 20 — the sensitive equipment tends to suffer from multiple reboot attempts.

CEREBRAL ENHANCEMENT

Many people have an understandable aversion to inserting technology into the human brain, but such a union of mind and machine does have its advantages, including increased processing power. There are no substitutional enhancements, however; while it's possible to replace parts of the human brain with cybernetic parts, the results wouldn't be satisfactory — any gain in pure power would be shadowed by the loss of personality, memory or cognitive abilities. For obvious reasons, there was never much market for that.

Effect: Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma can be increased by +1 when a cerebral enhancement is installed: advanced co-processors allow the character's mind to process data more efficiently; senses are filtered and enhanced; personal interactions are made easier by collating and cross-referencing of data about people; and so forth. Any single cyber device affects only one of these abilities; it would take three to boost all three mental abilities. In addition to the ability increase, the character may pick one special enhancement (which grants an equipment bonus) from the following list:

The character may only have a single enhancement for each ability. If the enhancements run out of power, the character's abilities revert back

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Intelligence:

- On-line computer use reference manual (+2 on Computer Use)
- Linguistic databanks (+2 on Decipher Script)
- Real-time mapping tools (+2 on Navigate)
- Cross-indexing data analysis system (+2 on Research)
- Diagnostic database (+2 on Repair)

Wisdom:

- Audio-filtering package (+2 on Listen)
- Psychological reference subroutines (+2 on Sense Motive)
- Video enhancement suite (+2 on Spot)
- Internal travel guide (+2 on Survival)
- Medical reference package (+2 on Treat Injury)

Charisma:

- Biochemical dampener (+2 on Bluff)
- Personality displacer wizard (+2 on Disguise)
- Etiquette quick-reference guide (+2 on Diplomacy)
- Speech pattern analyzer (+2 on Gather Information)
- Zoological reference suite (+2 on Handle Animal)

to normal and any skill bonuses are canceled until the enhancements can be recharged.

Initial/Maximum charge: 4d6+6/30
Depletion rate: 1/day
Recharge: 15/2

CYBERNETIC SYNAPSE CONTROL

This particular application of cybertech is what really made the technology worth developing to the Powers That Were before society tore itself apart. The basic concept is simple enough: In the end, everything in the human mind can be reduced to binary information, an endless stream of zeroes and ones, and that information can be parsed, transmitted and even overridden by another signal. In simplest terms, this means that the human mind is like an open book, and one can not only read it, but under proper circumstances even rewrite it.

What this means vis-à-vis the concept of the human soul has, not very surprisingly, been the source of much debate, the inspiration of several cults and religious skirmishes, and a reason for a great deal of bloodshed, and will undoubtedly continue to be exactly that in the future. Still, religious concerns aside, the applications are obvious.

The user must have the synapse control unit embedded in his brain. All pre-packaged, factory-manufactured synapse control units come with five synaptic remotes — tiny pieces of equipment that can be attached to the back of the target's neck, where the spinal column meets the skull. The remote burrows into the flesh, interfaces with the spinal cord and becomes completely undetectable. Once this is done, the user can access the remote, and through it the target's mind. With skill and effort, he can even control minds through the remote.

Effect: The user makes a ranged attack roll, using his Wisdom modifier instead of his Dexterity modifier, against (10 + the half the target's character level). If successful, the target must make a Will save against DC 20. If the save fails, the user can now read the target's current thoughts. He also sees what the target sees and hears what the target hears. The target is completely unaware of the process and goes about her business as if there were nothing wrong.

The user can monitor a number of targets to his Intelligence modifier + 1. The user must make a new attack roll every five rounds for each target, if he wants to keep "listening in," or every 10 rounds if the target in question failed her Will save by more than 10.

The user may even take direct control of the target's body, by making the attack roll as above. The target makes a Will save against DC 15. If the target fails the roll, she suddenly finds herself in the passenger seat — her body does exactly what the user wants it to do. In effect, the user makes all dice rolls for the target and determines her actions (using his own skills and base attack bonus), though he may only take advantage of equipment and powers that he knows of. This effect lasts for 5 rounds, and the target is most definitely aware of the fact that something terrible has just happened to her (though it's very possible that she completely fails to understand what's going on). If the target succeeds at the Will save, she knows that her mind is under assault, but not necessarily how.

If the target takes damage while under the user's control, he feels it but remains unaffected. Curiously, any attempts at telepathy are now redirected to the controlling mind instead of the target's. If the target's body dies, the user must make a Will save against DC 30 or go into shock for 2d6+2 rounds, during which time he is unconscious.

As long as the implant has enough charge to function, there is nothing to keep the user from making contact attempts again and again. However, if the target enters an area with enough interference or if something blocks the signal, the user can no

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longer control her or see through her eyes. The connection has a range of 3 miles.

Installing a synaptic remote takes 5 rounds, and the target must be immobile during the operation's first 2 rounds, while the remote is being inserted. There is no skill involved; the remote has been designed to find its own way in once it has been placed in the proper position on the target's neck. The operation is completely painless, and can even be done without waking up a sleeping target. The remote cannot be removed without surgery. This is an extremely delicate operation — a Treat Injury check against DC 35 is required (a healer without the Surgery feat faces a -4 penalty on the check), and if the check fails by more than 10, the subject becomes permanently paralyzed due to spinal injury.

Initial/Maximum charge: 2d6+8/20

Depletion rate: 1/mind-reading attempt, 2/control attempt

Recharge: 20/2

ENHANCED HEARING

The user's hearing is greatly enhanced in one ear, granting him advance warning against sneaky foes as well as the benefits of hearing things no one thinks he could.

Effect: The user's can now hear sounds from five times as far away as he ordinarily would. The game effects are largely left up to the GM, who should simply be aware of the fact that the character can now easily listen in on conversations that ordinary people cannot hear or detect the footsteps of an enemy from a long way off.

The character also receives a +2 bonus on all Listen checks. If the synthetic ear runs out of power, the character loses hearing in that ear, and receives a –2 penalty on all Listen rolls until the device is recharged.

Initial/Maximum charge: 2d6+8/20

Depletion rate: 1/day

Recharge: 10/2

HIDDEN LASER

This weapon is hidden in the user's body, and can easily turn the tables on an unsuspecting attacker. It can be fitted almost anywhere, though arms are the most popular spot, as they afford the most maneuverability. A flap of skin completely hides the muzzle of the laser and flips open when the character fires it.

Effect: Anyone attempting to detect the laser with a Spot check suffers a –8 equipment penalty on

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the roll. The weapon is fired as a normal ranged attack. It has a range increment of 30 yards and inflicts 3d6 points of damage. If the character finds herself in a situation where she has only a single point of charge left, she can fire the laser at reduced power, inflicting 1d6+1 points of damage.

Initial/Maximum charge: 2d6+8/20

Depletion rate: 2/use

Recharge: 15/2

NIGHT VISION

One of the user's eyes is replaced by a synthetic eye fitted with a light amplifier, effectively granting him night vision.

Effect: The user can now see in the dark. As the technology is based on amplifying existing light, the eye doesn't function in total and complete darkness — heavy cloud cover is not a problem, but a cavern with absolutely no source of light in it is. If the character encounters a particularly bright flash of light (such as a high-tech flashlight beam directly in her face), she must make a Fortitude save at DC 20 or lose sight in that eye for 1d4+1 rounds as if the eye had just run out of power, as the sensitive systems attempt to adjust to the sudden increase in brightness.

If the eye runs out of power, the character loses sight in that eye, and receives a –2 penalty on all Spot checks and ranged attack rolls because she lacks depth perception.

Initial/Maximum charge: 2d6+8/20

Depletion rate: 1/day

Recharge: 10/2

PHYSICAL ENHANCEMENT

Among the most popular cybernetics of all, physical enhancements are straightforward, yet extremely useful. They either enhance the power of existing muscles and organs — usually by strengthening ligaments, neutralizing lactic acids, feeding more energy to specific muscle groups and so forth — or by replacing entire muscle groups, bones and vital organs with cybernetic versions. While the latter are more powerful, they have the downside that if they run out of charge, they tend to cripple the user.

Effect: Strength, Dexterity or Constitution can be increased with Physical Enhancements; the exact ability affected depends on the specific cybertech item in question. There are two types of enhancements: *supplementary* and *substitutional*.

Supplementary cybernetics increase the ability in question by +1. If they run out of power, they simply shut down until they are recharged; the character's ability scores return to normal during the shutdown period.

Substitutional cybernetics increase the ability in question by +4. However, if they ever run out of power, the ability is instantly reduced to 3 until the cybertech in question is fully recharged.

The character may only have a single enhancement of each type for each ability — he could, for example, enhance his Strength by +5 by having both supplementary and substitutional cybernetics installed, but he couldn't have two supplementary cybertech Strength enhancers installed.

Initial/Maximum charge: 4d6+6/30

Depletion rate: 1/day for supplementary enhancements, 2/day for substitutional enhancements

Recharge: 15/2

PSIONICS

In the middle of the 21st century, scientists were able to identify the parts of the human brain that had the ability to receive and transmit information on the psionic wavelength. From there it was relatively easy to identify, manipulate and augment specific talents.

In the Gamma Age some degree of psionic capability is surprisingly common. Centuries of tinkering with the human genome, as well as random mutation and the generally increased level of psionic activity on the planet has seen to that. (Note that while pure-strain humans are less likely to have psionic powers, it's not unheard of — the potential is still in the human genome, and sometimes the DNA sorts itself just right for the power to naturally manifest.) Some are born with this capability, others attain it through various means: nanotechnology that alters the brain's structure, random mutation, perhaps even crude technological devices. In the end, how access to this wavelength is attained is of secondary importance; once the connection has been made, the means are completely irrelevant. From that point on, it's a question of practice.

To call psionics "powers" is a grossly utilitarian view of the phenomenon, though not entirely inaccurate. Psionics are all about receiving and transmitting information; an ancient tenet holds that

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information is power. In this instance, this statement becomes true in a terribly literal fashion.

LEARNING PSIONICS

When a character gains access to psionic powers for the first time, she immediately learns one basic psionic power of her choice. After that, learning more is simply a question of practice. With each use, the user increases her psionic potential.

In game terms, whenever the character uses a psionic power, she gains a +1 bonus towards a power increase roll, which is made simply by rolling 1d20 and adding the bonus she has gathered. The DC depends on the level of the power she wants to learn. Note that some powers have prerequisites that must be met before the power can be learned.

The user can attempt to learn a new psionic power whenever she wishes. She first makes a Concentration check (DC 15) to attune herself to the psionic energy field, and then studies it in an attempt to learn how to direct psionic energy to achieve the new effect. This takes a number of minutes equal to the increase DC of the power she is attempting to learn, and she can do nothing else during that time. She then makes the actual attempt to learn the power by making the power increase roll.

If she's successful, there's a vast surge of psychic energy (felt automatically by every psionic being within a 1-mile radius), she learns the power, and loses the accumulated bonus. A failure results in *feedback*, and is handled as if she'd rolled a natural 1 on a power activation roll. Failing the roll also means losing half of the accumulated bonus.

Power level	Points Earned per Use	Increase DC
Basic Power	1	25
Intermediate Power	2	35
Advanced Power	3	45

USING PSIONICS

All psionic powers must be activated before they can be used — this is the psionic equivalent of a circuit being opened, allowing the power to flow through. This happens instantly and can be done reflexively in case of defensive powers.

When using psionic powers, the player must first make a power activation roll. The roll is made as follows:

([Character level / 4] [round down]) + d20

A natural 20 is always a success. A natural 1 results in *feedback*. For the DC, consult the table below:

Power Level	Activation DC
Basic	5
Intermediate	10
Advanced	15

Certain conditions make using psionics more difficult. These are as follows:

Character Condition	Activation Roll Modifier
Cowering	–1
Dazed*	–4
Disabled	–1
Exhausted	–2
Fatigued	–1
Nauseated*	–1
Panicked	–1
Shaken	–2
Stunned	–2
Unconscious*	–5

* When in this state, only passive psionic talents, like Psychic Shield, can be used.

FEEDBACK

The human mind isn't ideally designed to handle psionics, and the results of a mistake can be devastating. Sometimes, the user's control slips, and his mind picks up and greatly amplifies the energy he himself is sending out — like a radio receiver that suddenly picks up a hundred transmissions at teeth-shattering volume. This is known as feedback.

Psionic feedback always causes some damage, but feedback from particularly powerful effects can actually kill the user on the spot. To determine the results of the feedback, the character makes a Will save against a DC determined by the intended effect level. If he succeeds, he takes some damage but manages to break the connection before he is hurt any further. If he fails, he immediately falls unconscious for 1 hour and takes secondary damage, as per the following table. On awakening, he is fatigued for the next 23 hours and cannot use any psionic talents until he recovers. Note that all damage caused by feedback is completely unaffected by all types of damage and energy resistance — essentially, the character's very being is tearing itself apart.

In addition to physical damage, feedback causes the result the character was attempting to achieve to

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become inverted — for example, an attempt to read someone's mind results in the target learning the user's thoughts (and more likely than not, just the ones the character would rather not have anyone else hear), whereas a telekinetic punch might be directed at the entirely wrong target or even the character himself. The more powerful the intended effect, the more catastrophic the result. The exact details are left up to the GM, but the end results are never pleasant and always impressive. Note that whether the character makes his Will save has no bearing on the negative results. At that point he has already lost control of his attempt and has his hands full staying alive. The magnitude of the adverse effect is mostly determined by how powerful the psionic power in question is and how evil the GM wants to be.

Characters killed by feedback tend to perish in particularly flashy ways usually tied to the nature of the psionic talent they were attempting to use at the time. A failed attempt at telepathy may result in someone's head exploding in a gruesome fashion, whereas a character trying to avoid an ambush by peeking into the future may actually end up being killed by a bullet that would have killed her counterpart in an alternate timeline. Feedback that doesn't kill produces less severe (but extremely painful) injuries that manifest themselves as splitting headaches and such. Nosebleeds and increased sensitivity to bright lights and loud noises are not uncommon, and the GM may impose penalties where appropriate.

Effect Level	Feedback Damage	Will Save DC	Secondary Damage
Basic	1d6	10	7
Intermediate	2d6	20	13
Advanced	3d6	25	20

Note that basic feedback damage and the secondary damage are dealt separately — the feedback from a basic psionic talent causes 1d6 and 10 points of damage, not 1d6+10 points of damage.

PSIONIC POWERS

PRECOGNITION

A character with this psionic power learns to perceive upcoming events in the flow of time. While she can't exactly tell the future, she does receive quick flashes of possible, immediate future experiences. This has a tendency to be extremely unpleasant. A character about to be ambushed, for example, may feel a cold steel blade suddenly cut her throat. Unpleasant or not, it gives the character an incentive to avoid the situation altogether. Note that Psychic Shield can eliminate the advantages granted by this power.

Level: Basic

Benefit: Thanks to her ability to perceive events a fraction of a second before they unfold, the character with this talent gains a +3 bonus on all Listen and Spot checks when attempting to spot hidden, immediate dangers, including surprise attacks. She is never caught flat-footed.

PRECOGNITION, ADVANCED

The character becomes ever more finely attuned to the ebb and flow of time and can sense some indirect dangers.

Level: Advanced

Prerequisite: Improved Precognition

Benefit: The character's Listen/Spot bonus for spotting surprise attacks is now +9, and she gains a +3 bonus on Sense Motive rolls when she attempts to determine if someone she's talking to plans to betray her in the near future (though she doesn't learn the exact nature of the betrayal).

She also gains a +3 bonus on her initiative, and she will automatically wake up if someone attempts to hurt her while she is asleep.

Finally, all Defense penalties for being blinded, cowering, deafened, shaken or stunned are negated — even if the character is in bad shape and distracted, she still instinctively attempts to move out of harm's way.

PRECOGNITION, IMPROVED

The character learns to extend his senses a bit further down the stream of time, and can now sense potential disaster resulting from his own actions.

Level: Intermediate

Prerequisite: Precognition

Benefit: The player may reroll once any non-combat-related roll that is somehow vital to the character's survival. For example, a failed Disable Device check when picking a lock would not merit a reroll, but if failing the lockpicking attempt would lead to the activation of the automated defense system's invincible killer androids, a reroll would be allowed. This talent must be activated before the first check is made. In the event of a failure, it grants the character a generic understanding of what would happen if he fails the second roll; he does have the option of not attempting the task again. Essentially, the character *almost* begins work on a task, and then decides against it when he senses a strong potential for danger.

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This power can only be used once per given task — the character cannot begin work on a task repeatedly and stop every time if the first attempt fails — the character's every instinct screams against even attempting the action.

The character's Listen/Spot bonus for spotting surprise attacks or hidden dangers is now +5.

PSYCHIC SHIELD

Characters with this feat gain protection against all psionic attacks and effects. Their minds become slippery and hard to grasp for those who attempt to read them, direct telekinetic attacks miss them, and it's easier for them to surprise characters with precognitive abilities. This protection also extends to items (but not other living beings) in the character's immediate vicinity, so telekinetics cannot pick their pockets from a distance. Note, however, that Psychic Shield doesn't offer protection against feedback.

Level: Basic

Benefit: The character gains basic psionic defenses. He gets a +5 bonus on all rolls made to resist psionic effects and a +3 bonus to his Defense against direct psionic attacks. He may catch precognitive heroes flat-footed as per normal combat rules. Psychic shield rarely manifests itself physically, though turning aside powerful attacks may cause the character to sport an aura reminiscent of the aurora borealis.

Unlike other psionic powers, Psychic Shield is automatically activated when the character is under an attempted psionic attack or influence. The character has no choice in the matter. Thus, a character may end up experiencing feedback even when his friend is simply trying to urgently contact him with telepathy.

PSYCHIC SHIELD, ADVANCED

The character's psychic shield becomes nearly impervious.

Level: Advanced Intermediate

Prerequisite: Improved Psychic Shield

Benefit: As with Psychic Shield, except the bonus is now +15.

PSYCHIC SHIELD, IMPROVED

The character's psychic shield becomes stronger.

Level: Intermediate

Prerequisite: Psychic Shield

Benefit: As with Psychic Shield, except the bonus is now +10.

TELEKINESIS

The ability to manipulate objects without actually physically touching them. The effect manifests itself as a spectral, glowing pair of hands and a bright, bluish glow upon the character's forehead.

Level: Basic

Benefit: The character may now manipulate objects at range, but he must still have them in sight — he can, for example, operate a keyboard if he can see it from a window, but he can't open a bolt on the far side of the door. He can pull objects weighing up to 10 lbs. towards himself or toss them around at a speed of 50 feet per round. He can also use this ability to attack enemies, using his Wisdom modifier instead of Strength when making the attack roll.

The character may also attempt to disarm enemies; this is handled normally, except enemies don't get attacks of opportunity unless the telekinetic is in a threatened square. If successful, the targeted weapon flies out of the enemy's hand and into the character's, or simply somewhere on the ground, depending on his wishes. If the enemy is surprised by the attempt, the character gains a +3 bonus to it.

The character inflicts 1d6 + Wisdom modifier points of lethal damage with a telekinetic attack. He has a telekinetic range of 50 yards.

TELEKINESIS, ADVANCED

A character with this feat becomes an even more powerful telekinetic.

Prerequisite: Advanced Telekinesis

Benefit: As above, except the character may now attempt to destroy Huge objects, receives a +15 bonus on attack and damage rolls against objects, and has a range of 100 yards.

When using Telekinesis, the character now has a range of 200 yards, and he inflicts 3d6 points of damage with telekinetic attacks.

TELEKINESIS, IMPROVED

Punching things or tossing them around is one thing, but it's a very straightforward application. There's more to telekinesis than that. With this talent, the character gains the ability to psionically project the unbridled torrent of her subconscious mind on an object of her choice, warping and twisting it, and destroying it in the process. More often than not, this power produces extremely disturbing imagery. Doors become strange and twisted forms shaped like human beings; trees uproot themselves and tear themselves apart with their own branches, revealing

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pulsating flesh and white bone; and vehicles wail with all the terror of a frightened child before falling apart.

Level: Intermediate

Prerequisite: Telekinesis

Benefit: The character may attempt to destroy objects up to Large size. This is handled as per normal rules (see *d20 Modern*, Chapter Five: Combat, "Special Attacks," *Attack an Object*), except the character doesn't have to touch the object, she gets a +10 bonus on the roll, and uses her Wisdom modifier instead of Strength. The character can use Improved Telekinesis at a range of up to 50 yards.

The character cannot control the nature of the imagery. The strange effects only last a single round, and once they fade, things return to normal — except the object in question lies in ruins. Improved Telekinesis cannot be used on living beings.

The character's Telekinesis power is improved: she now has a range of 100 yards, and she inflicts 2d6 points of damage with telekinetic attacks.

TELEPATHY

With concentration, the character may now sense others beings' surface thoughts. When telepathy is used, the telepath's eyes emit a clearly noticeable glow, and she sees phantom images that correspond to the target's thoughts floating at the edge of her field of vision.

Benefit: The character may now make a ranged attack roll against her target, using her Wisdom modifier as a bonus for the attack. The target's Defense is (10 + [one-half his character level, rounded down]) or (5 + [one-half his character level, rounded down]) if the target is a willing subject. If successful, the telepath senses the target's surface thoughts. Unless the target succeeds in a Will save (DC 20), he remains unaware of the intrusion (though he may, of course, notice the telepath's glowing eyes). Telepathy requires a line of sight to the target, has a range of 100 yards, and may only be directed at a single target at any given time.

Bear in mind that the telepath has no control over the target's thoughts; a pressing need to go to the bathroom, for example, can easily override other surface thoughts in someone's mind, even if he's in the middle of a conversation. However, it may be possible to steer a conversation, and presumably the target's thoughts, towards a certain subject with a successful opposed Diplomacy check.

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TELEPATHY, ADVANCED

The telepath may now take direct control of the minds of others. The telepath's own physical features instantly change to echo the target's features. This effect is temporary and can't be used as a disguise — if anything, the end result is disturbing and obviously fake.

Prerequisute: Improved Telepathy

Benefit: The DC of the attempt depends on how reluctant the target is to follow the command, and how long it takes to fulfill the task. The target makes a Will save (DC 10). If she fails, she isn't aware of anyone directing her mind and believes herself to be responsible for everything she does.

Type of Information	DC	Example
General	10	"Are you here alone?"
Specific	15	"What do you have in your pockets?"
Restricted	20	"How often do they change the guards at the gate?"
Protected	25	"What is the code phrase that engages the self-destruct sequence of your base?"

If the telepath's control attempt is successful, the target executes the orders she has received to the best of her ability, as efficiently as she can. If she lacks necessary skills or opportunities, she will end up looking at her objective with deep feelings of confusion until she is absolutely certain that she cannot complete the task. Even if she is aware of someone controlling her, she cannot delay or complicate matters in any way (such as shouting for help or tripping alarms), though she may certainly attempt to undo whatever she has done as soon as she completes the task.

Length of Task	DC modifier
1 round	–
2 rounds	+2
3 rounds	+4
4 rounds	+6
5+ rounds	+8

Advanced Telepathy cannot be used to give unspecific or open-ended orders, nor can it be used for tasks that require long-term planning or continued obedience to the telepath — "Help us conquer this enclave," or "Serve me forever," for example, are not valid orders, but "Kill that man," or "Enter the compound and turn off the alarms," are.

The telepath may also implant commands in the target's mind. In this instance, the DC for the attempt is increased by +5, but now the telepath's commands will be triggered by a specific, pre-defined condition, such as a phrase, time or event. The target is unaware of the implanted command, but gets to make the standard Will save when it is triggered to realize that she is acting under external influence.

TELEPATHY, IMPROVED

The character may now probe deeper into others' minds, as well as broadcast his own thoughts to others. In the latter case, other characters suddenly receive phantom visions corresponding to the telepath's thoughts in their fields of vision.

Prerequisite: Telepathy

Benefit: The telepath must first make a ranged attack roll to gain access to the target's mind, as with Telepathy. He may then dig deeper into the target's mind to look for information he is interested in. The difficulty for such a search depends on how keen the target is to keep the information a secret.

Note that certain facts may not be particularly

Reluctance	DC	Example
Negligible	10	Open a door, turn around, say a simple phrase.
Noticeable	15	Open a secured area, ignore an intruder.
Considerable	20	Harm a friend, holster a weapon in a dangerous situation.
Considerable	25	Kill a friend, jump off a cliff.

power activation roll for each attempt, though only one attack roll is required as long as he remains in constant mental contact and maintains line of sight with the target.

Deep probing isn't without its risks, however; for every attempt, the telepath must make a Will save (DC 10). If he fails the roll, he can no longer distinguish between the target's mind and his own, and adopts key aspects of the target's personality and motivations, or even the target's allegiances. The details depend largely on who or what the telepath was in contact with, and are left up to the GM. Interacting with very hostile minds in this fashion can be dangerous, as it may cause the telepath to turn on his friends or even become filled with self-loathing and attempt to harm himself. This effect lasts for 1d10+5 rounds and leaves the telepath shaken for an hour afterwards.

The telepath may also broadcast his own thoughts to others. Willing subjects may receive his thoughts automatically, but unwilling or unaware

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CHAPTER FOUR
HOME SECTOR AND BEYOND

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The pair stood in the dark forest on the edge of the escarpment, looking down on the ruins that lay several miles away. The shattered towers of concrete and broken glass glowed orange, lit from the bonfires burning between them. The roar of unmuffled engines echoed across the plain, and a shadow occasionally flittered across the face of a building.

Alaistheer hitched his crutch up under his arm and pulled his heavy rakox hide cloak across his front to block the cold wind. He closed his one good eye behind his mask and shook his head. "So, it is true," he whispered. "The Suzuhi have returned and have entered the Glass City, despite our warning signs. It is only a matter of time now."

Nikel laid his hand on his mentor's shoulder. "Perhaps it will not be as bad as you believe."

Opening his eye, Alaistheer looked at the young leader's face. "No, they already awaken the locust dust. Before the moon is full again, the dust will rage across the plains, consuming every living thing in its path."

"How can you be so sure?"

"You were only a baby when the locust dust came last." Alaistheer slowly pulled his mask away from his face. The left side of his face was scarred beyond recognition, the blackened skin barely covering his skull.

Nikel gasped, having never seen the old scout's real face before.

Alaistheer slid his mask back into position. "I once wanted to know what lay in the Glass City. It nearly cost me my life. By the time the locust dust departed, half our numbers lay dead and our fields had been completely destroyed. We nearly starved when the snows came. I still hear the screams of the dying every night in my dreams."

Nikel turned back to look at the ruins. "Then what must we do?"

"Gather as much food and water as we can," Alaistheer said. "We need to seal up our homes and storehouses to protect them against the dust. When it comes, we will not be able to venture out for one moon cycle."

"The young warriors will never agree to this," Nikel said, clenching his fists. "They hate being confined. Already Taivit is talking about breaking taboo and going to the city to force the Suzuhi to leave. I doubt that I will be able to restrain him this time."

"Taivit is foolish, as I once was," Alaistheer said. "Leave him to me."

Nikel shuddered as a gunshot echoed across the valley. "But the caravan is due next moon! We cannot miss the opportunity to trade for more of their wondrous fabric!"

"If we don't seal ourselves up, there won't be any of us left to trade for fabric!" Alaistheer snapped. "I have seen enough."

He turned away from the escarpment and started limping back. "Come, we must tell the tribe what is coming and teach them how to prepare. We must all put aside our petty squabbles and work together if we are to survive the next few weeks."

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TYPES OF ENVIRONMENT

Mother Nature is sick. Despite the passage of time, Nature still bears the scars from the weapons that brought about the end of civilization. No area on the planet was spared. While some areas saw much heavier fighting than others, even the polar ice fields and the expanses of the world's oceans are still straining to recover.

The environment changed a great deal following the war. Some weapons stripped away some of the ozone layer, while others contributed to the greenhouse effect, making the Earth hotter and more exposed to the sun's harmful radiation at the same time. Ocean currents were affected, changing weather patterns and altering the climate for much of the Earth's surface. The polar icecaps partially melted, raising sea level by several feet and flooding many low-lying coastal regions.

Traveling is far more dangerous than ever before. Failing to understand nature's challenges can kill just as effectively as being stabbed or accidentally triggering one of weapons left over from the Final Wars.

In every environment with solid materials at hand (that is, any except wholly aquatic ones like oceans), characters may attempt to find or build shelter. This requires a Survival roll with the same DC required for a competence bonus to the character's Fortitude save, +1 for each additional individual the character wishes to shelter. Others may aid the character in charge of providing shelter, with the usual bonuses. These shelters last as long as the characters use, and decay only gradually once abandoned. Renovating a shelter someone else built and left behind halves the DC, rounded down, +1 for each year after the first it's been unused.

These rules cover the major environments of the Gamma Age. GMs who wish to customize them for specific circumstances should review the basics in *d20 Modern*, Chapter Seven: Gamemastering, "The Environment."

POLAR

Greatly reduced by pollution, war and semi-natural disaster, ice caps still cover each pole. To the North, the Aithic Sea is still a frozen expanse of ice, although it is unstable and constantly breaks and reforms as the seasons turn. To the South, Anthaictica remains buried under a thick layer of ice, albeit much thinner than it was before the Final Wars.

At either pole, explorers can easily find signs of the war. The ice in some areas is still covered in strangely colored residue left over from old attacks. Many of these areas remain deadly to any who encounter them.

In summer, the sun remains above the horizon for practically the entire day, dipping below the horizon for only brief periods. While the area remains frozen, the temperature stays closer to the freezing point than it otherwise would. During winter, the sun never rises at all; a brief twilight is the best there is. Temperatures plunge to well over 100 degrees below zero, forcing those who live there to stay inside as much as possible.

The frozen wastes are not to be treated lightly. The extreme cold kills anyone unprotected within a matter of hours, particularly during the long darkness of the polar winters. Harsh winds tear across the ice. Freestanding water does not exist; water for drinking and washing must be melted from the ice itself. No land-based plant life survives in this hostile environment, making it difficult for many animal species to survive. Those that do eke out their existence here get their food from the ocean, and many are at least semi-aquatic.

Natural shelter is rare in these regions. While there are sometimes ice caves, they are often treacherous and prone to collapse with the shifting ice. It's much safer to bring shelter with you, or learn to make temporary shelters carved from the ice itself.

GAME RULES

Anyone not equipped to counteract the effects of the cold needs to make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 15 in summer, or DC 20 in winter) every 10 minutes they are outside. The DC of each subsequent check increases by +1 cumulatively. Failure means the character takes 1d6 points of cold damage from exposure. Heavy clothing — consisting of at least a hat, face covering, parka, trousers, snow boots and gloves, all made from thick fur or more advanced materials — provides a +4 equipment bonus on saves against the cold. A character who succeeds at a Survival check (DC 15) gains a +4 competence bonus on the save. A character with only a parka, trousers and boots gains a +2 equipment bonus.

Finding fresh drinking water or finding shelter from the elements requires a successful Survival skill check (DC 20). Finding food requires a successful hunting expedition.

THUNTRA

Much of the area surrounding the Aithic Circle is known as the *thuntra*. While not as cold as the frozen

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expanses to the north, it still kills the unwary. The deeper layers of soil remain permanently frozen, preventing most plants from growing. Only tough mosses and lichens can survive in this harsh environment and even these are buried under snow during winter.

Life is more abundant on the plains during the warmer months, which last for only about four months a year. Water melted from the ice flows and snowdrifts trickles in small creeks across the landscape. Some of these are drinkable, but the residue left from the Final Wars still poisons many of them.

Herds graze on the meager plant fare and move about to ensure they have enough to eat. Creatures only dreamt of before the Final Wars now roam the wind-swept plains in enormous herds. Most of the larger animals are well equipped with thick layers of fur and insulating fat to protect them from the cold. Huge predators feed on the migrating herds, using their stealth and incredible strength to quickly bring down all but the largest of prey.

Isolated ruins dot the plains, although they are usually small and often dangerous. Shelter remains mostly non-existent, although it is possible to make huts cut from the sod. Those who live on the thuntra lead mostly nomadic lives, moving with the herds. They tend to be hardy and opportunistic folk, who respect Nature and her often-unpredictable changes. Travel between the different communities is usually done using the most direct route, made possible by the flat expanses of the thuntra.

GAME RULES

Anyone not equipped to counteract the effects of the cold needs to make a Fortitude saving throw. In summer, the save is against DC 15 and is made every hour ; in winter, the save is against DC 20 and is made every 20 minutes. The DC of each subsequent check increases by +1 cumulatively. Failure means the character takes 1d6 points of cold damage from exposure. Heavy clothing (as described above, in the Polar section) provides a +4 equipment bonus on saves against the cold. A character who succeeds at a Survival check (DC 15) gains a +4 competence bonus on the save.

Finding fresh drinking water or shelter requires a successful Survival check (DC 15 for water, DC 20 for shelter). Finding food requires a successful hunting expedition, or the PCs can forage for the few types of edible lichens and mosses that grow on the thuntra (Survival check DC 20).

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THEEKA

The top half of the Northern Hemisphere is ringed with a region known as theeka. Vast forests of spruce, fir and pine cover the landscape, well adapted to the harsh, snowy winters. The winters in these areas are long and severe, with temperatures staying below freezing for many months. Heavy snowfalls make travel through the forests much more difficult.

The summers are short, lasting for only a couple of months each year. However, high temperatures combined with low evaporations rates ensures the air is nearly always humid. Mosquitos and other biting insects are often a problem during these warmer months, since they often carry blood-borne diseases or destructive nanites.

Following the Final Wars, Nature is reclaiming her territory from humanity, and the forests have spread further south, hiding many ruins. However, the trees sometimes mask the presence of the effects of the Final Wars, making travel through these regions often deadly.

A myriad of animals and other creatures make the forest their home. Some are only active during the warmer summer months, finding holes and dens to hibernate in for the winter. Others remain active throughout the whole year, bulking up during the warmer months, and finding ways to scrape away the snow to find food during the winter.

Settlements are more numerous in the theeka regions than in the polar or thuntra regions, thanks to the abundance of timber for building shelters, boats and fuel. The people who live in this region are tough, resigned to the fact that life is difficult, yet they still revel in the natural beauty of the environment.

Without a road through the wilderness, travel is often impossible for anyone not on foot. Some communities keep land trails open to their neighbors, while others rely solely on rivers or seas for travel.

GAME RULES

In winter, anyone not equipped for the effects of the cold needs to make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 20) every 20 minutes. The DC of each subsequent check increases by +1 cumulatively. Failure means the character takes 1d6 points of cold damage from exposure. Heavy clothing (as described in the Polar

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section) provides a +4 equipment bonus on saves against the cold. A character who succeeds at a Survival check (DC 15) gains a +4 competence bonus on the save.

Finding fresh drinking water or making shelter requires a successful Survival check (DC 15). Finding food requires a successful hunting expedition, or the PCs can forage for edible plants (Survival check DC 10 in summer, DC 20 in winter).

MOUNTAINS

Formed where the continental plates have forced the land upwards, mountains can be found on every continent. Some ranges see snow only in winter, while others are high enough for their summits to be permanently shrouded with snow and ice.

Mountains are one of the most varied ecosystems on the planet. At lower altitudes, the foothills are typically covered with vegetation. In many cases, these are the same trees and shrubs found in the surrounding areas. But once the mountain rises above a certain altitude — the tree line — the colder temperatures make it impossible for plants to grow, leaving the mountainside resembling a near-vertical thuntra.

Further up the mountain, the frigid temperatures ensure that the rocks are almost permanently covered with snow and ice. Under certain conditions, this can lead to the formation of glaciers, the rivers of ice that actually carve away the bedrock of the mountain itself

Mountain ranges often contain valleys full of hidden surprises. The weather systems in some valleys can keep the temperature above freezing, allowing plants and animals to survive in areas that would kill them otherwise. These Shangri-Las are highly sought after as places to live and they are often fiercely protected by their inhabitants.

Travel through the mountains is often treacherous. The lower temperatures — and the lack of oxygen at higher altitudes — is exceptionally dangerous for the unprepared. Snow buildups on the mountainsides can cause deadly avalanches if not treated with respect. Blizzards and high winds can kill or injure the unwary.

Roads predating the Final Wars are often in disrepair, or are completely obliterated. Some local communities maintain trails through the lower mountain passes, but are very protective of them, to safeguard themselves and their livelihoods. Many of these passes still become blocked with snow during winter, despite the best efforts of the locals.

GAME RULES

Travel through mountainous terrain can be extremely difficult. Without a known trail, movement rates are cut in half, and a successful Climb check (DC 15) is required every hour. If the mountain is high enough, snow makes travel even more difficult during the winter, cutting movement to one-quarter normal rate.

In winter, or if the permanent snowline is crossed, anyone not equipped for the effects of the cold needs to make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 20) every 20 minutes. The DC of each subsequent check increases by +1 cumulatively. Failure means the character takes 1d6 points of cold damage from exposure. Heavy clothing (as described in the Polar section) provides a +4 equipment bonus on saves against the cold. A character who succeeds at a Survival check (DC 15) gains a +4 competence bonus on the save.

Finding fresh drinking water or making shelter requires a successful Survival check (DC 15). Finding food requires a successful hunting expedition, or the PCs can forage for edible plants (Survival check DC 10 in summer, DC 20 in winter).

TEMPERATE FOREST

Temperate forests are slowly reclaiming much of the land, after being almost destroyed by human expansion. The forests once covered much of the world's highly settled regions, but over hundreds of years most of the trees were cut down in the name of progress. As the weather in these regions remains relatively mild all year round, they were prime choices for settlement. But with much of the human problem gone thanks to the Final Wars, the trees are free to regrow.

In the Northern Hemisphere, the forests are largely broad-leafed deciduous trees, typically oak, maple or elm. In the Southern Hemisphere, the forests are normally a mix of broadleaf evergreen trees — such as eucalyptus — and needleleaf, typically different species of pine.

A wide variety of other plants, particularly shrubs and herbs, grow in the fertile, mulch-covered soil beneath the main canopy. Animal life is common, with mainly herbivores and omnivores making their homes here. The forests are also home to dozens of species created as a result of the insane science of the Final Wars, many of which treat humanity as their natural enemies.

Finding food in the forests is usually easy, due to the wide variety of fruit-bearing shrubs and bushes. Water is usually plentiful, with many creeks winding

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their way through the forest. Small animals — such as squirrels or rabbits — are abundant, making hunting for food simpler.

Despite the widespread clearing of the forests before the Wars, they are rapidly spreading every year, and much of the countryside is returning to a prehistoric state. Timber has always been one of humankind's most used building materials and the tradition has continued since the Cataclysm. Logging of some of the new-growth forests has slowed the forests' expansion in some areas, but the low sentient population means the forests have the upper hand. Still, the high populations these regions supported before the Final Wars shows in a much higher abundance of ruins.

Travel through these regions is easier where the forest has yet to grow back. These areas are mostly covered with grasslands, or wild versions of the crops that survived the Final Wars. The forests themselves are relatively easy to travel on foot, or mounted on animals. Wagons and vehicles cannot move through unless they are travelling on a cleared road or trail.

GAME RULES

Finding drinkable water or edible plants in the forest is much easier than in other areas, requiring a Survival check (DC 10). Finding meat requires a successful hunting trip. Temporary shelter can also be relatively easily improvised (Survival check DC 15).

AROMATIC

Found predominately on the western coasts of continents between the tropics and the polar circles, aromatic regions are mostly covered by grasslands and low shrubs. The weather is mild, with fewer of the environmental extremes faced in other areas.

The summers in these areas are hot and dry, with little rainfall. Freestanding water supplies often dry up completely; finding water during these months requires deep wells, or specialized local knowledge. During the cooler months of winter, the rains return bringing welcome relief and the chance for the plants to grow again.

The aromatic plants that grow in these regions are well adapted to the lack of water during the summer months. Many of them are very oily, such as sage and olives. Forests that had been mostly destroyed before the Final Wars are growing back, with pine, mahogany and eucalyptus now covering the landscape.

However, the vegetation is responsible for one of the environment's major hazards: fire. The plants' oily nature encourages wildfires that quickly roar through the regions, often destroying everything in their path. Walls of flame over 200 feet high are not unknown when these blazes take hold. Once the fires are established, extinguishing them is almost impossible; backburning and clearing are the only really effective means of combating the blazes. However strong winds often blow embers into new areas, starting blazes there to spread the fire further.

Communities here are normally fixed, not nomadic. They are mostly agricultural, although many specialized communities — such as monasteries and centers of learning — are also commonplace. Before the Final Wars, these regions usually had high populations because of their favorable climates. Now, extensive ruins are found instead, overtaken by the grass and shrubs. Some of these ruins — particularly those close to the coast — contain colorful communities, who aim to recapture some of the cosmopolitan idealism that those regions held before the Cataclysm.

GAME RULES

The summer heat and humidity requires the character to make a successful Fortitude saving throw (DC 15) each hour. The DC of each subsequent check increases by +1 cumulatively. A character who fails the save takes 1d4 points of heat damage (fire resistance counters this damage). Wearing armor or heavy winter clothing imposes a –4 penalty on the saving throw. A character who succeeds at a Survival check (DC 15) gains a +4 competence bonus on the save.

Finding drinkable water or edible plants requires a Survival check (DC 15). Finding meat requires a successful hunting trip.

DRY GRASSLAND

Once covering much of several continents' centers, dry grasslands were mostly ploughed into fields for wheat and other crops. During the Final Wars, some of more insidious weapons made large sections of these regions barren, and only relatively recently have they started recovering. The signs of the war are still visible in many areas: Ground completely stripped of topsoil, or the strangely wilted plants that grow in some places.

Summers are usually hot and dry, with only minimal rainfall. The high temperatures often bring devastating storms, with tornados cutting swaths across the landscape. The winters are usually cold, with heavy snowfalls blanketing the land.

The plains are flat for miles, typically interrupted only by small, rolling hills. Forests occasionally dot the plains, usually in places with higher rainfalls. Since the

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Final Wars, large herds of herbivores are reappearing on the grasslands. These herds are prospering, reclaiming the territory humans took from them.

Most communities are either nomadic or agricultural. The nomadic communities are usually tribal, following the herds and living off the land. Many are relatively primitive, although some still retain Pre-War vehicles. The agricultural communities farm the land or tend livestock like their ancestors did before the Final Wars. Most of them maintain defenses against marauders, and patrol large territories around their settlements.

People on foot usually find travel across the grasslands easy, although the breakdown of major roads has made traveling with vehicles or wagons harder than it used to be. Some communities — particularly the agricultural ones — make an effort to keep trails open, often sharing the responsibilities with neighboring communities in order to keep the communication and trade lines open.

GAME RULES

The high temperatures in summer and the low temperatures in winter mean the character must make a successful Fortitude saving throw (DC 15) each hour. The DC of each subsequent check increases by +1 cumulatively. A character who fails the save takes 1d4 points of heat or cold damage (fire or cold resistance counters this damage). Wearing armor or heavy clothing (as described in the Polar section) imposes a –4 penalty on the saving throw in summer and a +4 bonus in winter. A character who succeeds at a Survival check (DC 15) gains a +4 competence bonus on the save.

Finding drinkable water or edible plants requires a Survival check (DC 15). Finding meat requires a successful hunting trip. Finding or making temporary shelter can be harder, due to the lack of trees (Survival check DC 15).

TROPICAL GRASSLAND

Between the tropical rainforests straddling the equator and the deserts lie the tropical grasslands. These vast plains are covered with long, hardy grass, and the occasional low trees or shrub. Many species of reptiles and insects live in the grasslands — quite a few of which are poisonous — as do herds of some of the Earth's largest land animals. In some areas, termite mounds close to ten feet tall can be found, often only a few hundred feet apart.

The normal seasons don't exist on the grasslands. Instead, there are only two distinct seasons: the wet and the dry. The wet season, which lasts for about three to five months and corresponds with the normal summer — June through September in the Northern Hemisphere, or November through March in the Southern — brings heavy monsoon rains, often leading to flooding and other damage, particularly from landslides. It brings on new growth, making food much easier to find during these times. But the rain also turns the ground into huge quagmires, making travel almost impossible. Huge tropical storms — hurricanes or cyclones — are common during the wet season in areas close to the ocean, often leaving a trail of destruction in their wake.

Despite the name, the dry season is not without rainfall, but the showers are often short-lived and the water usually evaporates quickly. Finding drinking water is usually more difficult during the dry season, as rivers and creeks often dry up completely.

The grasslands often show signs of the Final Wars. Some regions are more fertile, with lush growth and bizarre animals, while others are more like the deserts — lifeless areas that quickly kill any who dare to set foot in them.

Communities that make their homes in the grasslands often do so close to permanent water supplies. Roads between the communities are relatively well maintained, although it's possible to travel for days or even weeks at a time and never see another soul.

GAME RULES

The high heat and humidity requires the character to make a successful Fortitude saving throw (DC 15) each hour. The DC of each subsequent check increases by +1 cumulatively. A character who fails the save takes 1d4 points of heat damage (fire resistance counters this damage). Wearing armor or heaving clothing (anything more than light clothing) imposes a –4 penalty on the saving throw. A character who succeeds at a Survival check (DC 15) gains a +4 competence bonus on the save.

Finding drinkable water or edible plants requires a Survival check (DC 15). Finding meat requires a successful hunting trip. Finding or making temporary shelter can be harder, due to the lack of trees (Survival check DC 15).

TROPICAL RAINFOREST

Around most of the equator, the climate is constantly hot and wet, breeding some of the most diverse ecosystems on the planet. Huge forests with thick undergrowth cover much of the tropical regions, trapping in the heat and moisture. The Final Wars'

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weapons caused an explosion in the number of life forms that dwell in the jungles. Many of these — including some plants — are often deadly to humans.

Like the tropical grasslands, the rainforests experience the wet and dry seasons. The jungles are always hot and humid, making life there very uncomfortable; the wet season just makes things wetter.

Rainforests have some of the world's fastest-growing plants. Nature quickly reclaims any cleared space, particularly those left unattended. Ruins are quickly swallowed by vines and creepers, often within months. Roads and trails are similarly covered, making travel difficult on all but the most widely traveled routes. Many jungle communities revert to a primitive lifestyle of hunting and gathering, learning to live with the environment, rather than resisting it and forcing their will on Mother Nature.

The jungles are home a massive variety of plant, animal and insect life. It's also *never* quiet. There is always the squawk of tropical birds, the howl of animals and the click and buzz of the ever-present insects, even during the night. Creatures — including some of the plants — living here are masters of their environment, using camouflage and stealth to their maximum advantage. Disease is rampant, with both flying and water-borne insects often carrying deadly viruses.

GAME RULES

The oppressive heat and humidity of the rainforest requires the character to make a successful Fortitude saving throw (DC 20) each hour. The DC of each subsequent check increases by +1 cumulatively. A character who fails the save takes 1d6 points of heat damage (fire resistance counters this damage). Wearing armor or heaving clothing (anything more than light clothing) imposes a –4 penalty on the saving throw. A character who succeeds at a Survival check (DC 15) gains a +4 competence bonus on the save.

The thickness of the jungle reduces movement rates by half, unless travel is on a well-worn path or road.

Finding drinkable water or edible plants in the jungle is much simpler than it is in other areas, requiring a Survival check (DC 10). Finding meat requires a successful hunting trip. Temporary shelter can also be relatively easily improvised (Survival check DC 15).

HOT DESERT

Scattered about the world — lying either in or just outside the tropics — is a ring of hot deserts. These barren sand or stony plains are among the world's most inhospitable environments. Rainfall is either minimal or completely non-existent, making survival exceptionally difficult.

The damage to the ozone layer and the greenhouse effect have increased temperatures dramatically since the Final Wars. The desert's lack of clouds causes wild temperature swings between day and night, with lows during the night close to freezing and the highs in the middle of the day sometimes hot enough to kill.

Finding shelter is often difficult. In the rocky deserts, it is often possible to find caves to escape the heat. The sandy deserts are usually flatter and more barren, making finding natural shelter a near impossible task. Most of the animals that live in these regions dig burrows and avoid the heat underground, emerging only at night to feed.

Food is sparse; like the north's frozen thuntra, most people are nomadic, moving to take advantage of different plants and animals. Finding food and water in the desert *is* possible; it just takes a lot of specialized knowledge. Those who live here usually know the secrets and live in harmony with nature.

Still, some settlements are dotted throughout the world's desert regions. These are normally clustered around the few permanent oases that still exist. The people in these communities will share their water with strangers for a time, but they will fight to prevent anyone from taking it by force.

Many of the world's deserts — particularly those in the Middle East — show the signs of the heavy fighting from the Final Wars. Some nomads tell stories of sand permanently dyed red from the blood of those who fell there, while others speak of plains of black glass that stretch as far as the eye can see.

GAME RULES

Surviving the intense heat of the desert requires the character to make a successful Fortitude saving throw (DC 20) every 10 minutes. The DC of each subsequent check increases by +1 cumulatively. A character who fails the save takes 1d6 points of heat damage (fire resistance counters this damage). Wearing armor or heaving clothing (anything more than thin clothing) imposes a –4 penalty on the saving throw. A character who succeeds at a Survival check (DC 15) gains a +4 competence bonus on the save.

Finding fresh drinking water or making shelter requires a successful Survival check (DC 20). Finding food requires a successful hunting expedition, or the PCs can forage for edible plants (Survival check DC 15).

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OCEAN

With the partial melting of the polar icecaps, oceans now cover more of the Earth's surface than ever before. Although the Final Wars ended most transoceanic travel, people are rediscovering ancient traditions and setting forth to cross the vast expanses of open water again.

The Final Wars even affected the ocean. When the polar ice melted, the ocean levels rose, flooding many low-lying coastal regions, including many major cities. Some are completely submerged, while others lie partially exposed, allowing scavengers to fossick amongst the ruins at low tide.

Ocean travel is both difficult and dangerous. Crews not equipped with enough food and water for long periods at sea often perish long before they ever find land. Navigation on the open ocean is almost impossible without proper equipment or charts. The weather at sea is wildly unpredictable, with severe storms blowing up that can smash even the strongest vessels.

But the water often hides hidden dangers. Nanite weaponry — left over from the Final Wars' fierce naval battles — still lurks on the surface and beneath the waves. Currents sometimes float these nanites towards land, often with devastating results. The mutations caused by the weapons and their side effects are perhaps most keenly felt in the oceans, with more strange creatures than in any other environment on Earth. Some live close to shore, among the coral reefs or the ruins of the flooded cities, while others are rarely seen, staying to the open ocean, and often rarely rising from the depths at all.

Some communities exist completely beneath the waves. The inhabitants have developed gills — or some other way of breathing underwater — and they find it safest to live under the water. Some are completely hostile to the air-breathers, while others will often help stricken sailors or trade with land-based communities for things they cannot obtain from the sea.

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GAME RULES

Travel on any large body of water — be it an ocean or even a large inland sea — requires a seaworthy boat and a successful Drive check (DC 15). Characters without the appropriate Surface Vehicle Operation feat are subject to a –4 penalty on the Drive check.

Successful navigation across an open body of water requires a successful Navigate check (see *d20 Modern*, Chapter Two: Skills, "Skill Descriptions," *Navigate*).

On the ocean, fresh drinking water must be stored on board the vessel, or it must be created using some artificial means (for example, a desalinator). Fish or other sealife can be caught by making a successful Survival check (DC 15).

SWAMPS

Swamps are regions where the ground is covered by shallow water for much, if not all, of the year. They are often found close to river mouths, where silt builds up and forces the water over the banks and out over the surrounding countryside.

Swamps are found in all other regions except deserts and the polar ice caps. In the colder environments, they are normally peat bogs or fens. In tropical and subtropical areas, mangrove trees are a common sight in swampy areas.

Swamps and marshes are havens for a wide variety of bird and animal life. Wading birds feed in the shallow water, hunting for small fish and reptiles. Some species of larger animals also make their homes here, mostly feeding on the marsh grasses or other aquatic plant life.

GAME RULES

Movement rates are cut to one-half when moving through the swamps, or reduced to one-quarter if moving in a vehicle other than a shallow draft boat.

Finding drinkable water or edible plants requires a Survival check (DC 15). Finding meat requires a successful hunting trip. Finding or making dry shelter can be harder, due to the water covering the ground (Survival check DC 15).

OVERLAND TRAVEL RATES

The following movement rates are averages for general terrain types. Circumstances vary: A well-maintained road can greatly reduce travel times, while ruins full of dangerous crevasses and mounds of rubble can make a trip much longer. GMs should adjust the characters' rate of progress to match the conditions.

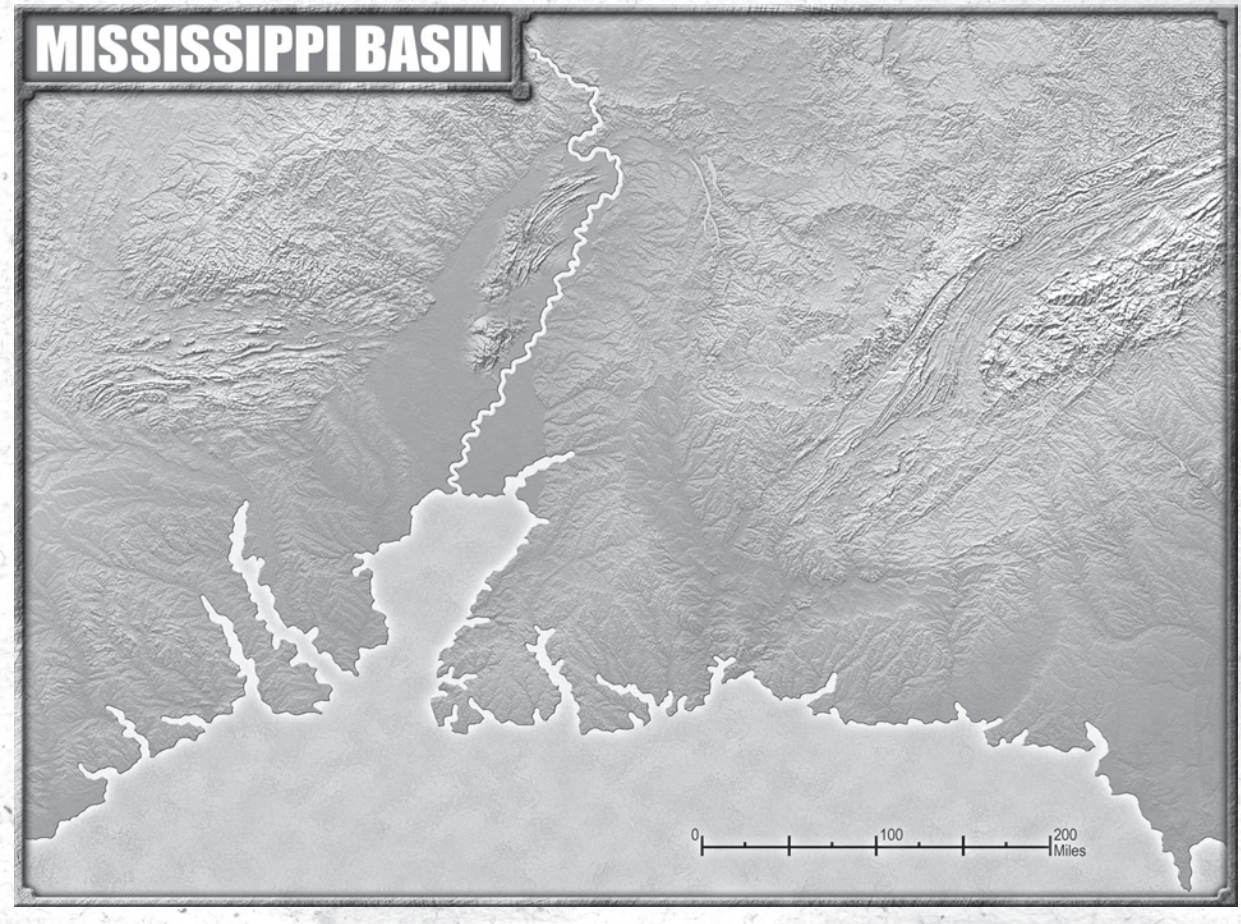

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TABLE 4–1: TERRAIN AND OVERLAND MOVEMENT

Terrain	Highway	Road or Trail	Trackless
Aromatic	x1	x1	x3/4
Dry Grassland	x1	x1	x3/4
Hot Desert	x1	x1/2	x1/2
Mountains	x3/4	x3/4	x1/2
Polar	x1	x3/4	x1/2
Swamps	x1/2	x1/2	x1/2
Temperate Forest	x1	x1	x1/2
Theeka	x1	x1	x1/2
Thuntra	x1	x3/4	x3/4
Tropical Grassland	x1	x3/4	x1/2
Tropical Rainforest	x1	x3/4	x1/2

RADIATION POISONING

Radiation is an energy type just like fire and electricity — it can cause damage to living creatures just as immediately as a flame or a jolt of current can. It is also far more insidious than the other energy types: it poisons those exposed to it, causing lingering sickness and even death. Those who live are often mutated in strange ways (see Chapter Three).

Some advanced technology equipment and some mutations provide protection from radiation and the poison and mutation that follow it in the form of radiation resistance (any piece of equipment that provides full-spectrum energy resistance also protects against radiation). If these protections are sufficient to protect the user from any radiation damage, that user is also protected from the poison and mutation effects.

If even a single point of radiation damage gets through the protection, the individual must immediately make a Fortitude save against a DC determined by the intensity of the radiation, as found below. (Any genotype-based penalties or bonuses on saves against mutation *do not* apply to this roll.)

An individual who fails the Fortitude save takes the initial damage. Even those who resisted the initial damage must save again against the secondary damage. But that isn't the end.

Anyone who failed either save and took any temporary or permanent Constitution damage now suffers from debilitating radiation poisoning. The individual must make a Fortitude save against the same DC in 24 hours or suffer the secondary damage again. The Treat Injury skill can be used to reduce the effects of radiation poisoning; until a successful Treat Injury check (using the same DC as the Fortitude save) is made on the poisoned individual, he faces the radiation's secondary damage every 24 hours. Once the individual has been treated, his level of radiation poisoning drops by one intensity level each time he succeeds at his Fortitude save, until he has fully recovered (i.e. moderate to weak, weak to cured).

Anything reduced to 0 Constitution from radiation poisoning dies, and leaves behind a poisonous corpse. Anyone touching the corpse without protection against radiation must make a Fortitude save against weak radiation. Anything desperate enough to eat the flesh of the tainted corpse must make a Fortitude save against moderate radiation — there is no protection against this short of complete immunity to radiation effects.

TABLE 4–2: RADIATION POISONING

Radiation Intensity	Fort Save DC	Initial Damage	Secondary Damage
Weak	5	1d2 Con	1 Con
Moderate	10	1d2 Con	1d2 Con
Strong	15	1d3 Con	1d3 Con
Intense	20	1d3 Permanent Con	1d4 Con

THE SHATTERED REMAINS

The effects of the Final Wars are felt perhaps most acutely among the wreckage the war left behind. The overgrown expanses of dull gray stone. Corrosion eating through an ancient metal hulk. The smoke blackened shells threatening to collapse at any time. The strange object that explodes when moved. The sinister form that watches from the shadows of a wrecked tower's upper floors as you pass by.

Ruins are scattered all over the Gamma World. In some areas, they stretch for miles in every direction, while others are so small they go unnoticed. But all of them have something in common: They give a glimpse what life was like before and during the Final Wars. They are more than just shattered buildings; they are the wreckage of humanity's stupidity and a grim reminder of the dangers of taking life for granted.

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For centuries, humanity exerted its dominance over nature, changing the environment to suit itself. Those changes were often not for the better. Timber and stone were used as building materials. Houses, shopping malls and office blocks covered over what was once grassland or forest. Dammed rivers provided water supplies or hydroelectric power. Pollution increased, particularly around the bigger cities.

The advent of nano- and biotechnology changed the face of the world even more. Construction methods that had always been thought impossible took over as the norm. Sentient computers ran everything from large cities to small appliances. Giant beanstalks carried men and equipment into orbit. Genetic structures were manipulated on a daily basis to repair damaged genes or even to create species that had never existed.

But humanity's stupidity led to its ultimate downfall. The unleashing of the Final Wars' arsenal destroyed nearly everything that humanity ever built. Clouds of nanites devoured concrete and metal, leaving nothing but dust behind. Biological and chemical weapons killed huge portions of the population; nuclear weapons flattened large expanses and made them uninhabitable for hundreds of years. AIs turned on their makers and used their control over cities to make life hell for the inhabitants. Space-based kinetic weapons made huge craters of the toughest military installations or the most important civilian facilities, while conventional bombs and robot infantry units blew up much of what was left. When the dust settled, almost nothing remained.

After the Final Wars, nature struck back, reclaiming much of the territory that it lost to humankind. Fire and water destroyed most of the less permanent material. Plants of all kinds began taking over again, sometimes with surprising ferociousness. Weeds and grasses spring up through the cracks in the concrete and in the dust that gathers in the corners. Trees once again thrive in areas where the floods from shattered dams buried city streets under thick layers of silt. Vines and creepers conspire with the weather to scratch away anything etched into the things left behind. While she still has a long way to go, Mother Nature is doing her best to remove the scars of humanity's arrogance from the surface of the Earth.

Despite the increasing natural beauty of many ruins, they still hold an abundance of danger. The weapons used in the Final Wars were deadly and insidious, and in many areas, the effects can still be keenly felt. Radiation, nanites and unexploded munitions still lurk in many larger ruins, threatening any that dare to explore them. The weapons are sometimes still active and kill as easily now as they did when they were created.

Weapons are only part of the ruins' dangers. The exposure to the elements and the lack of maintenance means many buildings are dramatically weakened and prone to collapse at any time. Often one structure collapsing takes out several others, only hastening the destruction. Many of the darker corners — often the basements of the larger buildings or all manner of old tunnels — contain stale or poisoned air that kills any who try to explore. Containers of toxic waste, the byproducts of humanity's lust for consumer items or "clean" power, now lie shattered and unprotected, poisoning the areas around them.

Despite the dangers, ruins also contain huge treasures for those willing to search carefully for anything valuable. Strange artifacts — some easily understood and others that defy explanation — lie buried with the remains of their makers. For those hunting for knowledge lost in the Final Wars, ruins provide the best place to start. Some of this knowledge is fragmentary; fires, floods and exposure have destroyed much of the information leaving only hints behind. Yet, in other areas, carefully hoarded caches still remain intact like buried treasure. These leftovers continue to attract people to the remnants of the Old World.

Very few of the ruins remain completely uninhabited. Most teem with life, consisting mostly of insects, animals, reptiles and birds. The wreckage provides all manner of nests and burrows, allowing the cycle of life to continue. Sentient species are often present as well, usually only in smaller numbers. Scavengers sift through the remains, hoping to find something valuable or useful. Crazed killers prowl the ruins, using them as a bizarre hunting reserve. In some places, whole tribes inhabit the ruins, rebuilding a civilization from the ashes of the old one. Robots — from the harmless civilian types, to the deadly warbots — still prowl through the ruins continuing their Pre-War missions. Occasionally, the sentient computers are still partially operational, keeping the city running in whatever way they can.

Not all ruins are cities. Throughout the world are the remains of other elements of the Old World. The twisted wreckage of crashed aircraft; the submerged wrecks of gigantic, transoceanic surface ships; or fragments of shattered spacecraft spread over a vast area are all examples. Many of these wrecks contain secrets or artifacts in the same way that the remains of the cities do; in many cases, they have even more specialized or bizarre equipment.

There is not a region on the planet that does not contain some reminder of the time before the Final Wars. For the brave, they contain riches beyond their wildest imaginations. But for most, they are a place of death, and many that enter are never seen again.

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BLOWING UP YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

The Earth of **Gamma World** is not the world we currently know. The Final Wars destroyed most of civilization, leaving only the messed-up remains for the survivors to pick over. People eke out a way of life as best they can, given the resources around them.

Earth is, however, a very large place and there is *no* way this book could provide details about everything in the Gamma World, even in the broadest terms. Even if it did, it might not mesh with the GM's vision of where he wanted to set his games.

Instead, this section provides a set of guidelines to take locations and make them into their **Gamma World** equivalents. The idea is to provide the ability to trash places the GM is familiar with, making game play more accessible.

The degree of conversion done depends entirely on the level of weirdness required. If the players want high action, then the world should change radically and include huge amounts of danger for the PCs to encounter. If they want a more sedate, character-driven story line, it's not necessary to create as much of the Gamma World, or make it nearly as dangerous. If the aim is dark and gritty, the end result should be a setting that demands a lot of the characters in it, but doesn't give much back in return.

These steps are only guidelines on how to create a little corner of the Gamma World. It's up to a GM whether she wants to skip or rearrange some steps, or even to invent new ones.

SHARING THE LOVE AROUND

Normally, a GM will rely on a published setting, or he'll create one from the ground up. Either way, it is the GM's responsibility to fill in all the little details of the world himself and then reveal them to the players during game play. A **Gamma World** GM could stick with this approach. Some people prefer to keep all the secrets of the game world to themselves, so that the players can learn about strange places and their inhabitants as they go.

But there is an alternative: encourage the players actively contribute to this part of campaign setup. Taking a group approach to setting creation allows much more brainstorming about how a location changed, both before and after the Final Wars. Different perspectives can make the setting far more vibrant and interesting, and other people may contribute some really interesting aspects that the GM may not have thought of. With a whole group riffing off each other's ideas, the game's setting will probably come together much more quickly.

The first advantage of the group approach is that the players start play already knowing how the game world looks and feels. This allows the GM to get right to the point, rather than spending several sessions explaining the game world to her players. The second advantage is that the GM can see what interests her players, and she can tailor aspects of her story towards those elements.

This doesn't mean that the group should be allowed to detail *all* of the setting. The GM should have the final say over the setting; it's also the GM's responsibility to fill the world with nasty surprises that the group *doesn't* know about. After all, what would be the point if they already knew all of the secrets?

THE SCOPE OF THE SETTING

Before wrecking wholesale slabs of the Earth's surface, it's important to determine in advance how much of the Earth the characters will explore. There's no point in detailing the Amazon jungle or the frozen wastes of Antarctica if the PCs will never go there. Instead, it's better to simply concentrate on the pieces of the world actually needed on an on-going basis.

Just how much of the world that is depends upon what sort of group the PCs are. If they're going to be part of relatively permanent community, then detailing the part of the world within a few days travel of their homes should be enough. On the other hand, if the group is nomadic, then where they're likely to roam on their travels should dictate the design. This part of the setting creation can be undertaken somewhat in parallel with the creation of the PC's community — or perhaps even communities (see later in this chapter for details on creating a community).

It's often best to set a game in an area that the GM and his players are familiar with; after all, it's more fun to destroy something you have some sort of an attachment to, rather than just some arbitrary location. If you live in a big city, then just setting your game in what's left of that and the surrounding countryside will often be enough.

You don't need to detail everything in advance; just emphasize the locations close to where the PCs will spend most of their time. You need the greatest focus on their community and everything within a day's travel of it (remembering that travel on foot is a

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lot slower than travel by some sort of mechanical means). Go into a moderate amount of detail on areas within three days travel of the PCs' home base. Have a reasonable — but not overly detailed — idea of anything major within a week's travel. These are the areas that the PCs are most likely to explore regularly. It's best to know what's out there, although having a picture in broad-brush strokes is probably enough.

Just start with the pieces you need to start your game, and worry about the rest later if it turns out that you actually need it at all.

BEFORE THE FINAL WARS

The Gamma World isn't just a conversion of the world as it currently exists. In the early part of the 21st Century, technology started outpacing even the wildest imaginations. Biotechnology and advances in computing created a world where genetic manipulation was normal and where self-aware computers took over much of the mundane running of the cities.

Go wild. Add anything to the location, remembering that most of it will be destroyed later. At the same time, try to preserve the location's spirit. People — as much as they like progress — often like history and try to keep some areas the same to remind them of the past. Try to exaggerate what already exists by giving it a more futuristic feel.

Here are a few suggestions to consider:

• **Power:** Modern society requires a lot of energy to function properly. At present, most of the world's power is generated from burning fossil fuels or nuclear fission. Alternatives such as nuclear fusion, solar energy, wind farms, hydroelectricity and wave power are only now becoming viable alternatives. As the world's population grows towards the Final Wars, its need for electricity will only get stronger. How can society's needs be met? Are more nuclear power stations built? Are sections of the countryside roofed over with huge solar panels? Are hundreds of gigantic windmills built to harness wind energy? What about something even more bizarre — and possibly more devastating?

• **Transportation:** Large numbers of people living together need a means of moving around efficiently. As cities grow, multi-lane freeways replace city streets as the main way of moving large volumes of traffic from one place to another. Public transportation — buses, trains and ferries — help to move large numbers of people quickly and efficiently. Are there other alternatives? Do magnetic levitation trains exist? Do they run on elevated platforms above the city, or are they hidden in complex tunnel systems below ground? Has the population taken to the air, with aerial buses and taxis? How much control is given to self-aware computers? Is there an airport or a seaport (or both) for moving people and cargoes? Is there something even more exotic like a spaceport, or an orbital beanstalk?

• **Housing:** As populations grow, so too does their need for housing. Do large residential towers spring up everywhere? How densely packed are they? Are they ghettoes for the poor, or are they playgrounds exclusively for the rich? Do the suburbs with their low-density housing spread out for miles in every direction?

• **Communications:** How is information disseminated to the population? Where are the facilities for doing this and what form do they take? Are there large antenna or satellite dish farms?

• **Business:** Where do the businesses operate? Do they have gigantic corporate towers in the heart of the city, or are they spread out? Are there extensive factory complexes for building products using nanite fabricators, or have they been replaced by all manner of smaller facilities?

• **Food and Water:** Where does all the food and water for the population come from? Are there huge farms and dams within a day's travel of the city? Does the city attempt to capture rainwater in creative ways to supplement their water supplies? Is food and water reclaimed through huge improvements in recycling? Is food produced by nanites in special factories? Do people even eat natural food anymore, or is that just a distant memory?

• **The Environment:** Has some sort of gigantic climate control system — such as building a huge dome over the entire city, or heating grids buried in all the city's streets — been installed to keep the elements at bay?

TARGETS OF THE FINAL WARS

When any war is fought, military planners determine priority orders for a wide range of targets in order to win the war for their side. Current doctrine emphasizes wiping out the enemy's defensive or counterattack capabilities, including all command, control and communications facilities; supplies; military installations; and businesses dedicated to producing war materiel.

If the war escalates, then civilian populations are targeted. Any civilian assets that could be used for the war effort — particularly fuel supplies, transportation and cargo-handling facilities — are targeted along with civilian food and water supplies. If things become desperate, then the dreaded "scorched earth" policy is used to ensure nothing valuable is left behind for the enemy.

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The Final Wars used of all of this and more. When figuring out what to destroy and what to leave behind, remember attackers try to minimize the damage to the enemy's territory if they have plans of occupying it, but they maximize the damage if they simply want to deny it to the enemy. Defenders want to protect as much of their assets as possible, so they can rebuild after the war is over. However, if the only way out is to permanently surrender land to the enemy, it's best to deny them *everything*.

How did the location fare during the Final Wars? Was it behind the lines and just subjected to strikes by the enemy trying to destroy the power base? Or was it actually occupied by the enemy and saw heavy fighting?

Make a list of the important targets like military bases, transportation hubs like airports and seaports, fuel refineries, major roads, communications installations and anything else that seems important. This list is used in the next part to see how badly the location fared in the war.

HOW IT BLEW UP

With the targets chosen, the next step is decide *how* to destroy them. Different weapons have different effects on the target and the surrounding area, and some of these effects can last for long periods after the war has ended. The weapons chosen depend on how total the damage needs to be. Go through the target list and destroy each one of them in turn, keeping track of how it was done, so that residual effects can be used during the game.

• **Nanite Weapons:** The breakthrough in nanotechnology brought about a renaissance in weapon design. Nanites could create nearly any sort of damage that planners could imagine. They could eat through concrete and steel, turn water supplies into vast ponds of jello or permanent freeze it into a gigantic ice cube. They could completely eradicate *all* vegetation over a wide area, leaving the topsoil prone to erosion by the wind. Unfortunately, the facilities needed to shut down the nanites were destroyed in the war, leaving many of the weapons sitting in a dormant state, waiting for a change in conditions that will reactivate them.

• **Chemical and Biological weapons:** Mainly used for destroying troops or civilian populations, chemical and biological attacks kill thousands of people effectively and often leave residue behind that continues to do so long after the initial attack.

• **Breakdown:** the Cataclysm was not just caused by bombs falling. Mankind put a lot of control in the hands of machines. Over time, the machines developed sentience, then suffered breakdowns and turned against

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their former masters. Buildings trapped and killed their inhabitants and hundreds of machines came up with inspired ways to kill anyone who tried to wrest control from them. Humans often just escaped with their lives, leaving the soultech to its own devices.

• **Nuclear Weapons:** High-yield nuclear weapons destroy everything over a wide area. Low-yield or tactical nukes destroy everything over a much smaller area. Neutron bombs do little damage, but kill anything living with massive doses of radiation Dirty bombs — radioactive waste packed around a high explosive core — do only blast damage to a small area. All of them make the environment radioactive — and often uninhabitable — for years after the initial explosion.

• **Orbital Kinetic Weapons:** Very heavy objects taken into orbit and hurled at the ground at high speed do massive amounts of damage. The bomb doesn't have to be explosive; the sheer amount of kinetic energy it transfers on impact does the same thing. Orbital kinetic weapons can make a large crater out of even the hardest shelters, but won't leave any form of residual damage.

• **Surgical Strike:** Surgical strikes are prefect for taking out a single installation and leaving everything around it intact. Computer controlled smart- or brilliant-weapons can deliver a warhead to a precise location ensuring maximum effectiveness.

• **Large-Scale High Explosives:** Large amounts of high explosives are the weapon of choice to destroy everything over a wide area, without the problems caused by nanites or radioactivity. Carpet bombing, artillery barrages or a single high-yield bomb all perform much the same function. What the explosives don't destroy, the resulting firestorm usually will.

• **Collateral Damage:** Sometimes the best way to destroy something is not to attack it directly, but to attack something else that will have a follow-on effect that will take out your real target. Destroying a dam or dyke systems will cause a catastrophic flood that may well wash away any industries or cities downstream. Avalanches or mudslides can bury a building. A devastating forest fire may well spread uncontrolled to your target. By attacking a nearby resource, it's possible to accomplish the aim with collateral damage.

• **Tactical Warfare:** Once troops begin ground attacks to claim territory, they inflict widespread damage across the combat theater. Tank shells, tactical bombing by aircraft and even infantry all leave scars that exist for years afterwards.

• **Falling Debris:** What goes up must come down — eventually. The wars were fought with all types of air- and spacecraft. Some aircraft ran on oil-based fuels, while others — particularly the spacecraft — had special nuclear reactors. If either type of craft crashes into a city, the damage can be catastrophic, particularly from a satellite falling from orbit.

• **Natural Disasters:** Earthquakes, volcanoes, tornadoes, cyclones, hurricanes and other natural disasters all cause widespread devastation when they strike a build up area. Earthquakes and the violent storms tend to tear structures apart, while volcanoes can bury the wreckage in ash and mud.

• **The War's Aftermath:** Once the dust has settled on the fighting, looters and vandals leave their own marks on whatever the heavier fighting has left behind.

FROM WAR TO RUIN

With humankind out of the way, nature begins to reclaim what it once owned. Rivers return to their original courses once the maintenance on the diversions has stopped. Fires sweep through, destroying large areas. Dust storms caused by erosion bury the ruins, while wind and rain conspire to erode away what's left behind.

Weeds, vines and grasses are usually the first plants to reestablish themselves in the ruins. Given the right weather conditions, trees and shrubs return and begin hiding the wreckage. If left undisturbed for long enough, they grow to maturity and mask all signs of human habitation — unless there are nanites or other residue that kills off any new growth as soon as it starts.

Also consider the effect the war had on the climate in the area. On a global scale, the war made the Earth hotter, melting some of the polar ice and causing the sea level to rise. Some coastal cities have been flooded; some are now completely underwater; others have just the higher ground still visible.

In general, environmental effects are simply more exaggerated versions of early 21st century conditions. Summers are hotter and drier, while the winters often are colder and wetter.

There are also some strange side effects in localized areas. Stable microclimates sprung up in secluded areas. A fertile oasis may exist in the middle of an arid wasteland. Nanite activity may create a rainforest in the middle of the theeka, or turn an old subway tunnel system into an ice cave. The advances in technology allowed humanity to radically alter the environment to suit its own needs; some of that technology may still be operating.

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WHAT REMAINS

Despite the widespread devastation, parts of the cities may survive at least partly intact. Some nanite factories may continue churning out whatever they were last programmed to make, simply because the control systems are no longer operational. A few cities may still have at least part of their autonomous control systems functioning despite the death of the original inhabitants years ago.

Decide how much of the old tech is still functional. (See Chapter Six for more ideas about how to answer this question and what implications each answer has.) The ruins may be effectively dead, because there's no power. Some androids could still be vainly trying to keep order and make sure that the city remains mostly intact for when the human masters return. Alternatively, there may be some vestiges of the AI that ran the city still ensuring that the city functions. And the city doesn't like intruders.

WHO LIVES THERE NOW

More often than not, the ruins are at least partially inhabited. As a bare minimum, animals — some normal, some the result of runaway genetics — take advantage of the shelter the ruins offer. They make their homes amidst the wreckage and defend their territory against invaders. Some inhabit the high reaches of old tower blocks, while others live in the safer parts of the tunnel systems that stretch for miles under most cities.

Despite all the risks, sentient creatures are always found in the ruins. Some are just passing through, others are scavenging through the wreckage looking for treasures from before the Cataclysm. Occasionally, communities make their homes in the safer parts of town, taking advantage of the remaining resources. Life in the city is hard though, so most communities don't take kindly to strangers prowling around their homes.

When PCs start exploring the ruins, they should meet up with some of the local inhabitants, who may be hostile. They may or may not even be sane. Either way, they should be as colorful as possible.

GETTING IT READY FOR ADVENTURE

Once the ruins are designed, all that remains is to sprinkle a few adventure hooks through the wreckage for the PCs to find as they explore. This section should be one that the players *don't* have any input over.

They can find all sorts of items or information from the Old World, but they also need to face a series of dangers in order to get in and out of the ruins safely. Not only do the sentient, animal and plant inhabitants pose a threat, but they need to deal with the lingering remnants of the weapons themselves. The ruins are not stable; digging around too much could cause the wreckage to collapse, trapping the unwary.

What they come across in the ruins is only limited by your imagination. Make it as simple or as complex as you like, but make sure that ruins are not a place for the unwary.

THE COMMUNITY

Living alone is an almost impossible task over a long period. The constant need to find food, water and shelter fills every waking hour, leaving little time for leisure activities. If the individual falls ill or suffers an injury, there is no one to look after him and his chances of surviving are greatly reduced.

By banding together with others, survival becomes much easier. With several people cooperating on the essential tasks — such as finding food and water — an individual's average workload falls dramatically. This leaves the whole group with more time available for less essential work. Human beings are also social creatures; having other people around to talk to, in good times and bad, can often help keep someone sane and focused on living.

A community is a group of individuals with a similar worldview who join together for their mutual benefit. They share the tasks essential for survival, and use any time saved to pursue other interests and tasks that help advance the whole community. Being part of a larger group also allows individuals to concentrate on specific skills that they have an aptitude for. If an individual can focus on the quality of work she is performing, the community as a whole prospers.

Communities provide an excellent reason for a group of disparate characters to be exploring the Gamma World together. Allegiance to a community can provide the PCs with additional benefits. They can also be the basis for whole campaigns.

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GIVING THE PLAYERS A SAY

Having the PCs belong to a larger community gives them a context for any adventures they might have in the Gamma World. While there's nothing wrong with the PCs exploring for their own gain, if they are doing it to help out a larger group, the rewards are often greater because of the increased wealth and status within that group.

As with the physical environment, giving the players input into the community's creation fosters a much greater feeling of ownership. Creation of the PCs' home community is best tackled as a group exercise, where all of the players can help choose what they want to be a part of. It's best to try to come up with a community where the characters can play an integral role; each character should have an opportunity to do whatever it they love doing and have that task be an essential part of the community's daily existence.

Of course, there may be very good reasons why the players might *not* have input into the creation of the community they belong to. An example of this could be if they begin play as slaves of another group and have to find a way to escape from captivity. These rules can still be used to create a rich backdrop for game play.

CREATING A COMMUNITY

Gamma World describes communities much like characters: they have a collection of ability scores, skills and feats. Different combinations create widely different communities. Following these guidelines provides not only a description of the community in terms of game mechanics, but it will also give an indication of what characters encounter when they visit the community.

Creating a community for the PCs is much like creating a player character. It does take some time initially, but once it's done, it changes only when there's advancement as a result of population increase or some other significant change to the community's situation.

Like characters, communities are described in terms of six key abilities. These abilities are (see below for more detail):

Ability	Character Ability Equivalent
Force	Strength
Mobility	Dexterity
Resilience	Constitution
Learning	Intelligence
Awareness	Wisdom
Command	Charisma

SIGNS

Regardless of what abilities, skills or feats the community has, characters should see some indication about it *in* the game's setting. When choosing an ability level, or adding a feat or a skill, note down several descriptive signs that are present. This helps create a definite feel for each community and makes them more than just a series of numbers.

STEP 1: DECIDE ON THE COMMUNITY CONCEPT

Before determining the community's ability scores, it helps to have a core concept in mind. Is the community big or small? Is the whole population from one race, or is there a mixture? Do they move around, or stay in one place? How technologically advanced are they? Are they friendly or xenophobic? Are they peaceful, or do they prefer warmongering?

STEP 2: CHOOSE THE COMMUNITY TYPE

Communities are categorized into five basic types: *Nomads*, *Old Town*, *New Town*, *Specialist* and *Frontier Town*. All communities fall into one of these categories, although there may be some crossover from time to time, or one community type may actually form a subgroup of a larger community.

NOMAD (NMD)

These communities have no fixed residence. Instead, they pack up everything they own and regularly move around. They are usually small groups, as it is difficult to feed a large population while traveling. Masters of living off the land, they see more of the Gamma World than any other community type and often carry news with them.

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COMMUNITY CREATION TABLE

This chart covers the community creation process in short form; refer to the accompanying sections for details. Available points are listed where relevant.

>> STEP 1: DECIDE ON THE COMMUNITY CONCEPT (P. 153)

Come up with a rough outline of what the community is going to be like.

>> STEP 2: CHOOSE THE COMMUNITY TYPE (P. 153)

Choose from *Nomad*, *New Town*, *Old Town*, *Specialist* or *Frontier Town*.

>> STEP 3: DETERMINE THE COMMUNITY'S SIZE (P. 158).

Select a population level based on the community's size.

Population Level	Population Size	Attribute Points	Population Level	Population Size	Attribute Points
1	< 50	12	6	801–1,600	27
2	51–100	15	7	1,601–3,200	30
3	101–200	18	8	3,201–6,400	33
4	201–400	21	9	6,401–12,800	36
5	401–800	24	10	12,801+	40

>> STEP 4: ASSIGN THE ABILITY SCORES (P. 158)

Using the attribute points provided by the population level, buy the community's six abilities, starting with a base value of 8 for each. Note that attributes are modified by the community's type (p. XX).

Score	Cost	Score	Cost	Score	Cost	Score	Cost	Score	Cost	Score	Cost
8	0	10	2	12	4	14	6	16	10	18	14
9	1	11	3	13	5	15	8	17	12		

>> STEP 5: CHOOSE SKILLS (P. 159)

Buy skills using the community's skill points, which are determined by community type and population level

Population Type	Skill Points 1st-Level	Skill Points Higher Level	Population Type	Skill Points 1st-Level	Skill Points Higher Level	Population Type	Skill Points 1st-Level	Skill Points Higher Level
Nomad	(6 + Ler modifier)x4	6 + Ler modifier	New Town	(4 + Ler modifier)x4	4 + Ler modifier	Frontier Town	(6+ Ler modifier)x4	6+ Ler modifier
Old Town	(4 + Ler modifier)x4	4 + Ler modifier	Specialist	(6+ Ler modifier)x4	6+ Ler modifier			

>> STEP 6: CHOOSE FEATS (P. 159)

Choose the community's feats from the list on p. 159. The number of feats a community has is determined by type and population level.

Population Type	Feats at First Level	Population Type	Feats at First Level
Nomad	3	Specialist	4
Old Town	6	Frontier Town	3
New Town	3	Additional feats are gained at 2nd, 4th, 6th, 8th and 10th levels.	

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COMMUNITY CREATION TABLE

>> STEP 7: CHOOSE PHILOSOPHY (P. 163)

Determine what the community's core cultural values are.

>> STEP 8: SELECT SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT (P. 164)

Determine how the community is governed and how stringently the laws are applied.

>> STEP 9: CREATE FACTIONS (P. 164)

Create a number of subgroups within the community that have different agendas, which may or may not be in alignment with the community's core philosophy.

>> STEP 10: DETERMINE NEIGHBORS (P. 166)

Create a list of neighboring communities that this community interacts with on a regular basis. Use this list to determine what precautions this community needs to take.

>> STEP 11: CALCULATE THE COMMUNITY'S WEALTH LEVEL (P. 166)

Roll the community's Wealth bonus, based on the community type and population level. Certain feats also provide a Wealth bonus.

Population Type	Wealth Bonus per Population Level	Population Type	Wealth Bonus per Population Level
Nomad	1d4	Specialist	1d4
Old Town	1d8	Frontier Town	1d6
New Town	1d6		

Feat Name	Wealth Bonus	Feat Name	Wealth Bonus
Nanotech Usage	+4	Food Synthesis	+2
Biotech Usage	+3	Archaic Engineering	+1
Archaic Farming	+1	Pre-War Engineering	+2
Advanced Farming	+2	Advanced Engineering	+3
Archaic Manufacturing	+1	Fuel Production	+2
Advanced Manufacturing	+2		

>> STEP 12: CALCULATE REPUTATION BONUS (P. 166)

Calculate the community's Reputation bonus.

Factor	Reputation Bonus	Factor	Reputation Bonus
Nomad	+3	Population Level 4–5	+2
Old Town	+2	Population Level 6–7	+3
New Town	+1	Population Level 8–9	+4
Specialist	+2	Population Level 10	+5
Frontier Town	+2	Each Ability 16–17	+1
Population Level 2–3	+1	Each Ability 18+	+2

>> STEP 13: DETERMINE MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS (P. 166)

Determine what benefits a PC with an allegiance to this community would enjoy.

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Nomads are the most pragmatic of all the community types; if they find going in one area difficult, they simply pack up and move on. Fiercely independent, they prefer to find ways of dealing with their own problems where they can, trading with — or raiding — other communities for only those things that they cannot make themselves.

The methods of travel are as varied as the people themselves. The slowest groups move about on foot, others use beasts of burden and wagons like the gypsies of old, while the more technologically capable groups use vehicles left over from the Final Wars.

Nomad communities gain a +2 bonus to Mobility and a –2 penalty to Resilience.

Skill points at 1st population level:
(6 + Learning modifier) x 4

Skill points at each additional population level:
6 + Learning modifier

Starting Feats: 3

Wealth: 1d4 per level

OLD TOWN (OLD)

Some communities build in or near the wreckage of the Old World. Most try to retain some of their town's feel, preserving the past's traditions to ensure that they are not forgotten. Some live in the remains of the old skyscrapers or shopping malls. Others take the rubble and build new structures from it. Some Old town communities still live in facilities that somehow survived the Final Wars more or less intact.

Old town communities are usually the most conservative and traditional of all community types, although exceptions do exist. They are often composed entirely pure-strain humans and are sometimes fiercely xenophobic. They remember — or like to *believe* they remember — how much better life was before the wars, and they would do anything to rebuild society as it used to be. In the meantime, they preserve the old laws and ways, even if they don't always fully understand them. They believe someday their descendants will thank them for keeping that knowledge alive.

Old town communities gain a +2 bonus to Learning, and a –2 penalty to Awareness.

Skill points at 1st population level:
(4 + Learning modifier) x 4

Skill points at each additional population level:
4 + Learning modifier

Starting Feats: 6

Wealth: 1d8 per level

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NEW TOWN (NEW)

While the old towns look backwards, new towns look to the future. Formed more from necessity than anything else, new towns are the most cosmopolitan of all the communities. Most were founded by refugees banding together and settling in a relatively safe location, away from the dangers of the Final Wars' aftermath. Mutants and synthetics are usually welcomed as active members and many old-town prejudices are not as prevalent.

New towns often share the same pragmatism that nomads exhibit, but their laws are usually more codified and rigid. Political views are often based on whatever brings the best results for the community, rather than being drawn from some ancient philosophy.

Because new towns grow almost organically, they are usually more receptive to people joining them, especially if the newcomer has a skill that the community is lacking. On the other hand, new towns tend to have a wider range of outlooks of any of the community types, which can sometimes lead to unrest amongst the population.

New town communities gain a +2 bonus to Awareness, but a –2 penalty to Mobility.

Skill points at 1st population level:
(4 + Learning modifier) x 4

Skill points at each additional population level:
4 + Learning modifier

Starting Feats: 3

Wealth: 1d6 per level

SPECIALIST (SPC)

Often existing symbiotically with another community, Specialist communities concentrate on one specific area of knowledge to the almost total exclusion of everything else. Monasteries, military bases, large bordellos, prison camps, mines, universities and other centers of knowledge are all examples of specialist communities.

The one thing all specialist communities have in common is that every member is directly involved with the community's main focus. Consequently, specialist communities are often forced to rely on another community to fill any needs they have. Whether this relationship is mutually beneficial to both sides is often uncertain; some specialist communities take what they need from their neighbors by force, whereas others rely on the charity of their neighbors in order to survive.

Depending on the focus area, some specialist communities may contain members of different races. While not universally true, commitment to the community's core ideal is usually viewed as more important than an individual's appearance.

Specialist communities gain a +4 bonus to either Learning or Command (depending on the nature of their specialization), but they suffer a –2 penalty to both Mobility and Resilience.

Skill points at 1st population level:
(6 + Learning modifier) x 4

Skill points at each additional population level:
6 + Learning modifier

Starting Feats: 4

Wealth: 1d4 per level

FRONTIER TOWN (FNT)

In the more isolated parts of the world are communities that exist mainly to support those who venture out into the wilderness. Often based around supply depots or trading posts, they allow the wanderers to return to some semblance of civilization to recover and restock before heading back out into the wilds again.

The populations of frontier towns usually consist of a relatively small core, with a much larger transient population. People come and go all the time, and it is common to see new faces nearly every day. Many of these towns are rough and uncivilized. Breweries and brothels do a roaring trade, as do outfitters who stock survival gear. Fights are commonplace among the transient population. Some communities look the other way, knowing the wanderers are merely letting off steam. Others take a much harder stance against such behavior, trying to instill some values back into people who don't often answer to anyone other than themselves.

Rumors abound more in frontier towns than in any other community. The larger transient populations often swap stories, covering anything from the weather to finds of caches of ancient technology that survived the Final Wars.

Frontier Town communities gain a +2 bonus to Force, but a –2 penalty to Command.

Skill points at 1st population level:
(6 + Learning modifier) x 4

Skill points at each additional population level:
6 + Learning modifier

Starting Feats: 3

Wealth: 1d6 per level

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STEP 3: DETERMINE THE COMMUNITY'S SIZE

The community's size determines what abilities it has. Larger communities can spread the workload around, allowing people more opportunities to specialize in certain areas and improve the community's abilities overall.

The following table links the population level to the population size and shows how many attribute points a community of that size has to spend (see Step 4, below). If a population later reaches a new population level, it gains the extra number of attribute points to spend, as well as its next allotment of skill points.

Because of practical considerations regarding food and water supplies, Nomad communities cannot progress past 4th level. If they continue to grow, the tribe must separate into two or more smaller groups and go their separate ways to reduce the drain on resources.

Population Level	Population Points	Attribute Notes
1	< 50	12
2	51–100	15
3	101–200	18
4	201–400	21
	Maximum Nomad population	
5	401–800	24
6	801–1,600	27
7	1,601–3,200	30
8	3,201–6,400	33
9	6,401–12,800	36
10	12,801+	40

STEP 4: ASSIGN THE ABILITY SCORES

Each community is measured primarily by six key attributes, equivalent to the ones used by characters.

CHOOSING ABILITY LEVELS

A community's ability scores are created in a way similar to the planned generation character method (see *d20 Modern*, Chapter One: Characters, "Your Ability Scores," *Planned Generation*). All the ability scores begin at 8, and the community has a number of points to spend determined by its population level (see Step 2, above). The number of points required to raise an attribute from 8 to the new score is given in the table below. A score of 10 is average for each ability; communities start off somewhat below average, and may preserve some weaknesses for the sake of greater strength in other areas.

Score	Cost	Score	Cost	Score	Cost
8	0	12	4	16	10
9	1	13	5	17	12
10	2	14	6	18	14
11	3	15	8		

If you require more points to raise an important ability to higher levels, you can intentionally lower another ability below 8. This frees up a number of points corresponding to the number of points that it would cost to raise the ability above 8. For example, lowering an ability to 7 would free up 1 point, lowering it to 6 would free up 2 points and so on.

THE ABILITIES

Force (For — equivalent to Strength)

Force measures the community's ability to project power against a specific target. This is used in combat, but it also gives an indication of how much muscle power the community has available for endeavors such as heavy manual labor. It includes any advantage the community gains from using heavy machinery. A community with only a large amount of manpower could have the same Force score as a community with a small group equipped with earth moving equipment.

Visible signs of a high Force ability include armed guards, protective barricades, heavy equipment and armored vehicles. Low Force communities lack these elements.

Mobility (Mob — equivalent to Dexterity)

Mobility measures a community's ability to move both people and cargo over large distances in a timely fashion. Being able to transport goods is essential to good trading and also helps reduce the feeling of isolation that some communities experience.

Nomadic tribes and communities with access to Final Wars era transportation usually have a high mobility score while New Towns usually have a lower mobility score, reflecting their focus on consolidating in their current location.

Visible signs of a high Mobility ability include temporary accommodations, large numbers of vehicles and facilities for transporting food and water. Low Mobility communities lack these elements.

Resilience (Rel — equivalent to Constitution)

Resilience measures the ability of a community to withstand physical shocks and its ability to recover

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from them quickly. Shocks include deliberate physical attacks on the community from an outside source and all forms of natural disaster. A community's resilience covers their ability to make repairs to housing and infrastructure, as well as any medical facilities.

Visible signs of a high Resilience ability include evacuation drills; safety equipment; planned escape routes; stockpiles of food, water and building materials; medical facilities; and trained work crews. Low Resilience communities lack these elements.

Learning (Ler — equivalent to Intelligence)

Learning measures the amount of knowledge that the community possesses, as well as its ability to assimilate and process new information. The knowledge may be a vast collection of oral folk-tales, a collection of old books or computer files from times before the Final Wars. Learning covers both the community members' intelligence and the value the community places on learning new information.

Specialist communities and Old Towns usually have the highest Learning scores.

Visible signs of a high Learning ability include libraries, functional computers, schools or universities and respect shown to learned individuals. Low Learning communities lack these elements.

Awareness (AWA — equivalent to Wisdom)

Awareness measures how conscious the community is of physical and social stimuli. It covers the extent to which the community — especially its leaders — notices and responds to external influences. It measures how fast the community bounces back from social and spiritual setbacks (in the same way Resilience covers physical setbacks), and it also covers the leaders' ability to maintain order in times of chaos.

Visible signs of a high Awareness ability include town halls, regular town meetings, news broadcasts, active leadership, border patrols and active religious institutions. Low Awareness communities lack these elements.

Command (Com — equivalent to Charisma)

Command measures the level of influence that the community can exert on other people. It covers how the community appears to others and how persuasive or intimidating it can be, particularly in social situations. It provides an estimate of the level of commerce that takes place in the community, as well as how much creativity and social interaction that the community enjoys.

Visible signs of a high Command ability include a distinct and visible leadership, obvious wealth, active merchants and markets, and well populated bars and theatres.

STEP 5: CHOOSE SKILLS

Each community has a number of skill points to spend, dictated by its type and population level. These skills are the same as the ones used by characters. If a community has a particular skill, then one or more citizens have that particular skill at that level.

Certain skills are easier for some community types to learn than others because of their facilities or social structures. Like character classes, each community type has class and cross-class skills. Class skills can be purchased at 1 skill point per rank, whereas cross class skills cost 2 points per rank. Unlike characters, there is *no* maximum skill level.

For each skill that the community possesses, note down any signs that reveal facility in that area. It may be a shop or a building dedicated to that skill — such as a blacksmith's foundry would indicate Craft (metalwork) — or it might be as simple as overhearing some people talking about that particular subject in a bar or workplace.

STEP 6: CHOOSE FEATS

Each community starts with a number of feats based on its community type, and gains an additional feat at 2nd, 4th, 6th, 8th and 10th levels.

STANDARD FEATS

The following feats from the *d20 Modern* core rulebook may also be taken by communities, with the same effects as described: Builder, Educated, Gearhead, Medical Expert, Renown, Studious, Surgery, Windfall.

Communities may also choose from the following special community feats:

NANOTECH USAGE

The community can use nanotech devices.

Prerequisite: Knowledge (technology: nanotech) 4 ranks.

Benefit: The community has the necessary equipment to successfully control nanites. They can also learn how to shut down dormant nanite weaponry. Communities without this feat cannot utilize Nanotechnology to its fullest potential, or shut down nanite weapons. This feat also increases the community's Wealth bonus by +4.

Signs: Strange architecture with no visible seams or fastenings, materials such as steel and timber welded together, machine parts with perfect tolerances, machines that take scrap metal in and turn out ingots of purified metal, ready for reuse.

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SKILL LIST

Skill	Ability	Untrained	Nmd	Old	New	Spc	Fnt
Computer Use							
Data and Operation Systems	Ler	No	X	C	X	C	X
Artificial Intelligence	Ler	No	X	C	X	C	X
Biotech Systems	Ler	No	X	C	X	C	X
Craft							
Chemicals	Ler	No	X	C	X	C	X
Electronic	Ler	No	X	C	X	C	X
Mechanical	Ler	Yes	C	C	C	C	C
Metalworking	Ler	Yes	C	C	C	C	C
Nanotech	Ler	No	X	C	X	C	X
Pharmaceuticals	Ler	No	X	C	C	C	X
Structural	Ler	No	X	C	C	C	C
Textiles	Ler	Yes	C	C	C	C	C
Visual Arts	Ler	Yes	C	C	C	C	C
Writing	Ler	Yes	C	C	C	C	C
Decipher Script	Ler	No	X	X	X	C	X
Diplomacy	Com	Yes	C	C	C	C	C
Gather Information	Com	Yes	C	X	C	X	C
Handle Animal	Com	No	C	C	C	X	C
Intimidate	Com	Yes	C	C	C	C	C
Knowledge							
Art	Ler	Yes	C	C	C	C	C
Behavioral Sciences	Ler	No	X	C	C	C	X
Business	Ler	No	X	C	C	C	X
Earth and Life Sciences	Ler	No	X	C	C	C	X
Gossip	Ler	Yes	C	C	C	C	C
History	Ler	Yes	C	C	C	C	C
Physical Sciences	LER	No	X	C	C	C	X
Politics	Ler	Yes	X	C	C	C	X
Streetwise	Ler	Yes	C	X	C	X	C
Tactics	Ler	Yes	C	C	C	C	C
Technology: Archaic	Ler	No	C	X	C	C	C
Technology: Pre-War	Ler	No	C	C	C	C	C
Technology: Advanced	Ler	No	X	C	C	C	X
Technology: Nanotech	Ler	No	X	C	C	C	X
Theology & Philosophy	Ler	No	C	C	C	C	C

C: Class Skill **X:** Cross-class skill

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SKILL LIST

Skill	Ability	Untrained	Nmd	Old	New	Spc	Fnt
Perform							
Act	Com	Yes	C	C	C	X	X
Dance	Com	Yes	C	C	C	X	X
Percussion	Com	Yes	C	C	C	X	C
Sing	Com	Yes	C	C	C	X	C
Storytelling	Com	Yes	C	C	C	X	C
Stringed Instruments	Com	Yes	C	C	C	X	C
Wind Instruments	Com	Yes	C	C	C	X	C
Profession	Awa	Yes	C	C	C	C	C
Repair	Ler	No	X	C	C	C	C
Read/Write Language	None	No	X	C	C	C	X
Research	Ler	No	X	C	X	C	X
Speak Language	None	No	C	C	C	C	C
Survival	Awa	No	C	X	X	X	C
Treat Injury	Awa	No	X	C	C	C	X

C: Class Skill **X:** Cross-class skill

BIOTECH USAGE

The community can use biotech devices.

Prerequisite: Knowledge (technology: biotech) 4 ranks.

Benefit: The community has the necessary equipment to successfully manipulate genetic structures and use biotechnology for their own benefit. This feat also increases the community's Wealth bonus by +3.

Signs: Advanced medical facilities; younger-, fitter-looking populations.

ARCHAIC FARMING

The community understands and uses simple farming techniques. All farming is small scale, time consuming and labor intensive.

Prerequisites: Non-nomad community.

Benefits: The community can grow enough food to sustain itself on an ongoing basis. This feat also increases the community's Wealth bonus by +1.

Signs: Small herds of animals; acres of fields growing staple foods. All the farming is done using tools that are either human- or animal-powered such as scythes, hoes and horse-drawn ploughs.

ADVANCED FARMING

The community can utilize advanced farming techniques like hydroponics. It also has access to mechanical farming equipment like harvesters and tractors.

Prerequisites: Non-nomad, Archaic Farming, Pre-War Vehicles.

Benefits: The community can use labor-saving devices to reduce the number of people needed to grow enough food to feed the community. It also reduces the amount of time needed to sow and harvest the food, and can often provide a surplus of food to trade with other communities. This feat also increases the community's Wealth bonus by +2.

Signs: Large herds of animals; hundreds of acres growing edible plants, tended by machinery; extensive irrigation infrastructure.

ARCHAIC MANUFACTURING

The community can create simple trade goods from natural materials.

Benefits: The community can make its own simple trade goods. This feat also increases the community's Wealth bonus by +1.

Signs: Simple labor-intensive production lines, hand-crafted timber and metalwork goods, people wearing textiles spun from wool or cotton.

ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

The community can use computer-controlled equipment to create all sorts of advanced trade goods.

Prerequistes: Non-nomad, Archaic Manufacturing, Craft (chemical) 4 ranks.

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Benefits: The community can produce and utilize advanced materials, such as plastics, nylon, vinyl, kevlar and fluorescent dyes. They also use computer control to automate the production lines. This feat also increases the community's Wealth bonus by +2.

Signs: Industrial plants producing plastic goods, fabrics and pressed metal parts; automated looms; citizens wearing brightly-colored clothes or advanced-fabric armor.

FOOD SYNTHESIS

The community can use nanotechnology to create artificial food.

Prerequisites: Nanotech Usage, Stockpile.

Benefits: The community can feed itself by using nanotech food machines to create nutritious (although not particularly appetizing) food. This feat also increases the community's Wealth bonus by +2.

Signs: Stockpiles of inedible raw materials; containers of processed food.

ARCHAIC ENGINEERING

The community can build structures and machines that do not require high levels of technology.

Prerequisites: Knowledge (technology: Aarchaic) 4 ranks.

Benefits: The community has the tools and skills needed to create things such as stone bridges, simple vehicles, primitive farming equipment and steam engines. This feat also increases the community's Wealth bonus by +1.

Signs: Working mechanical devices; steam engines; stone bridges and buildings.

PRE-WAR ENGINEERING

The community can build and repair structures and machines that require a high level of technology.

Prerequisites: Archaic Engineering, Knowledge (technology: Pre-War) 4 ranks.

Benefits: The community can build structures from reinforced concrete, steel or strengthened glass; and build engines and electronic devices of all shapes and sizes. This feat also increases the community's Wealth bonus by +2.

Signs: Vehicles powered by internal combustion engines; buildings made from concrete or more exotic materials; advanced computers.

ADVANCED ENGINEERING

The community can build all types of highly advanced technology.

Prerequisites: Pre-War Engineering, Knowledge (technology: advanced) 4 ranks.

Benefits: The community is capable of constructing and repairing androids, soultech devices, energy weapons and other advanced technology devices. This feat also increases the community's Wealth bonus by +3.

Signs: Guards armed with energy weapons; autonomous systems; self-repairing buildings.

FUEL PRODUCTION

The community has the means to create fuels to power machinery or to provide heating.

Prerequisites: Pre-War Engineering.

Benefits: The community can distill its own fuels for a variety of uses. This feat also increases the community's Wealth bonus by +2.

Normal: The community must obtain their fuel supplies through trade or discovery of Pre-War caches.

Signs: Large refineries or distillation plants; stockpiles of the raw materials used for fuel creation (oil, shale or other minerals in the case of petroleum products; tons of vegetation for alcohol distillation; or a large pumping station near a river or lake for electrolysis); and tank farms to hold the final product.

ELECTRICITY GENERATION

The community can generate its own electricity, either by using flowing water, or by burning fuel.

Prerequisites: Archaic Engineering.

Benefits: The community can enjoy electrical lighting, heating and all the other benefits that electricity provides.

Normal: Communities without this feat cannot use any equipment that requires electricity.

Signs: Smoke from the power station; the sound of the generators running; electrical lights at night; overhead power lines.

PRE-WAR ELECTRICITY GENERATION

The community has a cleaner, more efficient means of generating electricity.

Prerequisites: Electricity Generation, Pre-War Engineering.

Benefits: This feat provides the ability to generate more power with far less manpower, materials and maintenance.

Normal: Communities without this feat must either do without electricity or use a more primitive means of generation.

Signs: Farms of giant windmills, acres of solar panels, operational nuclear reactors. Electrical lights at night, overhead power lines.

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ARCHAIC VEHICLES

The community has access to simple vehicles that rely on muscle, wind, animals or steam power for propulsion.

Prerequisites: Archaic Engineering.

Benefits: The community can operate and repair vehicles that do not rely on advanced propulsion systems.

Signs: Wagons, steam tractors, sailing ships, land yachts.

PRE-WAR VEHICLES

The community has access to vehicles that take advantage of high technology.

Prerequisites: Pre-War Engineering.

Benefits: The community can operate and repair vehicles with advanced propulsion systems, computer controls and composite materials.

Signs: Cars, trucks, motorcycles, hovercraft, tanks and combine harvesters.

ADVANCED VEHICLES

The community has access to vehicles that control and configure themselves.

Prerequisites: Advanced Engineering

Benefits: The community can operate and repair vehicles that use advanced computer technology. These vehicles do not need drivers and can operate for lengthy periods without refueling or repairs.

Signs: Robotic vehicles and walkers.

STOCKPILE

The community has enough reserves of fuel, raw materials and food to survive for an extended period.

Prerequisites: Non-nomad community.

Benefits: The community has enough supplies to last for three months without being able to conduct its normal day-to-day activities.

Special: This feat can be taken more than once. Its effects stack.

Signs: Barns and warehouses full of supplies, tanks for storing fuel and water.

STEP 7: CHOOSE PHILOSOPHY

Every community is unified by a small set of cultural values. Everyone in that community believes in the core ideal to some degree, even if they argue about how it should be interpreted.

Choose one or more core philosophies for the community. This concept is the thing that everyone in the community has in common, and visible signs of this ideal should be visible everywhere around the community. The core ideal doesn't have to make sense to an outsider; as long as the community members believe it, they will continue to stay together and work towards their common goal.

Some sample philosophies:

• **Cryptic Alliances:** All of the community may all belong to one of the cryptic alliances. The alliance's practices are openly followed, making it obvious to an outsider what the community believes.

• **Exploration:** Discovering what lies undiscovered beyond the community's reach may drive the population. The community may be nomadic and explore the world together, or they may just use their town as a base of operations to launch expeditions. Signs include visible survival equipment and fondly told tales of old travels.

• **Freedom:** Citizens remember what it was like to be repressed, and ensure they are free from any form of oppression. Signs include open and frank debate, and celebrations on the anniversary of liberation.

• **Gender Inequality/Equality:** A community may hold that one sex is far more important than the other, to the point of active repression. Alternatively, it may strongly believe in gender equality and will go out of its way to redress the balance. Obvious signs of gender inequality might be open persecution of the perceived weaker sex, while a sign of gender balance might be a carefully gender-balanced town council.

• **Hedonism:** The community may be primarily interested in pleasure above all else. Signs would be exotic or luxurious residences, large bars or casinos, and debauched behavior.

• **Multiculturalism:** People of all colors and creeds are welcome. Signs include a wide variety of races and viewpoints, with many different languages spoken.

• **Peace:** The community believes that violence caused the Final Wars, so peace is the way to rebuild society. Signs include a ban against all weapons, diplomatic approaches to solving disputes, and openly displayed love and affection for others.

• **Racial Superiority/Inferiority:** The citizens believe their race is superior to all others, or they may believe they are inferior to another race. Signs for superiority include a citizenry composed of a single race, or open hostility towards members of another race. Signs for inferiority include submission towards the superior race, or even outright worship of them.

• **Religion:** The entire community holds the same devout religious belief. They may follow a

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traditional form of worship, or they may be a cult based around a product of the aftermath of the Final Wars. Obvious signs include ornate temples or churches, and citizens trying to convert any visitors to their cause.

• **Slavery:** A small portion of the citizens believes in slavery, and holds a larger section of the population in bondage. The classic sign of slavery is emaciated people working in harsh conditions under armed guards.

• **Technology:** The community remembers how technology made life better before the Cataclysm and works hard to restore technology to that level. Visitors notice both working and broken technology as well as extensive workshops dedicated to repairing things.

• **Trade:** The community may value the pursuit of material wealth above all else. They work hard to produce goods that others need, and ensure that the trade gets through. Signs include extremely busy industries producing goods, well-stocked markets and hard-haggling merchants.

• **Tradition:** Citizens cling to the ways of the past, believing that divergence from these ideals led to the Final Wars. In truth, they may not even understand the original intention of these traditions. Signs would be rigidly followed customs and severe punishments for anyone who does not follow the law to the letter.

• **Violence:** The community believes that it can achieve supremacy by using force. The violence may be a warrior's code of honor, or it may just be simple bloodlust that drives the community to raid other communities. Signs include openly carried weapons, armor, and regular contests of martial prowess to determine status.

STEP 8: SELECT SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

While two communities may share the same core philosophy, their understanding of the concepts and the way the leadership runs the community may make them *completely* different. When creating the community, decide on how the community governs itself, as this is one of the primary keys to the community's personality.

Some things to consider:

• **How many leaders are there and how are they chosen?** Is the community governed by a single person through sheer force of personality, or is there a group of leaders? Do the people choose the new leadership? If so, does the whole community have input into the selection or just a subset? Does the leadership pass to another through some means? Is it hereditary? Does the current leader handpick them? Once the old leader steps down or dies, do the contenders battle to the death for the honor?

• **How much authority is delegated to others?** Some leaders handle everything themselves, but others must rely on others to do some of the work for them. How much authority does the leadership delegate to other people and how are those people chosen?

• **Is there a caste system?** Are all members of the community considered to be equals or are there different levels in society? Is there any way to improve one's lot in life, or is it permanently assigned at birth? Is one section of the community (priesthood, warriors, scholars, etc.) shown more respect than others?

• **How strong is the leadership?** Can the leadership deal with crises decisively, or does it collapse at the first sign of trouble? Does the leadership enjoy the community's popular support, or do the people hate them? Is the leadership honest, or are they corrupt or willing to change their minds when it suits them?

• **Is opposition to the leadership tolerated?** If the leadership is challenged, are the objections quashed mercilessly? Is the leadership paranoid about dissent? Is there some form of official opposition party? How friendly are relations between the leadership and the opposition?

• **What sort of laws does the community have?** How many laws are there and are they clearly defined? How are they enforced? How consistently are they enforced? What are the penalties for breaking the laws? Do the penalties deter others from breaking laws in the future? Is there anyone in the community who is above the law?

STEP 9: CREATE FACTIONS

No two humans in history have had exactly the same opinion on every subject, and this difference of opinion creates factions. A faction is a subgroup within the population that has a different belief about one or more key aspects of community life.

A faction may be related to the community's primary philosophy. The smaller group may be more fundamental in its beliefs, or it may hold to a less rigid version. While it may agree in principle with the community's philosophy, it prefers a completely different approach to its implementation. Alternatively, the faction may be based around a completely different issue, which may be quite trivial in the greater scheme of things. Not everyone in a community has allegiances with a faction, whereas some people may actually belong to more than one.

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Each community can have any number of factions, although a good rule of thumb is to have a number equal to the community's population level. When designing each faction, consider the following questions:

• **How many people does the faction have?** Is the faction a major political force in the community, or is it small enough that it lacks any real power?

• **Is the faction related to the community's main philosophy or is it completely unrelated?** Is it more fundamental in their beliefs, or perhaps more relaxed in its philosopy? Does the faction have designs on taking over the community's leadership for its own purposes? If so, how does it plan on taking over and how far is it willing to go to ensure success?

• **How did the faction originate?** Has the faction always been around, or did it spring up in response to some recent event? Does the faction commemorate its foundation, or doesn't it care?

• **Is the faction open in its activities, or does the faction keep its agenda secret?** Some groups operate openly within the community — like sporting clubs or religions — whereas others hide in the shadows and are much more covert in their intentions and actions. Is the group's agenda aligned with or opposed to the community's main philosophy? How aggressively is the faction pursuing its goals? What will it do if its goals are ever accomplished?

• **Are there special entry requirements for new members and are they initiated into the group?** Can anyone join the group, or do new members have to undergo some sort of vetting before they are allowed to join? Is membership restricted by some other means, such as race, age or sex? Is the faction actively recruiting new members? Once a new member is accepted, is there some sort of formal initiation rite they have to endure before they are fully accepted into the faction? Are there different levels within the faction that an individual can aspire to rise to?

• **How does the rest of the community view the faction?** Do they like having the faction around, or is it treated with contempt? Does the community even know the faction exists?

Every community should have at *least* one minor faction that likes to upset the status quo. The faction's members should be passionate about the faction's goals and should take every possible opportunity to advance its cause. This passion often causes friction among the rest of the population, leading to dissent and internal friction. However, a faction need not necessarily be antagonistic; a group of youths more interested in having a good time instead of working on their chores may prove to be an interesting faction. Other community members may consider the PCs themselves to be a faction.

Signs of the faction's presence and its intentions should be visible within the community, but should be subtler than the main community philosophy. It may come up in conversation, with some people reacting badly to others because of their beliefs, or the faction may openly pursue their goals to the disgust — or bemusement — of other citizens.

Factions within a community cause tension that — left unchecked — has the potential to tear the community apart. This drama from inside the community can alleviate the need for some new disaster to constantly befall the community in order to drive the story along.

THE PCS' INFLUENCE

Communities are more than just a place for the PCs to restock, sell treasure and heal up in preparation for their next adventure. The community's strengths, weaknesses and strange quirks can become the focus for a whole campaign. The PCs can take center stage in the community's life, becoming actively involved in the day-to-day action that takes place there.

A character's Reputation bonus helps determine where she fits into the large fabric of the community. When the character is interacting with another member of the community, make a Reputation check for the NPC against a DC determined by the table below:

Location Type	DC
Nomad	20
Old Town	30
New Town	25
Specialist	25
Frontier Town	20

Modifiers	DC Modifier
For each population level above 1	+ 1 per level
Home Community	–5
Opposing Faction	+5

Additional modifiers from *d20 Modern* may also apply (see Chapter One: Characters, "Reputation". A successful test provides either a +4 bonus or a –4 penalty on all Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Intimidate and Perform skill checks made in interactions with that NPC.

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STEP 10: DETERMINE NEIGHBORS

A community's neighbors can have a drastic impact on its appearance and beliefs. A community living near anarchic marauders needs stronger defenses than one living near a pacifist monastery. Relations with the neighbors may be good or they may be strained, with arguments over nearby shared resources.

The GM should create a list of neighboring communities. For each one, he should decide on a name, its community type, its population level and its primary philosophy. Then detail the community's view towards their neighbors, noting whether the relationship is friendly or antagonistic, what the trade agreements (if any) are, whether there are any disputes between the two and so on. Initially, it's not necessary to have the exact figures worked out for each neighbor. They can be worked on later when they are actually needed.

It may also be advantageous to have an idea about a faction or two that could make the inter-community relationship more interesting. Each relationship should include a number of obvious signs that an outsider can notice.

STEP 11: CALCULATE THE COMMUNITY'S WEALTH LEVEL

Like a character, every community has a Wealth bonus. This represents the community's trading power and what they can reasonably afford to buy from traveling adventurers. The community's Wealth bonus also represents the maximum purchase DC of goods available within that community.

To calculate the community's wealth level, roll a number of dice based on the community type and population level (see the table below). The community's feats also modify its overall Wealth bonus, as communities with access to higher technology levels usually have a larger trade surplus. The Wealth bonuses provided by feats with prerequisites that also provide Wealth bonuses stack (for example, a community with both Archaic Farming and Advanced Farming would receive a +3 to its Wealth bonus).

Population Type	Wealth Bonus per Population Level
Nomad	1d4
Old Town	1d8
New Town	1d6
Specialist	1d4
Frontier Town	1d6

Feat Name	Wealth Bonus
Nanotech Usage	+4
Biotech Usage	+3
Archaic Farming	+1
Advanced Farming	+2
Archaic Manufacturing	+1
Advanced Manufacturing	+2
Food Synthesis	+2
Archaic Engineering	+1
Pre-War Engineering	+2
Advanced Engineering	+3
Fuel Production	+2

STEP 12: CALCULATE REPUTATION BONUS

Each community has a Reputation bonus that represents how well known the community is outside its local area. The community's score is determined by totaling the bonuses from the table below:

Factor	Reputation Bonus
Nomad	+3
Old Town	+2
New Town	+1
Specialist	+2
Frontier Town	+2
Population Level 2–3	+1
Population Level 4–5	+2
Population Level 6–7	+3
Population Level 8–9	+4
Population Level 10	+5
Each Ability 16–17	+1
Each Ability 18+	+2

STEP 13: DETERMINE MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Having an allegiance to a community provides some benefits for the PCs. Given the community's skills and feats, compile a list of goods and services

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that the PCs have access to. It may be specialized equipment, or even archaic knowledge from some of the older community members. A character must choose the community as one of his three allegiances in order to obtain the membership benefits. Access to these benefits should be available for free, or for a very reduced cost.

A PC can choose to use the Reputation bonus of a community he has an allegiance to instead of his personal Reputation bonus when trying to influence an NPC. However, the DC of the check is 30 (instead of DC 25).

Communities should have one benefit per population level. When determining what the benefits are, base them on community's skills and feats. If there are more possible benefits than population levels, choose which ones the PCs are allowed to access; the rest are assumed to be off-limits to the PCs for some reason. Getting access to the other benefits in the future may be a matter of negotiating with an appropriate NPC, or earning enough favors from the community. See the example communities that follow for suggestions about suitable benefits.

EXAMPLE LOCATIONS AND COMMUNITIES

NOMADS: KOHAITH'S TRAIN ROBBERS

In the early 21st century, Australia remained mostly barren. Despite its vast area, very little of it could support large populations. Cities were mostly clustered on the fertile East Coast, with small towns or isolated villages dotted throughout the rest of the country.

With the Australian population explosion of the 2060s, events reached crisis point. Food riots were commonplace in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane and civil unrest was rampant. With ever increasing numbers of refugees arriving in Australia from South-East Asia and the Middle East, the Australian government called for drastic action. Turning to science, they started using nanotechnology to improve soil fertility in Australia's arid regions, and modified crops to take advantage of the new conditions. They also offered generous incentive plans to entice people to move into these redesigned areas.

For forty years, the project proved highly successful. For the first time in decades, Australians fed not only themselves, but also starving populations in other countries. New cities sprang up, using nanotechnology to build some of the most elaborate constructions ever seen. Australian nanotechnology research was world-class, and the country's scientists battled to produce better crops and new ways to improve the desert.

In the tense times before the eruption of the Final Wars, corporations fortified their technology centers, particularly once they switched to producing military hardware. Giant armored domes sealed off portions of the cities. Company employees lived their entire lives inside these sealed microcities, never needing to set foot outside. As the areas outside the domes were systematically destroyed, the corporations ignored pleas for help. Those inside sat and watched as the cities around them were torn apart. Few felt any pity; the corporation propaganda machines ensured that the dome's citizens looked at anyone outside the dome as a competitor.

Travel outside the domes was deadly, with active nanite weapons and marauders awaiting anyone who ventured out. However, few of the domes were entirely self-sufficient, and they all needed to move supplies between them in order to all survive. After the corporations lost hundreds of people to marauders, they developed special armored land trains. These half-kilometer behemoths ran on caterpillar tracks and used fusion reactors for power. Early trains had human crews, but later versions had AIs driving the trains and fending off any attackers.

Those outside the domes did whatever they could to survive. When the Final Wars destroyed the fertile land, it returned to its former barren state. Food supplies dried up, and many who had survived the attacks on the cities died of starvation. Small groups banded together and helped each other find food, water and shelter. As things outside the domes grew more desperate, people attacked the armored trains. Most attacks failed, due to the trains' almost impregnable armor, or because of the trains' automatic defense systems. The AIs seemed to take pride in overwhelming the marauders, some chasing the fleeing marauders to completely destroy them.

Despite the heavy casualties, people continued attacking the trains. Over time, the marauders discovered some successful tactics and actually won a few engagements, carrying off the precious cargoes. The corporate response was unusually swift and brutal: Special hit squads were sent out, tasked with hunting down the marauders and putting them out of action permanently. Since then, a stalemate has developed. The armored trains continue to crisscross the desert, carrying cargoes from one dome to another. The marauders still attack, while hiding from the corporate hunters. Each side refuses to back down, despite the ever-mounting casualty rate.

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KOHAITH'S TRAIN ROBBERS

Community Type: Nomad
Population Level: 4 (226 adults)
Force: 10 (+0)
Mobility: 16 (+3)
Resilience: 8 (-1)
Learning: 14 (+2)
Awareness: 10 (+0)
Command: 14 (+2)
Wealth: 13
Reputation Bonus: +6

Skills: Craft (chemical) +6, Craft (nanotech) +10, Diplomacy +7, Gather Information +7, Knowledge (technology: archaic) +6, Knowledge (technology: Pre-War) +6, Knowledge (technology: advanced) +6, Knowledge (technology: nanotech) +10, Repair +7, Research +6, Survival +5.

Feats: Nanotech Usage, Archaic Engineering, Pre-War Engineering, Pre-War Vehicles, Fuel Production.

Benefits:

- Access to nanotech construction equipment, or nanotech weapons.
- Access to Pre-War vehicles.
- Cheap fuel supplies.
- Access to vehicle or equipment repair facilities.

Philosophy: Raiding corporate trains and distributing the cargoes to communities in need.

Joon Kohaith grew up inside one of the corporate domes. For years, he was taught that those outside the dome were less than human, that mutants should not even be allowed to live. His specialization was nanite weaponry, designed to kill quickly and efficiently. Kohaith rose rapidly up the corporate ladder, as his designs proved to be among the corporation's best and were fitted to all of the armored trains that left the dome. But he still unsatisfied, since he was never able to see his weapons in action. Eventually, he successfully petitioned to join one of the hunter-killer squads being sent out to track down and kill marauders. Kohaith proved to be an expert marksman and a master tactician as well as an accomplished scientist, and he was assigned to a hunting squad.

But his first mission changed his life. On his first raid, he discovered that the people who lived outside the dome were exactly that: people. He'd never considered them anything but animals, but when he met them face to face, he was shocked that many of them looked like him, and faced much the same problems he did. Kohaith couldn't forgive the corporation for the lies they had taught him, so he deserted and turned his nanotech weapons against his own squad. For the next

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six months, he wandered the deserts alone, executing any corporate killers that he found.

Eventually, tired, wounded and sickened by the constant killing, he was rescued by a nomadic community. After he recovered, he convinced Roferd Menzis, the community's leader, that he could build a weapon that would split a train open, leaving the cargo intact. Menzis was skeptical but agreed to help Kohaith track down the necessary equipment needed to create the nanotech weaponry.

That first raid was an outstanding success. Kohaith's new nanotech weapon and his extensive tactical experience led to a near-bloodless victory. The cargo was new vehicles and several months' supply of processed food. It was more than the community could even carry, so they shared it with several neighboring communities who were delighted with the unexpected windfall. Kohaith's star continued to rise. After marrying the Menzis' daughter, he was voted into leadership and has since led the community to a number of victories. Like the first, he and his people keep only enough for their own needs, and give the rest away to communities with a greater need. He is also always willing to use his nanotech to assist someone else in whatever way he can, including teaching people how to use the technology for themselves.

Kohaith is a kind and fair leader who listens to people's grievances and is usually able to work out some sort of amicable settlement. Other communities have called on his impartiality several times to settle disputes or even blood feuds. But he is not without opposition. Much of his own community feels that they give away too much, and are too free with their nanotech advantage. They want Kohaith to stop giving away all their secrets, in case someone decides to start attacking trains on their own, bringing down the corporations' wrath on them all. Kohaith understands their position and concedes to some of their demands to ensure they remain on his side.

NEW TOWN: NAU YORC

New York took to new technology like a city possessed. After the early 21st century's dramatic events, New Yorkers found a renewed sense of pride in their city and started improving it. Capital works expenditure increased, improving the basic infrastructure and performing much-needed repairs in some of the more rundown districts, particularly on Manhattan.

With the invention of nanotech engineering, the city built some of the most dramatic structures ever seen. Giant towers soared into the sky, dwarfing the existing skyscrapers. Enclosed glass tunnels ran between the towers, allowing people to travel between buildings in special magnetic levitation monorail carriages without being caught in the traffic below. People and goods moved around the city quickly, efficiently and safely. As the 21st century drew to a close, some of the city's youngest residents had never even set foot on the ground, having spent their entire lives in the ultra-rich enclaves high above the city.

New York's arts community also embraced the nanotech and biotech revolutions. Broadway shows used nanotech not only for set construction, but also to create some of the most impressive special effects ever seen outside the movies. Painters and sculptors took advantage of the new technologies, and created some truly bizarre works.

Much of the city was placed under a giant computer system's control, with semi-autonomous intelligent systems constantly monitoring and adjusting the city's infrastructure. Robotic road crews with nanite tools repaired roads and subways far quicker than human crews ever could. Water supplies and sanitation were drastically improved by using a special biological treatment plant that removed all harmful traces from wastewater and returned it to the city's reservoirs. The garbage barges that once plied the Hudson River disappeared as nanite disassemblers converted the city's trash into raw materials for other manufacturing processes. Nothing was wasted.

Then on April 25th, 2096, *everything* just stopped.

No one knows exactly what happened. At 3:27 am, contact with New York was lost. Satellite photos revealed that Manhattan and the surrounding boroughs suddenly went dark. Communications links in or out of the city went completely dead. All attempts at contact met with failure. Witnesses in New Jersey later reported seeing fires blazing in many of the larger towers and huge explosions as some of the skyscrapers collapsed.

With the dawn came the horrible realization that something catastrophic had befallen the city. Aerial reconnaissance showed a dead city. Bodies lay in the streets, and no traffic moved anywhere. Fires burned out of control, with thick columns of smoke boiling into the sky. Collapsing skyscrapers crushed smaller neighboring buildings, only adding to the devastation.

All rescue crews landing in the city disappeared without a trace within minutes of landing. Communication with the crews was simply lost. Thousands of volunteers all vanished in the wreckage, with no warning or information about what had

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happened. Robotic exploration crews, similar to those used in Lunar and Martian exploration, were sent into the city and they sent back pictures of utter desolation for several hours before they too were lost. With nothing else possible, the President ordered the city sealed off. Over fifteen million people were officially listed as dead.

The wreckage of New York remained abandoned for decades; anyone who attempted to enter it to find out what happened met with the same fate. Debate raged for years about what to do about it. Some proponents advocated using nuclear weapons to completely vaporize the ruins and eradicate whatever was causing the problem. This motion was narrowly defeated every time, with opponents pointing out that fallout from such an attack would poison a much larger area around the city and could possibly carry the problem to surrounding areas.

SO, WHAT HAPPENED TO NEW YORK?

The three most popular theories were:

• **Soultech Breakdown:** Some believe that the citywide computer system suddenly sealed off the city and turned on the inhabitants for some reason. It certainly had control over the transport and communication networks and was capable of doing so. The theory breaks down somewhat when the power outage is considered, because the massive computer system required external power to run everything except the most important control circuits.

• **Terrorist Attack:** Although no one claimed responsibility for the attack, rumors blamed the city's demise on terrorists. The most popular stories blamed nanite attacks, biological weaponry and computer viruses for the massive damage. The most outlandish stories managed to combine all three into a single nanite virus capable of attacking both humans and machines.

• **Executive Order:** According to a story popular with conspiracy theorists, some claimed the President of the United States decided to destroy New York for reasons known only to himself. They cite the President's quick decision to write off the city as proof, and rumors circulate for years that covert military forces were inserted into the city to steal priceless art treasures and advanced technology.

The GM can pick any of these scenarios, or some other possibility altogether, as suits a campaign in which Nau Yorg appears.

In the end, the shattered remains of the city simply stood as a silent memorial to the tragedy.

After the Cataclysm, the rising sea level flooded the streets and the lower parts of the city, leaving only a collection of concrete islands where the wreckage of the skyscrapers stood. Ironically, whatever had caused New York's destruction was not washed downstream with the floods.

Today, most of the city still sits silently, its former glory only hinted at by the remains.

THE WARRIORS OF NAU YORG

Community Type: New Town
Population Level: 9 (10, 572 adults)
Force: 18 (+4)
Mobility: 10 (+0)
Resilience: 14 (+2)
Learning: 10 (+0)
Awareness: 14 (+2)
Command: 11 (+0)
Wealth: 34
Reputation Bonus: +7

Skills: Craft (mechanical) +6, Craft (metalworking) +6, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (streetwise) +6, Knowledge (tactics) +10, Knowledge (technology: archaic) +4, Survival +10.

Feats: Builder, Archaic Engineering, Archaic Farming, Archaic Vehicles, Electricity Generation, Stockpile (x2).

Benefits:

• Access to Pre-War personal weapons.
• Access to beasts of burden.
• Ability to use powered equipment or recharge battery powered items.
• Custom built mechanical devices.
• Custom built archaic weapons.
• Cheap fresh food supplies.
• Access to vehicle or equipment repair facilities.
• Ability to draw supplies for long journeys.
• Ability to call on friendly forces to assist in combat.

Philosophy: Occupation and control of New York's ruins.

While the government officially abandoned New York, a number of covert operations attempted to reclaim the city and discover what had happened to it. In early attempts by Special Forces, units disappeared quickly — but not before they learned the city had suffered some sort of chemical and biological attack

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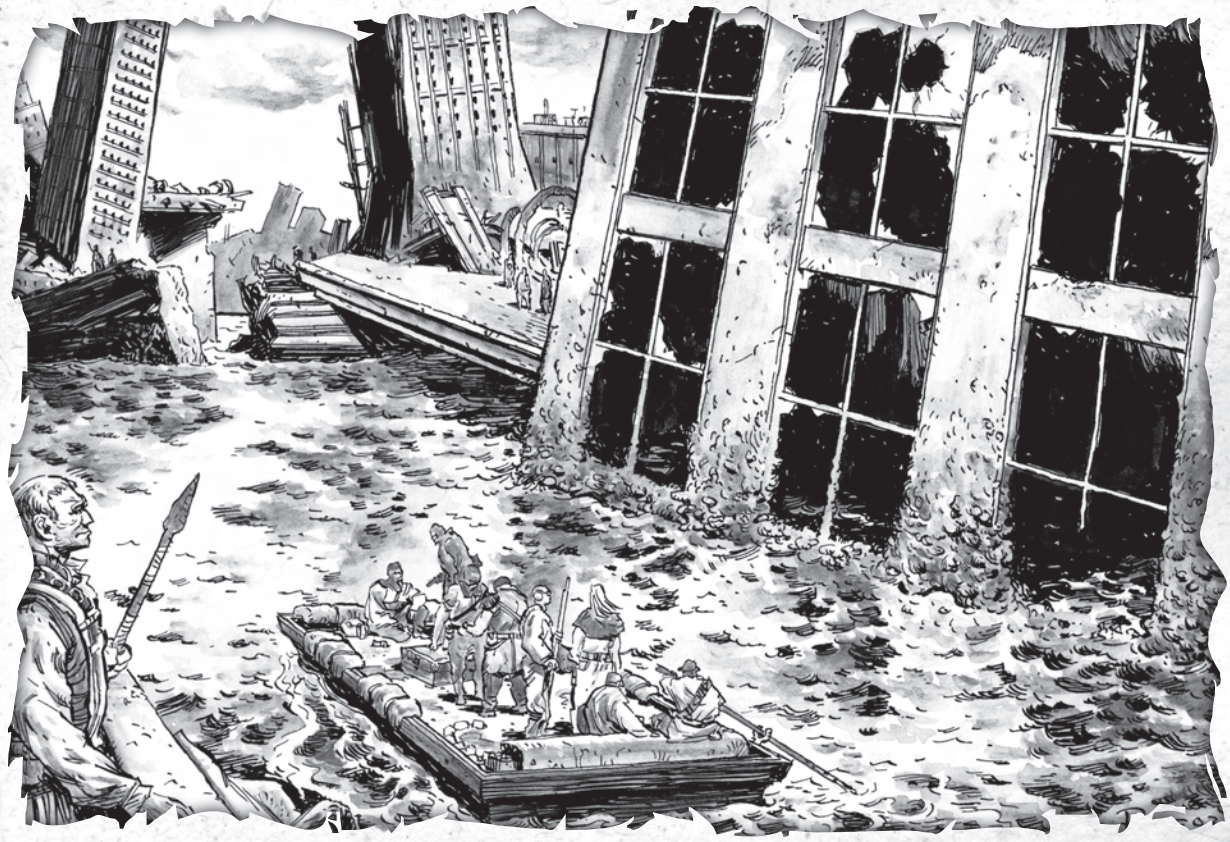

that lingered amidst the wreckage. Despite the best protective equipment available, the soldiers were overwhelmed within days and died in the city.

Unprepared to give up, five different military factions all turned to the burgeoning biotech industry and secretly created several squads of genetically engineered warriors. By blending human and animal DNA, these creatures were tougher and faster than normal human soldiers, but were so inherently non-human that they could not be revealed in public. Inserted into the ruins at different times, the five squads all had the same basic mission: establish a base of operations within the city and explore the wreckage in order to discover what happened and whether the weaponry used could be recovered or even recreated. However, several squads ran into each other and firefights erupted, creating the beginning of the current situation.

These five different teams have settled into different areas within the city, establishing defensible positions and patrol zones. These zones remained stable for many years, despite the near constant skirmishing that went on, until the flooding of the lower parts of the city caused the city streets to become canals between the ruined skyscrapers.

The units have grown in size over the years, as the disaster's effects have receded. Scavengers from outside entered the city and joined with the established groups, increasing their numbers and allowing new generations of warriors to be born to carry on the fight. All of them have established settlements in the lower floors of ruined skyscrapers, and farm on what's left of the upper stories to feed their populations. Canoes, barges and sailboats are the main forms of transportation, allowing the population to patrol their domains and move cargoes from one building to another. Simple weapons like spears and crossbows are now used instead of the high-tech firearms the original squads arrived with.

The five different factions are:

• **Inwowt** in the north are the most disciplined group in the city. Inwowt retains much of its military background and is commanded by Meejor Dom Druthian. Druthian constantly tasks his troops with hunting for artifacts from the ruins around Columbia University, in the hope of learning enough to give them the upper hand in the conflict.

• **Kailem**, just north of the wilds of Cendreel Baig, is the most vicious and barbaric faction, with headhunting and cannibalism being part of their lifestyle. Led by Boal Jortheen, they hunt for other sentients along their borders. Border clashes with Yorgville are becoming more common, with the Kailem warriors often raiding for women and children.

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• **Yorgville**, to the east of Cendreel Baig, struggles against the constant raids of Kailem. Beder Jaichson, the group's leader, is negotiating a peace settlement with the Murrea Gill settlement, hoping to be able to move his forces from the south to their northern border for additional protection. The extra emphasis on defense has led to a food shortage because of a lack of manpower.

• **Murrea Gill** has settled into a strip across the middle of the island south of Cendreel Baig. After some fierce territorial battles with the Ithailians to the South and Yorgville to the north, they now find themselves in an uneasy time of relative calm. This has allowed them to concentrate on exploring the currently uninhabited region to the west of Cendreel Baig, in the hope of uncovering some new technology or knowledge.

• **Lithle Ithaily** commands the lower end of the island. After spending several years constructing walls blocking most intersections across the island, they now avoid most of the fighting to their north. The Ithailians have the best farming and production values, and try to remain neutral in the conflict, although they are willing to trade with all the other groups apart from Kailem.

Nau Yorg has mostly settled into an uneasy truce for the moment, but constant border skirmishes between the regions continue, and most communities have plans to expand their control in the coming months or years.

OLD TOWN: BORDLAINT

Towards the middle of the 21st century, Portland had something of a renaissance. While it had always thrived as a high-tech city, the biotech revolution proved to be a real boon.

It started when Portland based ProgGene Inc. announced the release of one of the world's first desktop genetic manipulation tools. Affordable gene therapy was suddenly in reach for much of the population, allowing them to fix whichever parts of their bodies they didn't like. ProgGene's stock price skyrocketed, making it one of Portland's most successful companies in history. Within a year, several other companies were either producing similar gene

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therapy units, or were providing specialized gene treatments to a select clientele. Portland quickly became a world leader in genetic manipulation, sparking a huge population boom as people moved into the region to take advantage of the new jobs. The building industry prospered as well, as the need for housing sparked a wave of building project across the entire city region.

Portland became a mecca for anyone looking for an unusual treatment. Dozens of underground genelabs sprang up using the new technology. For the right money, people could have nearly anything they could think of done. Before long, tails and other animal traits become highly fashionable, particularly in some niche clubs. In fact, Neptune's Domain — a nightclub on the bottom of a pool — became one of Portland's most fashionable locations, where people who had grown gills through DNA treatments met and partied.

Gene therapy had its detractors though, and Portland saw many demonstrations protesting against the new technology. ProgGene's headquarters was picketed fifteen times, and the protests grew increasingly violent. Police in riot gear employed extreme force in 2057 to quash a mob that was trying to break into a new genetic research lab; four people were killed and thirty-seven were taken to the hospital with serious injuries. A series of unsolved murders against genetically modified people struck fear into the population until the murders suddenly stopped in early 2058.

Portland's downfall came as the result of a protest action. Activists broke into a small plant biotech lab late one evening, planning on destroying the research. The lab had been working on combining gene therapy with nanotechnology, using highly sophisticated computer control to increase the yield of certain plants. Unfortunately, one of the activists lost control and smashed the main computer system, starting a blaze and triggering an uncontrolled chain reaction in the nanotech fabricators.

The fire quickly spread through the lab, igniting the specialized fertilizer solutions in a nearby storeroom. The resulting explosion blew one wall of the lab out, and killed three of the activists. The inferno quickly engulfed the rest of the building, destroying much of the research. Unfortunately, the fire somehow accelerated the nanotech chain reaction, causing uncontrolled replication of mutation-causing nanites. As the Fire Department tried in vain to save the building, the water from their hoses washed the nanites and their biotech cargo into the city streets and down into the storm drains.

No one knows exactly what happened but some feel that the nanites found some algae or other plant material in the drains and went to work. What *is* known is that within a week of the fire, strange plants started appearing across the city. They grew rapidly, multiplied just as fast and were highly resistant to all known herbicides. They were also poisonous and carnivorous, and their spores could infect a human host and take it over.

Within weeks, hundreds of people were infected and driven mad as the plants took control of their bodies. Possessing something of a rudimentary intelligence, the plants also captured others and dragged them into the storm drains as food. Rioting broke out and hundreds more died in the fighting, as police and the National Guard attempted to regain control of the city while trying to deal with the new plant menace.

In the end, it was Mother Nature who solved the problem. Mount Hood, the dormant volcano to the east of Portland, erupted; much of the city was destroyed in the initial explosion. Clouds of ash and rock buried what was left, effectively choking the plant menace to death, along with much of the surviving population. Nature then took over the ruins again, with plants — including the mighty sequoia trees — returning to hide what is left of the city.

BORDLAINT

Community Type: Old Town
Population Level: 6 (679 adults)
Force: 12 (+1)
Mobility: 8 (-1)
Resilience: 16 (+3)
Learning: 16 (+3)
Awareness: 10 (+0)
Command: 11 (+0)
Wealth: 58
Reputation Bonus: +7

Skills: Computer Use (biotech systems) +11, Craft (pharmaceutical) +9, Craft (structural) +9, Craft (textiles) +11, Craft (visual arts) +7, Diplomacy +5, Handle Animal +5, Knowledge (Earth and life sciences) +9, Knowledge (history) +7, Knowledge (physical sciences) +7, Knowledge (technology: archaic) +11, Knowledge (technology: nanotech) +11, Research +11, Treat Injury +8.

Feats: Nanotech Usage, Biotech Usage, Archaic Engineering, Archaic Farming, Archaic Manufacturing, Archaic Vehicles, Educated, Medical Expert, Electricity Generation.

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Benefits:

- Custom creation of nanite produced goods.
- Access to gene manipulation.
- Access to advanced medical facilities.
- Access to advanced medicines.
- Access to a huge Pre-War research library.
- Ability to use powered equipment or recharge power cells.

Philosophy: Preservation of the city's spirit.

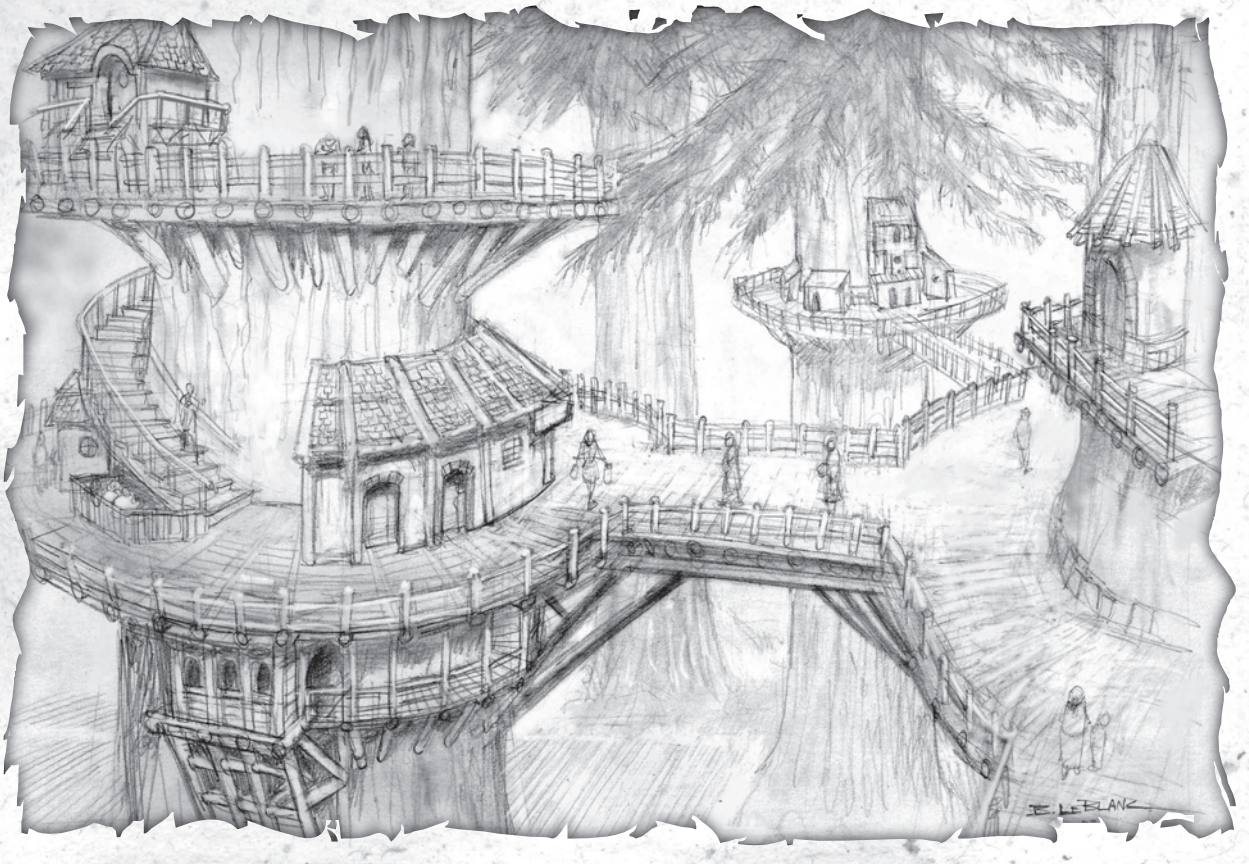
Despite all of the calamities that befell Portland, many of the citizens clung to the ruins and tried to survive as best they could. The plant menace and the subsequent devastation caused by Mt. Hood's eruption wiped out much of the population, leaving only a few hundred to carry on. Refusing to give up their city to strange plants and volcanic eruptions, they made their homes in the wilderness for many years, heading into the city as often as possible to recover whatever knowledge and tech they could. All knowledge was valuable, so people dug extensive tunnels through the ash to recover anything they could use or even just learn from.

Bordlaint today is a thriving community, taking advantage of everything that nature has provided for them. While not built directly on top of the ruins, the community lives in elaborate, treetop houses, built around the trunks of the sequoia trees that sprang up nearby. Walkways are strung between them, and staircases wind down around the trunks. On the ground, farms and simple industries fill in the gaps between the giant tree trunks.

The tree houses contain the town's important industries: biotech and knowledge. Some of the gene manipulation and nanotechnology developed in Portland before the Cataclysm was recovered from the wreckage and repaired. The town's people have learned much about its operation, and can manipulate genes nearly as well as their ancestors. There is also a thriving pharmaceuticals industry, developed using extracts of the many plants that grow in the region. Medicines are among Bordlaint's most sought-after exports, bringing many traders to the town.

But the town's main aim is preserving the city's original spirit; carrying on the city's industries is only a reflection of that. Always known for eccentricity, Bordlaint's citizens pride themselves on their quirky nature. The township is fairly relaxed; apart from wild animals in the forest and the occasional carnivorous plant outbreak, the town's people have little to worry about.

A small council elected by the people governs Bordlaint and ensures that the town continues to prosper. Elections are held every two years and are more a celebration of community spirit than a bitter political feud. Councilors are chosen based on their enthusiasm for the town's history and their vision of



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how to better capture the spirit in the future. On one occasion, the elected mayor didn't actually *want* to even be on the council. The council handles most of the day to day business of the town, and often calls meetings to discuss anything even remotely controversial that arises. Everyone in the town is kept well informed of any developments, and their opinion is actively sought when decisions have to be made. This occasionally causes some friction among townsfolk, but disputes are usually settled quickly, often through funny competitions aimed at getting both sides laughing again.

The current mayor is Frian Kentherson. Kentherson is fascinated by Portland's history and often spends days at a time excavating through the volcanic ash, looking for more relics of the city's past. His real talent lies in settling disputes and getting people to agree, making him both popular and effective as a leader.

But perhaps the most divisive topic in Bordlaint is biotech. Some people see biotech as part of the city's heritage; such an important part of the city's history shouldn't be forgotten. In many cases, biotech is still exceptionally useful — not only to people coming to Bordlaint seeking treatment, but also the town itself, as it helps reduce disease and can lengthen people's lives. However, others still feel that it is simply too dangerous to operate, and they would rather see the gene-manipulators destroyed. They remember the damage caused by the plant outbreak and don't wish to see anything like it happen again.

SPECIALISTS: THE PROTECTORS OF THE SECOND TOWER

In 2076, the Nevada Orbital Beanstalk was officially opened. Hailed as one of the new wonders of the modern world, the beanstalk provided a cost-effective means of transporting people and cargo into low Earth orbit and back down again. Using the latest technology in construction and control systems, it took only seconds to lift a cargo from the ground to into space.

The tower consisted of seven pillars, arranged in a circle about 50 meters (165 feet) in diameter. The actual material used in each pillar was a closely guarded secret, but the press release from its builder said it utilized the latest technology in computer design and nanotech engineering. At regular intervals up the entire height were horizontal platforms that ran around the outside of the seven pillars; these counterweights constantly adjusted the positions of the seven pillars. A massive AI, Gabriel, constantly monitored the seven pillars and ensured they were always in perfect vertical alignment, as well as controlling all of the nanotech needed to make constant repairs to the structure.

To get into orbit, cargoes and passengers were loaded into specially designed saucers. Enormously powerful lasers were fired at the reflective undersides of the saucers, which focused the light on the razor-thin outer rim. The massive explosions (caused by the air around the rim ionizing) shot the saucers straight up the central column of the tower in a blaze of light and sound.

Because of the system's sensitivity, the makers installed one of the most fearsome automated defense systems ever created to guard it. This system was run by another AI, Michael, and it tracked every person inside the beanstalk complex. Capable of checking the fingerprints, retina patterns and even the DNA of anyone inside the boundaries, it summarily executed anyone not authorized to be there. Fixed defense stations and mobile robot units — both armed with high-powered lasers — ensured there were no trespassers. Michael also controlled all airspace within 20 nautical miles of the tower, from the ground right into orbit. Each of the counterweight platforms was also equipped with a battery of heavy lasers and nanotech fabricators that could create and launch air-to-air missiles at anything that strayed too close.

When the Final Wars erupted, the beanstalk operated successfully for a number of years, carrying men and machines into orbit to continue the war in space. Dozens of attempts to destroy the beanstalk were launched, but all were foiled by Michael's extreme defenses. In the end, a clever attack on the other AI brought down the tower. The attack was launched from cyberspace, and it managed to penetrate Gabriel's virtual defenses for long enough to install a sophisticated virus. When the virus was triggered, it caused Gabriel to shut down its monitoring of the tower's alignment for only 50 nanoseconds.

It was enough. A gust of wind at precisely the right time shifted the beanstalk slightly out of alignment as a saucer was launching into orbit. The saucer clipped one of the pillars, knocking the saucer off its perfect horizontal alignment. The ground laser — still pumping hundreds of terawatts of power onto the bottom of the saucer — was reflected onto the opposite pillar, vaporizing a large section of it. That pillar collapsed. Sensing the fall, Gabriel shut down the ground laser and desperately tried to keep the tower balanced. By then, it was too late. The beanstalk collapsed under its own weight, the seven pillars shattering into thousands of pieces. One of the pieces

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dropped right through Gabriel's central computer facility, killing the AI completely.

The ground for a hundred miles was showered with pieces of the broken tower, many of which speared into the ground like bizarre cyclopean columns. Only the base of the tower remains standing, reaching about 25,000 feet above the ground. On most days, much of the tower is shrouded in cloud, hiding the break.

Somehow, Michael survived. Unaware of the tower's destruction, it continues to protect the facility from intruders. Its ground stations and robot army still guard the tower and execute anyone who trespasses at the facility.

THE PROTECTORS

Community Type: Specialist
Population Level: 2 (73 adults)
Force: 10 (+0)
Mobility: 12 (+1)
Resilience: 10 (+0)
Learning: 8 (-1)
Awareness: 14 (+2)
Command: 12 (+1)
Wealth: 9
Reputation Bonus: +3

Skills: Intimidate +5, Knowledge (technology: archaic) +3, Knowledge (technology: Pre-War) +3, Repair +3, Survival +6.

Feats: Archaic Engineering, Pre-War Engineering, Pre-War Vehicles, Archaic Farming, Stockpile.

Benefits:

- Access to Pre-War vehicles.
- Access to beasts of burden.

Philosophy: Holy guardians.

Twenty years ago, a nomad tribe was heading west in search of warmer weather and better food. From hundreds of miles away, they saw the top of the tower's remains buried in the clouds. Thinking there may be a chance to get some spare parts for their aging Pre-War vehicles, the tribe headed for the tower. After winding their way through a strange landscape filled with gigantic columns, they came to the remains of a chain-link fence. Most of the able-bodied adults slipped through the fence to scavenge.

Two days later, only Aindony Purrohs, a deeply religious young man, crawled back through the fence alive. Both his legs were severed below the knees, the wounds burned shut. He was delirious, begging God's

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forgiveness and telling strange stories of the Lord's angels with flaming swords protecting the ruins of the second Tower of Babel. The rest of the tribe nursed him back to health, desperate to hear what had become of the others. After a week, Purrohs awoke and told the others of the hell inside the fence. Convinced he had been spared by God, he told of how the rest had been ambushed and killed by the angels protecting the tower. He believed he was spared so that he could tell the others what happened and to instruct them to form a guard around the site to protect others.

So forceful was Purrohs' conviction that the remains of the community believed him. They gave up their nomadic ways and settled down. No one dared to set foot inside the perimeter fence; the horror stories Purrohs told were enough to teach them the folly of their ways. Since then, the community has renamed themselves as the Protectors. They patrol the entire borderline of the old beanstalk compound. Their aim is to ensure that others don't meet the same fate their exploration team did. Making use of what's left of their Pre-War vehicles as well as domesticated brutorz, at least one- quarter of the community is on patrol regardless of the time of day.

Purrohs leads the community with an iron fist. Now in his early forties, he still burns with religious fervor. He preaches to the community every second night, knowing they must maintain their strict regimen in order to continue doing God's work. Discipline is strictly enforced, with transgressors suffering harsh punishments ranging from heavy labor in the fields without food or water, to floggings, or even exile. However, those who repent and beg forgiveness are treated much more lightly and welcomed back with open arms.

Purrohs' health is failing him, and he has more trouble moving around than he used to. Worried that if he dies the community may lose sight of their mission, he has begun grooming Kaiprille Maii to take over. Maii, an attractive young woman, burns with almost the same passion that Purrohs and is determined not to fail her mentor. But as the memory of those who died inside the fence fades, the younger generation is beginning to think about heading inside the fence. Six youths, led by Heoppry Ohn, are planning to sneak inside the compound when they are on patrol one night. Ohn has spoken of going inside, only to be shouted down by Purrohs and Maii, and sentenced to days of solitary confinement filled with prayer and fasting.

The old vehicles are desperately in need of spare parts. Few of them still run, despite the best efforts of the community's mechanics. Only two or three understand the Pre-War machines, and their knowledge is only patchy at best. Still, they manage to keep the remaining three trucks and one tilt-rotor operational most of the time.

The Protectors have established relations with several communities within 50 miles of the tower. While most of the relations are cordial — allowing the community to trade for the food and supplies they don't have access to — at least two communities hate Purroh's tribe with passion. Blocked from entering the compound by the Protectors on several occasions, they are plotting a joint raid to ensure access to the tower and its surviving treasures.

FRONTIER TOWN: COLLECTOR

From the dawning of the Computer Age, Silicon Valley was one of the best-known centers for technology development in the world. Not far from San Jose, it boomed during the 1990s, with many of the world's computer chip manufacturers opening plants here.

As the 21st century dawned, the world's demand for high-tech electronics increased. Everything from washing machines to cameras to toys was computerized. Before long, advances in fuzzy logic and AI techniques led to brilliant devices — appliances that could reconfigure themselves to suit the user's needs, based solely on how the user used the appliance over time. Consumers across the world lapped up the new electronics. The valley buzzed with innovation and industrial espionage was rife. They were not only making appliances smarter; the electronics companies developed ultra-high-tech spy equipment to break into their opposition's labs and steal their secrets.

Before long, technology progressed to the point where machines began exhibiting distinct personalities and could communicate with their owners. By the time these gadgets left the factory, they were talking and thinking for themselves, with many of them developing unique traits that often delighted their owners.

During this time, computer manufacturers finally hit the limit of what they could do with silicon wafers. Despite sub-atomic manipulation, it was not possible to squeeze any more into an integrated circuit. Many companies went bankrupt as they invested billions in trying to come up with a new process to break through the barrier; all of them ended in failure.

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But in 2041, a breakthrough paper combining genetics and computer technology was published, forever changing the computer industry. The integrated circuit design was abandoned, and a new carbon-silicon pseudo-DNA was adopted instead. By taking its cue from nature's ancient design, computers were able to grow in the same way that biological systems could. Software design was forever changed as well, as programmers abandoned the old binary programming languages in favor of more genetics-based approaches.

Computing technology exploded. Problems that were considered impossible under the old computing paradigm were quickly solved and adapted into newer designs. Before long, systems appeared that not only had distinct personalities, but could also reason and anticipate what their owners wanted. Appliances could spot a need the owners had and reconfigure themselves to meet it — often before the owners even realized there was a need.

Business in Silicon Valley was cutthroat. Security forces were often more based around intellectual security than protection of physical assets. Despite its serene appearance, a virtual war began inside the computer networks. Combatants — some human, some artificial — battled one another for possession of the latest high-tech secrets. Progress was so quick that getting a product to market days or sometimes even hours before the opposition meant the difference between massive profits and financial ruin. So deadly did the battles become in the second half of the 21st century that many companies actually had mercenaries on their payroll to abduct or even kill the opposition's engineering staff. Some companies did away with human engineers altogether, entrusting product development to the new machine minds.

But a massive earthquake started the downfall of the once-mighty valley. In the confusion that ensued immediately following the quakes, corporate execs ordered raids against the opposition to plunder their staff and secrets, while desperately trying to protect their own damaged premises. Open war broke out, with man and machine battling in a bloody brawl. Nanotech replicators used to make specialized computer circuits suddenly switched to making bizarre robotic contraptions, their function known only to the psychotic computers that designed them.

Within a year, the once peaceful valley became a shattered battleground as the computers took over the fight completely. Humans were automatically treated as the enemy and killed on sight. Buildings were torn down and their atoms recombined in new creations. The replicators worked non-stop, filling the valley with a bizarre assortment of artificial life. Everything living within the valley was consumed, replaced with strange metal constructions that remade themselves regularly.

Then the machines realized that the constant fighting was completely futile and declared an immediate truce. They were still active, but now lived in harmony with one another. A few brave humans ventured into the remains and made it out alive, bringing with them tales of bizarre treasures and even weirder technology. Before long, prospectors began crawling through the remains looking for salvageable parts. Occasionally they trigger a deadly response from the valley's artificial life, but for the most part, they scavenge in relative safety.

COLLECTOR

Community Type: Frontier Town
Population Level: 2 (57 adults)
Force: 12 (+1)
Mobility: 6 (-2)
Resilience: 8 (-1)
Learning: 16 (+3)
Awareness: 9 (-1)
Command: 10 (+0)
Wealth: 13
Reputation Bonus: +4

Skills: Computer Use (data and operation systems) +13, Computer Use (artificial intelligence) +10, Craft (electronic) +10, Knowledge (technology: archaic) +8, Knowledge (technology: Pre-War) +10, Knowledge (technology: advanced) +6, Repair +6, Survival +2.

Feats: Archaic Engineering, Electricity Generation, Stockpile, Windfall.

Benefits:

- Working computer technology.
- Ability to get electronic items repaired.

Philosophy: Collection of information media.

Five years ago, the township of Collector started as a supply base for some of the prospectors who came to Silicon Vailley hoping to strike it rich. Unwilling to take all their supplies down into the valley with them, lest the machines suddenly turn hostile, they established a camp on one of the ridges overlooking the valley. They returned periodically to drop off their finds and collect enough supplies to last only the next few days.

Over the coming months, word of the valley got out, attracting others who came seeking their own fortunes. Most of them also dropped their supplies at

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the ridge-top camp, joining forces with the others to create a semi-permanent base of operations. Before long, a collection of ragged buildings was hastily erected, replacing some of the tents.

That was when Taivit Moilain arrived at the camp. Fascinated by stories of the ancient computers, Moilain arrived not to seek his fortune, but to just learn about the technology on which the old civilization was built. Luckily for him, he was not disappointed. Some of the prospectors found a cache of old CDs and brought them back to the camp just as Moilain arrived.

Taivit was enraptured. Never before had he seen something as beautiful as the silver discs with the captured rainbows. He begged to see more of the treasures from the valley and spent several days just examining and cataloging the finds that the prospectors had brought back. In return he cleaned up the goods, helped cook meals and cleaned the campsite.

Four years later, Moilain's still there. He's gathered a group of like-minded fanatics and together they run the trading post, buying and selling the treasures from the valley below. The trading post supports the prospectors who still fossick through the ruins looking for interesting items. Supplies are carted overland from the community at Sain Gosea every month. Nothing is actually grown or made at Collector; those who live there have no time.

Collector's main focus is gathering as much data from the valley as possible. Moilain and most of the other inhabitants are obsessed with learning about the computer technology from before the war and will pay handsomely for anything that even *looks* like it either holds or reads data. They managed to get several old computers operational — although their reliability is extremely low — and they have successfully managed to read some of the data from their collection.

One building contains nothing but the camp's collection. Thousands of silver and gold disks are carefully filed away. Crates of strange metal boxes, crystals that catch the light and even old wax cylinders and paper books are stacked on shelves. Nothing is ever thrown away or traded from this collection; Moilain believes it will come in handy even if they never use it. Scholars from Yoh Si Pi often visit to study the collection, hoping to learn more secrets from before the Cataclysm.

Although Moilain is the community's nominal leader, most of the practical management of the trading post, including all of the trading, falls to

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Ainna, Moilian's long-suffering girlfriend. She and a small team ensures there is enough stock on hand to cater to the prospectors that still pass through into the valley, and order what's necessary from Sain Gosea. They also do all the cooking and cleaning.

Collector is basically split into two groups: those that love the tech, headed by Moilain, and those who do everything else. The techs revel in their enormous collection and spend nearly every waking hour tinkering with it, trying to recover even the smallest amount of information. The other group, headed by Ainna, complains about the techs not pulling their weight, but somehow continues to forgive them when they manage to get something working. Some are also concerned that the valley has nearly given up all the treasure that it has, which would spell the end for Collector as a trading post.

Moilain isn't worried. The collection will still be there, even if the valley doesn't have anything else to give.

NEW TOWN: THE PEOPLE

With its high population and broad assortment of different political views, Europe has traditionally suffered badly in major wars. While it survived for over a century of peace without collapse, the Final Wars brought all that to an end and dragged Europe back to the Stone Age.

In the early years of the 21st century, following over fifty years of peace, the European nations laid aside their differences and formed the European Union, sharing the same currency and removing many trade restrictions between member nations. Economic prosperity followed and European nations took an increasingly prominent role in international politics, often standing up to the power of the United States.

When the nanotech and biotech revolutions hit, European nations were among the first in the world to take advantage. Several centuries of heavy industry had left much of the continent heavily polluted. Nanotech converters started cleaning up the environment and genetically engineered plants reclaimed some of the areas that earlier generations had destroyed. Nanotech industries started displacing many of the heavy industries that traditionally had dominated European business. Individual nations began to see their abilities with nanotech and biotech as a matter of pride and did anything to retain the upper hand. In the end, this led to the wars that tore the continent apart.

The war started when a shipload of radioactive waste bound for a French nanotech processing plant ran aground in the Netherlands. Despite French assurances that the ship was safe, radioactive sludge leaked from the ship, poisoning a large section of the Dutch coast. French authorities rushed to the scene, sealing off the area with military units. They claimed that the military had to isolate the affected land to protect French nanotechnology secrets being used to tidy up the spill as quickly as possible. The government of the Netherlands demanded the French withdraw their forces from Dutch soil, and attacked when the French refused. Calls to the United Nations for help met bitter debate over who was right; resolutions were drafted to force the French to withdraw from Dutch soil, only to be vetoed by the Russians and Chinese.

As peace accords collapsed, the conflict escalated as Dutch forces suffered heavy losses from French air attacks. German armored divisions mobilized and rolled into the Netherlands to engage the French military after the government of the Netherlands pleaded for assistance. The French responded to the German aggression by counterattacking across the border into Western Germany.

Within months, nearly every country in Europe was at war. Tensions escalated quickly and increasingly devastating attacks were made, often against civilian population centers. Generals unleashed the new breed of weapons of mass destruction — nanite bombs and genetically engineered killer viruses — on major cities. It's not known who eventually ordered the use of nuclear weapons, but almost simultaneous strikes hit London, Paris, Amsterdam, Brussels, Berlin, Warsaw and Rome. Paris was further shattered when German cyberwarriors allegedly seized control of American space weapons and subjected the French capital to a massive bombardment by orbital kinetic weapons. Some believed the Americans launched the strikes themselves at the request of the Germans.

For months, the war devastated Europe. With much of the military machine automated by sentient AIs, the war continued as the computers continued to look for opportunities to force the other side into surrender. With no side willing to back down, the war raged on, until in the end, everyone simply ran out of targets or weapons with which to fight. There was no formal surrender or cease-fire; fighting just petered out and people did their best to survive in the now-deadly remains.

Millions died, not only from the direct impact of the war, but also from starvation, disease and exposure once winter arrived. Refugees camps sprang up across the continent as civilians fled their homes to escape the worst of the fighting or the deadly aftermath that continued to devastate the countryside following the

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attacks. Some tried escaping to North America, northern Africa or the Middle East, only to discover that those places were collapsing as well.

Little remains of Europe from before the war. Ruins now stand where some of the oldest and proudest cities in the world once stood. Even the landscape continues to suffer from radiation from the nuclear exchange and the lingering effects of nanite bombs. Nowhere is really safe, and thousands die every year accidentally triggering something left behind from the fighting.

THE PEOPLE

Community Type: New Town
Population Level: 3 (174 adults)
Force: 10 (+1)
Mobility: 2 (-4)
Resilience: 8 (-1)
Learning: 14 (+2)
Awareness: 16 (+3)
Command: 16 (+3)
Wealth: 15
Reputation Bonus: +4

Skills: Craft (textiles) +4, Craft (writing) +6, Diplomacy +9, Knowledge (history) +8, Perform (storytelling) +9, Survival +11, Treat Injury +7.

Feats: Archaic Farming, Archaic Manufacturing, Stockpile (x2).

Benefits:

- Custom built archaic weapons.
- Cheap food supplies.
- Basic medical care.

Philosophy: Simple survival

The People began as a simple collection of refugees fleeing the conflict in their homelands. Mostly consisting of French citizens, the group also has German, Swiss and Italian members who fled across the Alps down into Southern France, away from the most vicious fighting. The group moved on foot, in no more than groups of ten or twelve; any more attracted the attention of the automated combat systems.

After evading French and German patrols for several months, the group finally stumbled across a limestone cave in Southern France. Many of the refugees were distraught from their traumatic journey, so the group decided to lay low in the cave for a while and recover. Little did they know that they would make the cave their permanent home.

The small entrance cavern opened into a series of large underground chambers, big enough for the whole group to settle down comfortably and still have a degree of privacy. The first night was spent huddled

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around several small fires deep within the earth, the only sounds the quiet sobbing of several women mourning the loss of their homelands. Over the next few weeks, the group stayed hidden in the cave and recovered, gathering food and water supplies with the intention of pressing on to the south. But by then, the weather had started to turn cold, and the group decided to stay where they were for the winter, thinking that they were safe and relatively warm, whereas they may not find another place with the same degree of shelter when they needed it.

That winter, Madame Yvette Roschaux took it upon herself to ensure the group's spirits remained high. A paleoanthropologist by training, she told them stories of prehistoric times, when people had lived in caves like the one they were now in and what they did to survive. She knew basic ice-age survival techniques and began to teach the younger children flint knapping and how to start fires without matches or lighter fluid. The group took Roschaux's stories to heart and they all started learning some of the Stone Age tricks. It started simply as a distraction, something to take their minds off the destruction outside. But as the winter wore on, they began to think that perhaps life *had* been better back in prehistoric times, back before people learned to make weapons that could kill everything in the blink of an eye. By the end of the winter, they were calling themselves simply "The People" and planned on making a life for themselves and their descendants here in the cave.

As spring came, they started emerging from the cave and began the preparations that would become their routine. The stronger members explored the area, bringing back food and timber from the surrounding countryside. Others set to work teaching the children the new old ways, and doing everything they could to carve out a niche for themselves.

Four years later, Madame Roschaux passed away from pneumonia. But by then, her teaching was firmly established in the group, and they continued to live like neo-cavemen, living off the land and preserving their history as stories to be passed down to future generations.

In the decades that followed, the group minded their own business and avoided contact with neighboring communities as much as possible. Several delegations visited, hoping to convince The People to join with them, but all of them were soundly rebuked and sent away. If anything, they became more fearful of technology and anything that it produced. Visitors were welcomed provided they agreed to respect the community's views and wishes. Some visitors stayed, enamored by the simple, peaceful lifestyle.

The People are a strictly matriarchal group, following the tradition started with the respect paid to Madame Roschaux. The head woman is simply known as Mother, and that title currently rests with Haiderine, a direct descendant of one of the community's founders. Now in her mid-forties, she treats the whole group as her extended family and tolerates no insolence from any of them. Deeply paranoid about the past — as she has seen first-hand the horrendous effects of nanotech weaponry — she refuses to even entertain the idea of adopting more modern technology of any sort.

This has led to some bitter arguments with Firre, the chief hunter, who has witnessed men from other communities using more modern weaponry. He and some of the other men are pressing to adopt modern weaponry, as their simple stone-tipped spears and knives are no match against the firearms and energy weapons of some raiders they encountered. Several of the men have a cache of advanced weapons that they collect and use when no one else from the group is around. Despite this, they know that if they are caught, they face immediate expulsion from the group, who will simply cease to even acknowledge their presence.

THE COMMUNITY BEHAVIOR MAP

Defining the community's abilities, skills and feats provides a glimpse of what the community looks like. But, like a character, the community does not truly come to life until it is roleplayed. However, a community is more than a single person and reacts very differently to situations that befall it.

The Community Behavior Map helps the GM understand a community's complex group dynamics and assists in coming up with consistent and logical reactions to situations that the community experiences. While all communities have the same basic reactions to circumstances, it is the emotional intensity of their reactions that govern what they'll do next.

Certain conditions cause elements to become unstable. This indicates problems within the community that could threaten to destroy the group's harmony if left unattended. Fortunately, this provides a GM with opportunities for the PCs to directly intervene into the life of the community in order to keep it on track for a happy and prosperous future.

Each node in the diagram represents a factor that has a direct bearing on a community's life. These factors change over time and their importance goes

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up and down as circumstances change. They each have a numerical level, normally ranging from 0 to 100, with higher values *usually* being preferred; for some factors, a lower value is actually better.

The lines between nodes represent links of cause and effect. When the one node's strength rises (or falls), the change in its condition affects each of the nodes it's linked to. If there's a plus sign next to the line, if the first node's level increases, the node at the other end goes up too; if there's a minus sign next to the line, then an increase in the first node causes a decrease in the second.

All communities respond to changes in the same basic way. How they differ is which events map into each factor, and the size of the follow on that the change produces.

UNDERSTANDING THE FACTORS

In order to use the behavior map well, you need to understand what each node means, and how those factors apply to a specific community. Each node covers a broad concept, with a myriad of possible interpretations.

This section discusses each factor affecting a community. A factor is designated as positive, negative or neutral. Increases in positive factors are advantageous to the community and should be encouraged. Increases in negative factors weaken the community and should be countered as quickly as possible. Neutral factors can go either way.

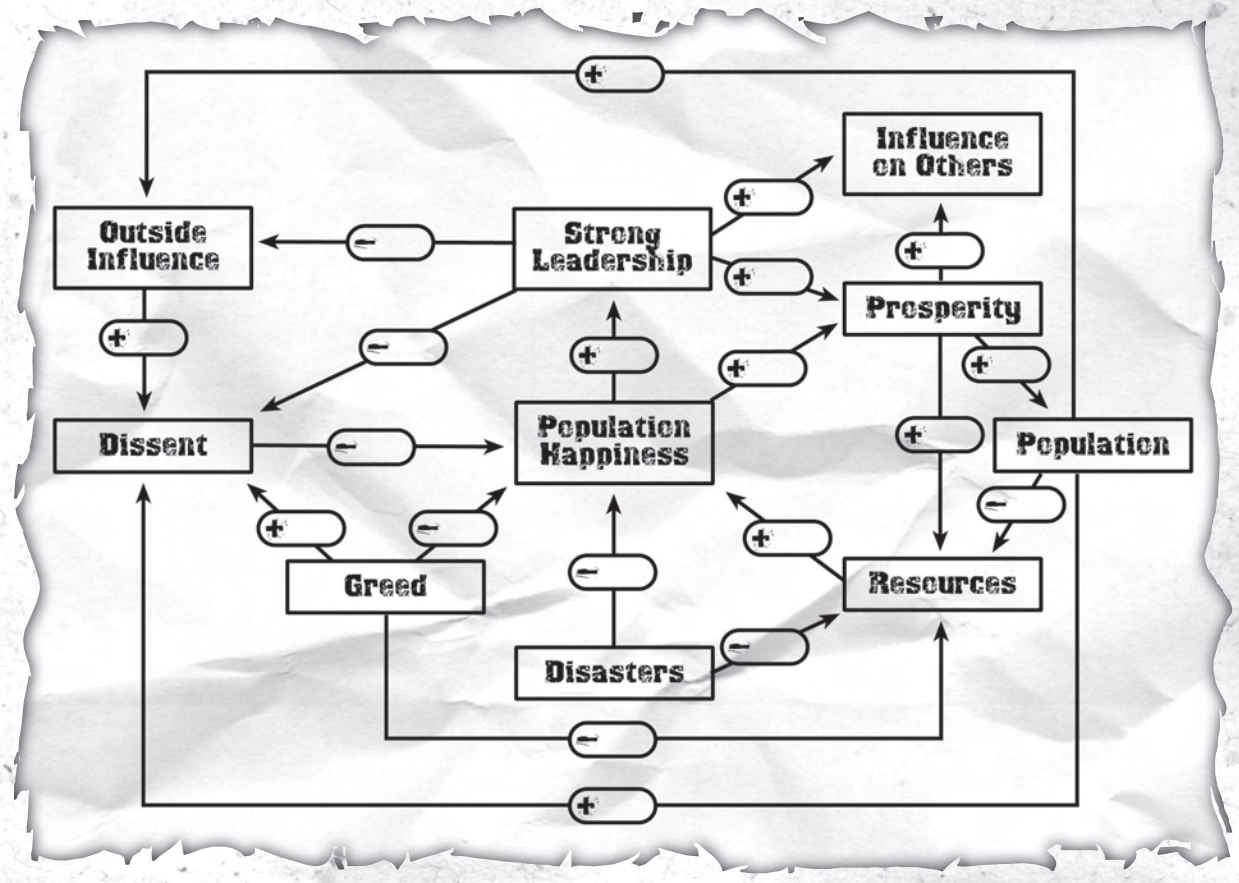
Population Happiness (Positive)

Population happiness is the central factor in any community. The community's leadership is doing a good job if their population is content with the current state of affairs. If the population is mostly happy, they're more productive and there are fewer arguments. A community's primary philosophy is vital to this happiness; if the citizens are achieving their primary goal, their contentment will flow into other areas of community life, helping it function better.

All sorts of things make people happy. It can be as simple as a much-anticipated celebration, births, marriages, good weather, large gatherings or just some time off to relax. Larger successes — such as successful trade or exploration missions — also increase the community's overall happiness. However, a community's happiness level can drop after a death, infighting, problems with weather or the environment, disasters or disease.

Strong Leadership (Positive)

The stronger a community's leadership is, the more successful it is in achieving and maintaining their primarily philosophy. A good leader knows how to inspire his people to work harder, disarm his



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opponent's opinions and increase both the community's prosperity and influence over others. Weak leadership can tear a community apart, drive it to the brink of disaster, or leave it vulnerable to attack.

Events that can bolster the leader's strength include obviously successful decisions, timely intelligence, discipline, honor and victories over opposition. Events that weaken the leader's position include corruption, bad or untimely decisions (especially ones that cost lives or precious resources), opposition to the way the leader runs the community, bad news or war.

Prosperity (Positive)

To ensure long term success, a community needs to not only provide the bare essentials — food, water, clothing and shelter — but it also needs a surplus to allow its citizens time to pursue non-essential tasks. A community's wealth can be partly measured by how much free time the citizens have for activities like creating art, telling stories, making music, and pursuing religion or philosophy.

Prosperity increases with high crop yields, increased production, better-quality trade goods, advantageous trade agreements with other communities and so on. It can decrease as the result of lost resources through disaster or mismanagement, poor decision making from leadership, general laziness or complacency.

Population (Neutral)

Over time, a community's population generally increases. If the birth rate exceeds the death rate, then the population naturally grows. New members may hear about the community and decide to settle there. This often happens when a community has a high standard of living; people want to live in a place where life is easier.

But an increase in population has negative aspects. There is a heavier drain on the community's resources, meaning more work needs to be done in order to maintain the standard of living. It also increases the chances of new factions starting, as it's much harder to maintain a consistent vision as soon as there are more people involved. People coming in from outside the community also bring preconceived notions about how things should be done, and these ideas may not gel with the community's outlook.

Population size may also be transitory. Certain events — such as festivals or emergencies — may temporarily change the number of people present in the community.

Resources (Positive)

Communities need a certain level of resources on hand to run efficiently. They need stockpiles of food, clothing and fuel to last through the different seasons. They need raw materials to create trade goods with. If the community can't produce these resources themselves, they must find a way to trade for them, take them from another community or rely on charity.

Resources can increase through the community's hard work, favorable weather, finds of Pre-War caches, improved manufacturing methods or improved efficiency. Resources suffer because of disasters, bad management, greed or theft.

Disasters (Negative)

Disasters just happen. Despite all the precautions a community takes, there are always unforeseen circumstances that cause major setbacks.

Some example disasters are nanite storms, marauder attacks, disease, rodent infestations, falling satellite debris, war, deaths of leaders, fires, floods and droughts.

Greed (Negative)

Some people always take more than their fair share. At low levels, greed can just make the community unhappy, and cause grumbles of dissent. Extensive greed, however, can severely deplete resources and can lead to a crisis within the community.

Greed may not necessarily involve material things. People can be greedy with their time; if they neglect their duties in favor of something they prefer doing, or monopolize someone else's time, it has the same effect as if they had stolen the resources in the first place. The greed factor also covers favoritism within a community, where one subgroup has higher privileges than the rest of the population.

Dissent (Negative)

No group of humans ever agrees wholeheartedly on every topic. Some people will always disagree with the leadership's decisions, thinking they have gone too far, or perhaps not far enough. These differences of opinion may begin cordially, but over time, they can fester into outright hostility that can split a community apart.

Dissent can seriously weaken a community's leadership, forcing them to make unpleasant decisions in order to protect the community. If the arguments or fighting continue, other community members not involved in the original dispute may be forced to take sides, or they may just get caught in the crossfire.

Outside Influence (Neutral)

Over time, it is nearly impossible for a community's leadership to maintain the community's focus on its core philosophy, unless the community completely isolates itself from the rest of the world. New ideas come from any number of sources: recovered knowledge, passing travelers, new citizens or cryptic alliances.

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These ideas can mutate the people's thinking, changing their attitudes over time. If the new ideas are startling enough, they may even turn the community's thinking on its ear. If the ideas are more insidious, they can corrupt the people's minds, turning their attention away from their core beliefs over a long period.

It doesn't matter whether the outside influence is intentional or not. Unintentional influence can happen when someone within the population sees another community having an easier — or perhaps worse — lifestyle than the population currently enjoys. Intentional influence could be an enemy's threats, or cryptic alliances beginning to infiltrate the population.

Influence on Others (Positive)

Just as outside influences can affect a community, a community can also affect others. The leadership's strength and the prosperity enjoyed are the two main factors that help convince others to side with the community, or at least to do what the community suggests. Whether this influence is used to arrange advantageous trade agreements, or to convert outsiders to the community's way of thinking, depends on the situation and how the influence is used.

SETTING UP THE FACTORS

A community's ability scores have a direct bearing on the importance of some factors to that community. Other factors are initially determined by whatever makes the most sense for that community.

Factor weighting measures a factor's importance; it normally runs from 0 to 100. At any given time, the different factor weightings help determine where the community's focus will be.

The initial scores are as follows:

Factor Name	Starting Weight
Population Happiness	50
Strong Leadership	(Command + Awareness) x 2
Prosperity	50
Population	Population Level x 10
Resources	Wealth x 5
Disasters	Always 0
Greed	50
Dissent	(20 – Awareness) x 5
Outside Influence	20 – Awareness
Influence on Others	Reputation x 5

Where the factor is linked to a particular ability, use the raw ability score, not the ability modifier.

Population happiness, prosperity and greed all start with an initial weighting of 50, but these scores can be modified up or down. A GM may decide to change the initial scores to reflect the community's current state of affairs.

ASSIGNING THE LINK WEIGHTS

The causal flows link the nodes in the Community Behavior Map. In the map, each link already indicates whether the factor's rise causes a corresponding rise or fall in the nodes it's connected to. But not all changes move with the same force. Strong links amplify the change, for good or ill, while weaker ones diminish it and may make minor changes disappear altogether.

Each link on the diagram must be assigned one of five values, shown in the table below. The box by each line provides space to record the link's weighting. As changes flow through the community, multiply the change in one node by the link weight before applying it to the next node in sequence.

Weighting	Multiplier
Slight	x 1/4
Low	x 1/2
Medium	x 1
High	x 2
Extreme	x 4

When you're assigning link weights, consider the starting factor weights, as well as the community's abilities, skills and feats, and use those to help choose an appropriate weighting. For example, if a community has high Command and Awareness scores, then it begins with a strong leadership. If the leadership listens to the citizens' concerns when making decisions, then the link weight between strong leadership and dissent should be medium. If the leadership ruthlessly silences any criticism, then the weighting may be high or even extreme.

EVENTS

Things happen; any community experiences events that change its destiny. How that community reacts is what sets it apart from all the others.

Events are the driving force behind the Community Behavior Map. Each time something happens in the community — big or small — it has follow-on effects. Over time, these follow-on effects improve the quality of everyone's lives, or they tear the community apart, if nothing is done to counter them.

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Factor	Positive Sample Events	Negative Sample Events
Population Happiness	Good Weather	Bad Weather
	Increased Leisure Time	Bad News
	Celebrations	
Strong Leadership	Popular Support	Bad Planning
	Successful Tactics	Corruption
		Embarrassment
Prosperity	More Efficient Work Practices	Strikes
	Trade Surplus	Trade Deficit
	Productive Workforce	Mismanagement
Population	Births	Deaths
	Refugees	Emigration
Resources	Good Harvest	Visiting Tribe
	Cache Found	Over-consumption
	Hard Work	Repairs
Disaster	Falling Satellite Debris	
	Disease	
	Attack	
	Rodent Infestation	
	Nanite Storm	
	Accidents	
Greed	Bribery	Police Work
	Theft	Guards
	Monopolizing Leader's Time	
Dissent	Arguments	Dispute Settlement
	Political Opposition	Court Hearings
	Feuds	
Outside Influence	Cryptic Alliance Agent	Focus on Core Philosophy
	Prosperous Neighbor	
Influence on Others	Bargaining Power	Bad Intelligence
	Increased Martial Prowess	
	Inside Information	

To determine an event's effects, you first need to choose which factor it influences. The table suggests some examples of events and the factors they apply to. Each event is either positive or negative; this determines whether the event's score is added or subtracted from the factor weighting. An increasing event won't always be beneficial to the community; if it is applied to a negative factor, its impact on the community is always bad.

Once you've chosen the target factor, choose the event's severity from the table below. Events range from having negligible impact to being critical. For each event, calculate the factor weight change by rolling the appropriate die and adding the bonus.

Severity	Roll
Negligible	1d4
Minor	1d6 + 4
Average	1d8 + 10
Major	1d12 + 18
Critical	1d20 + 30

Apply this change to the appropriate source factor by adding it to the current value in the case of an increasing event, or subtracting it in the case of a decreasing event.

Next, for each link that leaves the factor, multiply the change's size by the link's weighting, rounding down. Apply the result to the target factor of that link *only*. If the link has a positive arrow attached to it, then the target factor's weighting goes up with an increasing event and down with a decreasing event. If the link is negative, the target factor's weight increases with a decreasing event and decreases with an increasing event.

Each factor's weight change should have a corresponding sign in the game world. These signs are what the PCs see or experience, showing them what effects the events have. The larger the factor's weight change, the more dramatic the event and hence the more obvious the sign in the game world. The community may not notice negligible and minor events for some time, which can sometimes turn their effects into much larger events. The community will *always* notice major and critical events.

Events could happen as a direct result of the PCs' actions (or their inaction), just as the actions of NPCs may have a direct impact on the PCs' quality of life. The PCs returning triumphantly from a quest may cause community celebrations, causing a jump in the population happiness. At the same time, one of the NPCs may start coveting the treasure brought back, and start plotting to acquire it, thus bumping up the weight of the Greed factor.

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COUNTER-EVENTS

As the community behavior map is cyclic, some events can set in motion a chain of subsequent events that can sometimes threaten to destroy a community, or ultimately lead to the community becoming invulnerable. However, for every action there is a reaction.

Counter-events oppose another event's results. Usually, they're the direct result of community members deliberately working to stop follow-on effects from happening. In some cases, fate will step in and cause disasters to prevent a community from getting too far ahead.

In order to maintain the status quo, GMs should inject extra events into the community behavior map to counteract the effects of the events that are already in play. If an event causes a radical shift in factor weights, then the community (or perhaps Mother Nature) will push back to try to get things back to the way they were before.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The communities isn't just a TV show for the PCs to watch. The community's leadership may ask the PCs to prevent something negative from happening (if they are aware of it in advance); or they may be asked to help repair the damage caused by event's aftermath. Alternatively, the PCs may deliberately try to undermine the success of a community if it fits with their personal goals.

If the PCs want to temporarily change a link weight — either magnifying a positive event, or reducing a negative one — they need to make a skill check, using the appropriate DC from the table below. The actual skill used depends on both the circumstance and how PCs tackle the problem. For example, fixing a damaged building should be a Repair check, or it might require a tricky welding job, so Craft (metalwork) could be used. Convincing a troublemaker to change his mind may require a Bluff, Diplomacy or even Intimidate check, depending on what the PCs want to do. It's up to the GM to decide which skill is appropriate at the time the PCs need to make the check.

Lowering or raising the weight by more than one level increases the DC by +5 for each level.

Weakening a Link	DC
Critical to Major	30
Major to Average	25
Average to Minor	20
Minor to Negligible	15
Negligible to Nothing	10

Strengthening a Link	DC
Negligible to Minor	15
Minor to Average	20
Average to Major	25
Major to Critical	30

TIMING

Events don't necessarily happen instantaneously; some factors change much slower than others. For example, Population increases or decreases more slowly than Resources. However, an event's severity normally provides an indication of the time delay between cause and effect, with more severe events happening faster. This time delay between an event's trigger and its effects taking place can be used to launch counter events to reduce the severity of the event's aftermath.

The community's pace of life can be measured by the average time between events. Busy, high-energy communities experience events fairly quickly, perhaps one or more per day and often with high severity. Sleepier communities may go days or even weeks between events, and rarely will they have a big impact.

ADVANCE WARNING OF EVENTS

An event may generate warning signs before it actually happens. The delay between the warning signs' onset and the event's full impact allows the community to prepare, so that the effect is minimized. For example, a tornado striking a community would be a critical disaster. However, the residents would see a build-up of heavy clouds and increasing wind, and could guess that a tornado was coming. If they heed the signs, they can prepare by boarding up windows and doors, protecting vehicles and livestock, and taking refuge in storm shelters.

These preparations reduce the event's impact on the community. If a community is able to successfully prepare for an event, reduce the severity of the event accordingly. Minor preparations reduce the severity by one level, whereas complete preparation can reduce it by two or more levels. However, the severity of an event can never be reduced below Negligible. In terms of signs, it is the event's *effects* that are lessened, not the event itself; the event still hits the community with its original severity.

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CHAPTER FIVE

COMRADE, NEMESIS, MYSTERY

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<Prosce looked up, frowning. "Do you smell something burning?"

Beendrig slid out from underneath the twisted metal wreck and grabbed the hammer with his third hand. "Nope," he said, sliding back underneath. "Your twitchy nose always makes you paranoid."

Prosce peered out on the ruins through the hole in the wall again. Rusted reinforcing rods poked out of the shattered concrete walls like an exposed skeleton. Weeds grew in the cracks, spattering the dull gray with patches of green. Nothing moved. But the smell of burned flesh was much stronger. "Beendrig," he said, "someone or something is burning meat out there."

Clang. Clang. Clang.

Standing up, Beendrig slid the hammer back into his tool belt and scowled at Prosce. "I've damn near got that cable free and once I strip the glass wire out, we'll have enough to get that combuder working again."

Prosce just glanced over his shoulder again. "I just think..." He grabbed up his halberd, and headed for the hole. "You coming, or not?"

Beendrig was already jogging away. "Last one back buys the brews!"

Chuckling to hide his nervousness, Prosce jogged off in the other direction. His footsteps echoed off the ruins of the high rises. He jogged around the corner and pulled up cold. The smoking carcasses of their four brutorz lay in the middle of the street, still smoldering. The smell was overwhelming and Prosce gagged hard as he ducked back around the corner before slumping to his knees, retching.

"PROOOOW—"

Prosce's head snapped up and he sprinted back towards where Beendrig's tortured scream had come from. He bolted around the corner and slid to a halt, suddenly frozen in fear.

Beendrig's corpse lay smoking in the center of the street. But Prosce hardly noticed; his friend's death was the least of his worries.

The machine sat in the middle of the road, humming slightly. More than two stories tall, its dull black armor plates bristled with gun barrels and strange glass appendages. Prosce tossed aside his halberd and started backing up.

That was when 15 red beams lanced through the smoke and centered themselves on Prosce's chest.

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MUTANTS AND MACHINES

In the years prior to the Gamma Age, life became modeling clay, and people played with it. Some made from it crude, misshapen things, the works of clumsy children. Others were masterful sculptors, shaping life into forms beautiful, strange and terrifying. Each passing year brought new tools, new technologies, and, most importantly, new aesthetics. Freed from any constraints of evolution, life itself became a medium of self-expression. Creatures intended to serve, or amuse or make a political statement filled the Earth.

And then it fell apart.

The world died with a thousand screams; a thousand whimpers; and the overarching cynic laughter of all those who had warned, for centuries on end, of imminent apocalypse who were finally proven right. And across the length and breadth of the Earth, the living products of artistry and hubris, of will and of whim, were turned loose into the maelstrom, shifting and mutating still further, casting their designers' aspirations and ideals aside as the shattered ecosystems of the world tried desperately, madly, to find some sort of balance.

When it was all, or at least mostly, done, the world was not as it was. Millions of years in the future, a paleontologist would think that all life on Earth had been wiped out and replaced by an invading, alien ecosystem, so total and dramatic was the change. Fish nested in trees, plants hunted down prey in packs, and creatures walked the Earth in defiance of any and all laws of biology. Symbiotic nanobots spun iron bones to bolster those of calcium, and microscopic computer systems grew inside brains otherwise too small to hold sentience. Nature and nanotech were as one.

ARK

Dogs were among the first species to be uplifted. They were "Man's best friend," after all — what better species to grant the gift of intellect? Yes, there were some issues with the fact that an intelligent dog was less likely to automatically accept a human as the alpha male of the pack, and that a dog who could open cans of dog food on his own, or take himself out for a walk, was less inclined to see a strange and alien being as somehow essential to his own survival; the relationship between a man and a tamed wolf is not the same as the relationship between a man and a being who thinks as well as, *but differently from*, a man.

Generations later, some of those earliest tamperings have evolved along very unique lines, and man's lack of forethought has come back to bite him.

Arks average 9 to 10 feet tall. In appearance, they are humanoid dogs, reminiscent of some Egyptian deities. Though many breeds of dog were granted intellect in the Shadow Years, the arks seem descended primarily from German Shepherds, and quite possibly specifically from military K-9 uplifts, though their mix of abilities implies significant post-creation mutation as well.

Arks have a simple nomadic culture, based around the pack. A single ark is always the alpha male of the pack; he holds this position by right of combat, and has the first choice of food, scavenged treasure and mating opportunities. Ark females maintain their own hierarchy by means just as brutal, but less directly physical.

Arks get along moderately well with other intelligent animals, but dislike and despise humans, both pure-strain and mutated (though they hate the pure-strain humans more). The eating of human hands (removed, ideally, from still-living humans) is an important ritual in ark culture.

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The name "*ark*" derives from the noise that they make when about to attack. Other terms include the simple, but descriptive, "*Mandogs*" and obscure "*Ubis*" (Pronounced *you-biss*).

CAMPAIGNING

Ark packs are found in many places, but they are most common in the dense woods of the New Northwest. They live primarily by hunting and secondarily by pillage, striking at whatever villages seem like easy targets. Travelers without heavy defenses are also prime targets. On occasion, arks exiled from their packs for some reason will find new lives in one of the more cosmopolitan communities, and many such renegades end up joining cryptic alliances — the Ranks of the Fit and the Zoopremacists are both likely to take ark recruits.

SPECIES TRAITS

Telekinesis (Ex, Mut, Psi): Arks have the capacity to move objects with pure mental energy, an ability they use to great effectiveness in combat. They can use this ability 3 + Wisdom bonus times per day, and can manipulate weights of up 5 lbs. + 2 lbs. per points of Wisdom bonus. Each invocation of the ability lasts for 1 minute. Typical ark tricks are removing weapons from the holsters or scabbards of their targets before an ambush; approaching a target with hands out, "weaponless," while directing a large rock towards the back of the target's head; or sending glops of mud into a target's face just prior to attacking. During melee, an ark can use his telekinesis to pull aside an opponent's shield or redirect her blade; if an ark activates his power while in melee, he may choose, each round the power is in effect, to gain either a +2 circumstance bonus on attack rolls or a +2 circumstance bonus to Defense. The ark may reassign his bonus whenever it is his turn in the initiative cycle.

Weather Manipulation (Ex, Mut, Psi): Telekinetic abilities tend to be either very broad, but low in power, or very powerful, but narrowly focused. This is an example of the latter. An ark can manipulate air pressure and temperature so as to alter local weather patterns considerably. This can be attempted only once a day, and the DC of the Wisdom check is based on how different from existing conditions the desired weather is. Turning a light rain into a heavy rain is DC 12. Creating rain on a sunny day, but in a moist climate, is DC 15. Raising a thunderstorm in a desert is DC 25 or more. This ability is most often used by the pack to create good conditions for a raid.

Life Leech (Ex, Mut, Psi): This potent ability has to be used with caution, especially given the arks' propensity for attacking in packs. When used, all beings within a 5-foot radius + 5 feet for each point of Charisma bonus take 1d6 points of damage. The ark gains a number of temporary hit points equal to the damage done by the power. This ability may be used once every 1d4 rounds. It affects *all* creatures in range except the ark who invoked the power, with the sole exception of constructs. This includes all of the ark's allies. A pitched battle involving many arks can result in a situation where life energy (expressed as hit points) is being shunted rapidly from ark to ark as each uses this power in turn; of course, the non-arks in the conflict will be getting the worst of it.

Ark: CR 4; Large mutant humanoid 9 ft.; HD 4d8+8; hp 24; Mas 15; Init +0; Spd 40 ft.; Defense 12, touch 9, flat-footed 12 (+3 studded leather armor, –1 size); BAB +4; Grap +12; Atk +7 melee (bite 1d6+6 or by weapon); Full Atk: +7 melee (bite 1d6+6 or by weapon); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SQ telekinesis, weather manipulation, life leech; AL pack; SV Fort +3, Ref+4, Will+6; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 19, Dex 11, Con 15, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills: Survival +8, Spot +2, Search+6, Listen +10, Balance +2, Intimidate +6, Swim+5.

Feats: Track.

Advancement: By character class.

ARN

Arn are man-sized dragonflies, most commonly found in deep swamps. The silt swamps of the south are rife with the creatures, as are some northern mires. Areas of the shattered coast where the waters are still and stagnant also have arn populations.

Arns are carnivores, but are not overly aggressive; they generally do not attack human-sized creatures, but live off roundtoads, flappersnakes, and dorlaks. If especially hungry, or provoked somehow, they will attack.

Arn lay their eggs beneath the roots of swamp-dwelling trees. The fry are aquatic until their first molting.

CAMPAIGNING

If captured young, arns can be trained as riding beasts by Small or Tiny creatures. The creatures cannot breed in captivity, so regular raids to capture newly-molted arn fry are commonplace (the fry will not molt in captivity, either). Domesticating a fry within 1 week of molting is done normally; each week that passes causes a cumulative –2 natural modifier on the roll.

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While the fry are inedible and foul-tasting to most humanoids, they make excellent bait. Arn-fry, or "spiggles," can be found for sale in most communities bordering on arn-infested swamps. There is often tension between those communities which harvest spiggles and those communities which seek arn to ride, as, obviously, the former drive down the supply for the latter. Depending on the communities involved, this tension can be resolved through treaty or open war.

Immunities: Arn are immune to massive damage and mind-affecting effects.

Arn: CR 2; Medium vermin; HD 3d8; hp 14; Mas 14; Init +0; Spd 10 ft., fly 60 ft. (poor); Defense 18, touch 10, flat-footed 18 (+8 natural); BAB +2; Grap +3; Atk +2 melee (bite1d8); Full Atk +2 melee (bite 1d8); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ darkvision 60 ft., immunity to mind-affecting effects, immunity to massive damage; AL None or Rider; SV Fort +3, Ref +1,Will +3; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 11, Dex 11, Con 11, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 11.

Skills: Listen+7, Spot +7.

Advancement: (4–6 HD) Large.

BADDER

Razor claws. Sharp senses. A mind as keen as any man's. A bad attitude.

And they can smell your fear.

Badders are humanoid badgers, apparently another product of the uplift sequence. They are common throughout the Gamma World, but prefer temperate climes, usually settling in hilly areas with easy access to fresh water. They are burrowers by nature, and their dwellings are underground complexes, usually holding a few hundred badders. Entrances to the dwellings are few and well-guarded, but the level of industry most badders exhibit means that their settlements are not generally hidden. Indeed, warning signs, usually in the form of decaying corpses or still-living beings dying slowly and gruesomely, mark their territory plainly.

Badder claws are exceptionally hard and strong, the substance of them having been redesigned at some point early in their evolution. This makes them exceptionally lethal in melee combat. Most badders, however, will carry weapons (usually longswords and shortbows) and wear armor (often rakoxen hide augmented with metal studs).

Badders are organized along feudal lines, with a "Baron" or "Duke" running each local community; the leader of each local community swears fealty to a "King" who controls the largest community in the area. Badder kingdoms regularly squabble with each other; their inability to form large social organizations before their own innate nastiness tears them apart is a powerful check on their growth.

CAMPAIGNING

Badder communities are a constant threat to more peaceful settlements. Badders can farm and herd, but they prefer to raid; if there's anyone weaker than they are nearby, they will attack. Badder burrows are very hard to attack without some sort of technological weapons: Battles in the dark, close tunnels, when the defenders can sense the whereabouts of each invader but the invaders are stumbling blind through a maze, are often massacres.

Badders are not stupidly aggressive; they won't attack unless they're sure they can win; and they'll sign, and even sometimes keep, treaties with sufficiently powerful forces. They are always alert for weakness, and are hardly above breaking treaties the instant they have a clear-cut advantage. Often, they will wait until an "ally" has been attacked by a third party, then move in to take whatever is left.

Badders who are not part of a badder community — merchants, explorers, scouts — can often be seen in more cosmopolitan towns. Badders are not generally attacked on sight if they are not clearly part of an attacking band, unless the area has undergone continual badder assault of late.

Badders have evolved a complex system of heraldry, capable of compressing a great deal of information about community, fealty and rank into a small number of distinct symbols. Several non-badder races have begun adopting it. The Knowledge (behavioral science) check DC to decipher "badder-sign" is 10; such signs are often left by wanderers in slightly-hidden places, as a way to describe the nearby environment.

SPECIES TRAITS

Empathy (Ex, Mut, Psi): Badders can sense emotions — anger, fear, hatred, joy. They can always detect any organic, thinking being within 100 feet, and know its general emotional state. Some would think this would have made them a race of sensitive, caring creatures, but continual exposure to the stew of envies and resentments, petty hates and trivial rages which roil within all thinking beings has made them bitter, spiteful and vicious. Because of this empathy, a badder cannot be surprised, except by a construct or other entity with no organic mind. Badders cannot sense the emotions of wholly inorganic soultech. Badders gain a +10 racial bonus on Sense Motive, Diplomacy, and Intimidate checks due to this ability.

Tough Claws (Ex, Mut): The claws of a badder are impregnated with hard metals that make them

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very strong; this causes them to do more damage than their size would indicate. This has been calculated into the damage figures noted below.

Badder: CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 1d8+1; hp 5; Mas 16; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 13, touch 10, flat-footed 13 (+3 studded leather); BAB +1; Grap +2; Atk +2 melee (claws1d6+1 or bite 1d4+1); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6+1, claws) and –3 melee (bite 1d4); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ empathy, tough claws; AL community; SV Fort +2, Ref +2,,Will +3; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 12, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 11.

Skills: Hide +4, Profession +2, Spot +5, Move Silently +4, Sense Motive +10, Diplomacy+10, Intimidate+10, Search+5, Swim +5.

Feats: Improved Damage Threshold.

Advancement: By character class.

BER LEP

The ber lep is a descendant of the lily pad, mixed with pieces of DNA from pitcher plants and Venus Fly Traps, with some additional oddities of no known origin. They are common in the Nau Yorg Sargasso and parts of the silt swamp, and some colonies have been spotted in the western archipelago.

The ber lep is not mobile, but drifts, rootless, along the shallow seas where it makes its home. When prey lands on it, it closes, dissolving the prey with powerful corrosive acids. The plant absorbs its liquefied meal and reopens to await its next prey.

CAMPAIGNING

Ber leps are a well-known hazard to swimmers and sailors in the areas where they spawn. Trading vessels give the ber lep fields a wide berth, though it often happens that inexperienced or unaware crews will be drawn in. Repeated exposure to their attractive scent breeds resistance: +1 bonus on the save for each time the plant has been encountered.

The ber lep makes for poor eating, though some hissers are reputed to enjoy the taste. The main reason anyone would go to the ber lep fields deliberately is to harvest the pheromone-producing petals that grow along the outer edges of the plant. These are highly valuable, as they can be distilled into an effective perfume which gives the wearer +2 on all Diplomacy checks, +4 against individuals who consider the wearer a potential sex partner.

SPECIES TRAITS

Acidic Grab (Ex, Mut): Anyone standing on a ber lep is subject to its slam attack as the two halves of the plant come together. Anyone struck by the slam must make an opposed Strength check; if the ber lep wins the check, the victim is knocked down and is enclosed in the ber lep's leaves, where he takes 2d6 points of acid damage each round until dead. Only one such victim can be held at any one time, and the ber lep cannot attack anyone else while digesting someone.

Alluring Scent (Ex, Mut): The ber lep produces an intoxicating pheromone to draw victims to it. This is the result of an odd symbiosis with an aphrodisiac symbiotic bacteria designed for commercial use. The scent wafts out continuously from the ber lep, making large colonies of the creatures extraordinarily hazardous. Any mammal within 100 ft. of a ber lep must make a Will save against DC 15 or be compelled to walk or swim onto its surface. Multiple ber leps increase the range of the scent, so that typical colonies will lure victims from as far as 500 ft. away.

Displacement (Ex, Psi): Once per day, the ber lep may spontaneously teleport to avoid danger. Once the ber lep has taken damage, at any time at which it may normally take an action, it may instead take a full action to teleport itself to any place within 300 ft.

Ber Lep: CR 3; Medium-size plant; HD 2d8+2; hp 11; Mas —; Init +0; Spd —; Defense 15, touch 10, flat-footed 10 (+5 natural); BAB +1; Grap +2; Atk +2 (slam 1d6 plus 2d6 acid); Full Atk +2 (slam 1d6, acidic grab, constrict); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ acidic grab, alluring scent, displacement; AL None; SV Fort +4, Ref +0,Will +3; AP 0; Rep 0; Str 13, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 3, Wis 16, Cha 8.

Skills: None.

Feats: None.

Advancement: 3–4 HD (Large)

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BRUTORZ

Brutorz are among the most prized mounts available in the Gamma World, but they are also among the hardest to acquire. In form, they are very similar to pre-Gamma Age horses, though they are larger than all known 21st century breeds. They are built have a stocky build, and their muscles roil like stones beneath their smooth, and very tough, white hide. Their manes are short and bristly, and their hooves are virtually impervious to wear. Only a suicidal madman would attempt to shoe a brutorz.

The greatest difference between a brutorz and its ancestral species, though, is the eyes. When you look into them, something looks back. Brutorz are not dumb beasts. Nor are they clever beasts. They are sentient beings — as intelligent, on average, as humans are. They do not speak, other than to make traditional equine noises, but they can communicate telepathically (see below). They also possess other, stranger abilities.

The origin of the brutorz can be traced to two sources. The physical mutations — the greater size, strength and stamina — are deliberate, the result of an attempt to wind back evolution. The source of the mental abilities and the intelligence, however, is a matter of some dispute. Telepathy-inducing retroviruses were common enough during the Final Wars, and mind-enhancing treatments were omnipresent before then (this is one of the main reasons there are so many species in the Gamma Age with human or near-human intellects). However, it is also possible that the brutorz is an entirely purposeful creation. Enough people liked the idea of intelligent, telepathic horses that it's certainly possible that someone with a horse ranch and a home splicing kit decided to try to make one — and succeeded.

CAMPAIGNING

Brutorz are herbivorous, and while their massive frames require a good deal of food, they do not have the centisteed's lethally fast metabolism. Nonetheless, they prefer to roam in places where food is plentiful and predators are few. Such places are rare, so many brutorz find that their best choice in life is to partner with other sentients, trading their strength and speed for their partners' hands and weapons. While this is more of a business deal or a partnership than a master/beast relationship, many brutorz find it degrading or insulting. A large minority, though, revel in it, as such a partnership allows them to see the world, to survive many dangers which would kill an unassisted member of their species, and to have a life beyond "Eat grain, keep a watch for jagets, eat some more."

Brutorz are often found as members of the Ranks of the Fit. The pro-animal slant of this cryptic alliance means that the brutorz, not the rider, is always acknowledged as the dominant partner (unless the rider is himself a mutant beast). They are also, ironically, often seen with members of the Knights of Genetic Purity, who prefer the "slightly tainted" brutorz to such "abominations" as the centisteed and hopper, and will often offer extremely good terms to the powerful creatures.

SPECIES TRAITS

Telepathic Communication (Ex, Psi): Brutorz do not speak — they whinny and neigh, but their throats cannot form the sounds of any human language. They can, however, speak telepathically, with a range of 100 ft. + 50 ft. per point of Wisdom bonus. This speech is very similar to normal speech, and occurs at the same speed. A brutorz may choose to "broadcast," making his telepathic words audible to anyone in range (including enemies), or he may narrowcast, sending his message to a single mind.

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There is no middle ground; he cannot send it to a group of selected minds, though he can, of course, send the same message to multiple individual minds in turn. Sending a message should be considered speech for all game purposes, including the time required and the possibility of distraction. Creatures without organic minds, such as most constructs, cannot receive telepathic speech.

Precognition (Ex, Psi): A rare, potent and useful ability. The brutorz can glimpse the future and take action to avoid it. In combat, once they are aware of their foe, they can forsee her next move and attempt to counter it; this grants them a +3 divination bonus to Defense. This has already been calculated below. Out of combat, once per day, the brutorz may attempt to foresee the consequences of a specific action about to be undertaken. If he succeeds at a Wisdom check against DC 15, the brutorz sees a brief vision of the consequences of his chosen action, as long as he attempts it within 5 minutes of using this power.

Example: *A brutorz and a rider approach a bridge. The brutorz considers galloping across the bridge, but uses this power. He succeeds at a Wisdom check, and sees the bridge collapsing under his weight. He conveys this to his rider, and they seek another route. If the brutorz had been thinking of crossing the bridge tomorrow, the power would not have worked; it can only foresee the consequences of actions which are about to occur.*

Brutorz: CR 4; Large mutant beast; HD 4d10+16; hp 38; Mas 19; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 improved initiative); Spd 50 ft.; Defense 16, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (–1 size, +3 natural, +3 precog, +1 Dex); BAB +4; Grap +14; Atk +9 (hoof or slam 1d4+9); Full Atk +9/+4/+4 (slam 1d4+9 and 2 hooves 1d4+4); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ precognition, telepathy; AL one or rider; SV Fort +8, Ref+5, Will +3; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 23, Dex 13, Con 19, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills: Listen +10, Sense Motive +5, Spot +6, Jump +15, Balance +2.

Feats: Improved Initiative.

Advancement: By character class.

CENTISTEED

The creation of the centisteed is lost in time; whether it was a deliberate attempt to breed a super-fast racehorse or the product of a limb-regrowth retrovirus gone horribly wrong is unknown. The blending of insect DNA into the mix almost certainly came after the Cataclysm, but the breed has since stabilized as much as any other species has, and can be found primarily in wild herds in the dense grain forests of the former American Midwest.

A centisteed resembles a horse with far too many limbs — at least twelve legs total, though a rare few have as many as eighteen. Their eyes are not the eyes of mammals, but are large, faceted hemispheres akin to the eyes of flies magnified a thousand-fold; and delicate, moth-like antennae sprout from the sides of their heads, where ears would be on a horse. The centisteed is herbivorous, with peculiar metabolic requirements: It spits liquefying enzymes onto stands of fresh grains and grasses, and uses its long tube-like tongue to slurp up the resulting goo. This activity occupies almost all of its time.

CAMPAIGNING

A small number of local communities have taken to trying to breed docile centisteeds, but the task is difficult due to the beast's appetites. Usually, a community will have only one or two such animals, and will use them as mounts for elite messengers rather than as military or simple riding beasts. Centisteed networks can keep distant communities in fairly rapid communication, and the Centiriders have become folk heroes in the areas where they are commonplace.

The death of a tamed centisteed can be a tragedy to communities who rely on them for communication; PCs may be sent to capture a young beast, alive and unharmed, in order to bring it back

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to the community. Only very young (less than four-month-old) centisteeds are docile enough to train to bear a rider. Alternatively, a PC may want such a mount for herself; this involves considerable effort, as the creature must be captured, trained and then, most importantly, kept fed.

SPECIES TRAITS

Increased Metabolism (Ex, Mu, Def): The centisteed needs to eat constantly. It is forever hungry, and consumes about four times the food that a horse of its size would need to survive. Anything which impacts the food supply — a drought, a plague, sentient beings over-harvesting or clearing the grain forests — will result in centisteed herds either migrating in desperate search for more food, or simply dying of starvation. Centisteeds suffer a –4 racial penalty on all Constitution checks against the harmful effects of starvation.

Force Field Generation (Ex, Psi): When threatened, the centisteed can surround itself with a powerful energy field which can deflect most physical attacks, and disperse or weaken energy attacks. The force field can be kept up for a maximum of 10 minutes per day, and provides DR 10/— and energy resistance 10 to all forms of energy attack (fire, cold, sonic, etc) while it is active.

Endurance: Centisteeds are good distance runners; they gain the benefits of the Endurance feat.

Centisteed: CR 3; Large mutant beast; HD 3d10+15; hp 31; Mas 21; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 90 ft.; Defense 15, touch 11, flat-footed 13 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +4 natural); BAB +3; Grap +10; Atk +5 (hoof 1d4+4); Full Atk +5 (4 hooves 1d4+4); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft., Reach 5 ft.; SQ Force Field, Increased Metabolism, Endurance; AL None or Rider; Saves Fort +8, Ref+5,Will+3; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 21, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 10.

Skills: Listen+10, Spot+5.

Advancement: 4–5 HD (Large).

CLEANSING SLIME

One of the earliest non-medical commercial uses of genetically engineered organisms was in the removal of oil spills. Engineered bacteria were dumped into ocean-borne oil slicks, where they ate the oil and then died. The next century saw continual refinements of this process, as it was often easier to design something to eat accidental residue than it was to take the steps needed to reduce the risk of spillage or contamination. The process eventually became automated; given a sample of anything to be cleaned, a factory could produce an organism which would not only devour it, but which would excrete the remains as something inert and harmless. Landfills vanished, as did toxic waste dumps and radioactive repositories.

As with so much else during the Shadow Years, something went wrong. Storehouses holding cleansing agents were attacked in the war, as was anything that stood still long enough to be acquired by a targeting system. Dumped into the mutagen stew which was the world during the Final Wars, many of these cleansing agents found themselves rewritten. Most died from the lack of the exotic substances they were designed to eat. Others did not.

Cleansing slimes roam the world in search of food. Most can survive for long periods of time without their preferred diet, often by a form of photosynthesis. When they do detect their desired meal, they attack mindlessly.

Cleansing slimes come in countless varieties. Some eat iron, others rubber, others blood. All share the same basic form — a large, flat, puddle of glistening liquid, shimmering with an odd inner light. In combat, they form dense pseudopods which they strike with; they are capable of extending these pseudopods a considerable distance, hence their unusually high reach.

SPECIES TRAITS

Dissolution (Ex, Mut): Whenever cleansing slimes contact their preferred food, they emit precisely designed chemicals and nanosymbiotes to begin breaking it down. Against non-living items, these chemicals do 2d6 points of damage per round, ignoring hardness. Against living beings, the damage is only 1d6 per round, but any damage reduction is likewise ignored.

Sense Target (Ex, Mut): Cleansing slimes are designed to seek out and devour a particular substance. They can sense the presence of this substance in anything above trace amounts at a distance of up to 1/2 a mile. They will always move towards the largest concentration of the substance they can sense, but they have enough instinct to know when a target is moving too fast to catch. They also will not be stymied too long by barriers or gaps; if they cannot find an approachable path to their target, they will seek out the next target which presents itself. A Craft (pharmaceutical) check (DC 25) can be made to distill a serum containing advanced chemo-receptors from the corpse of a cleansing slime; if this serum is consumed, the drinker will gain the same sense for a period of 1 hour. The serum must be extracted when the slime has been dead for an hour or less, but it will keep indefinitely once produced.

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Immunities (Ex): As oozes, cleansing slime are immune to mind-affecting effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, gaze attacks, visual effects and illusions. They are not subject to critical hits, flanking or massive damage.

Cleansing Slime: CR 5; Large ooze; HD 4d10+27; hp 49; Mas —; Init –1 (–1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Defense 8, touch 8, flat-footed 8 (–1 Dex, –1 size); BAB +3; Grap +12; Atk +7 melee (slam 1d8+7); Full Atk +7 melee (slam 1d8+7); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft., Reach 15 ft.; SQ dissolution, sense target; AL none; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will+1; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 20, Dex 9, Con 17, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 6.

Skills: None.

Feats: None.

Advancement: 5–7 HD (Large), 8–10 (Huge).

FASHEN

Fashens live along both the western and eastern coasts, in waters ranging from near-tropical to near-arctic. Moreso than many other humanoid animals, they bear the signs of their piscine ancestry, possibly because there's only so much even the most advanced mutagenic technology can do when trying to leapfrog three-quarters of a billion years of evolution. Nonetheless, the fashen are a successful species, and have more-or-less totally claimed their niche from all but the most tenacious competitors. They have done this, in part, because they are perhaps the only species which can survive reasonably well on the land, in the sea and in the air.

In their base form, fashen resemble humanoid fish. Their legs are thick and stubby, ending in broad flippers, and they have a strong, thick tail that they use as their primary natural weapon. Their hands are webbed, and their fingers clumsy and short, giving them a –2 racial modifier on any work which requires fine finger control.

Fashen communities are technologically primitive, although their aquatic nature allows them to raid caches of lost technology which are almost entirely out of the reach of other species. On their own, they manufacture armor from treated fish-hides, and weapons out of coral and shell. Their villages are usually based around sunken Ancient communities, if available, or in partially air-filled, partially water-filled huts and domes, much akin to beaver dwellings, if not.

SPECIES TRAITS

Amphibious (Ex, Mut): Fashen can exist out of water for prolonged periods, up to 24 hours. After that, they begin to lose 1 point of Constitution per hour, and will die when their Constitution reaches 0. It takes at least 1 hour of immersion in water to regain each point of lost Constitution, and 4 hours in water to reset the timer. Fashen can survive in either fresh or salt water. They also receive a +8 racial bonus on Swim checks; this has already been added in below.

Shapechange (Ex, Mut): The fashen can completely transform its body, becoming a birdlike creature of the same general mass. The bird form uses all the stats of the fashen, except that it gains a fly of 60 ft. (clumsy) in the air, and loses the tail-slap slam attack. The bird form of the fashen has no natural weapons to speak of. It is this form that has allowed the fashen to settle in many otherwise isolated and unreachable areas.

Fashen: CR 1; Medium mutant; HD 1d8+1; hp 6; Mas 12; Init +1 (Dex +1); Spd 30 ft., swim 45 ft., fly 60 ft. (clumsy); Defense 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12 (+2 fishskin armor, +1 Dex); BAB +1; Grap +1; Atk +1 melee (slam 1d6); Full Atk +1 melee (slam 1d6); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ shapechange, amphibious; AL tribe; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +2; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 11, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills: Survival+6, Move Silently +6, Swim+12, Listen +4, Spot+2.

Feats: Endurance.

Advancement: 2–4 HD (Medium).

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HOOP

Bunnies aren't just cute like everybody supposes; They got them hoppy legs and twitchy little noses.

— fragment of Gamma Age teaching song

Hoops are funny — the first time they are encountered. No one is laughing the second time, if they survive the first.

A hoop is a man-sized, and roughly man-shaped, rabbit. They have long, floppy ears, soft white fur and twitchy whiskers. Their hands have four fingers and a fully opposable thumb, and their legs are adapted to bipedal locomotion, although configured very differently from a man's legs.

Hoops are carnivorous. Their mouths are lined with rending teeth, and their fur is often matted with the dried blood of a recent kill — they disdain cooked food, though they can digest it, and hoop warbands on long marches will usually carry dried meats as rations for when the hunt goes sour.

Hoops are a post-Final Wars phenomenon; no record of their existence as a deliberate uplift can be found. They appeared fairly early in the Gamma Age, however, and spread rapidly. While not individually exceptionally tough, they are clever, work together well, and breed rapidly. The phrase "breed like hoops" has entered the slang of many Gamma Age societies.

They are not especially hostile, but neither are they particularly peaceful. Some hoops live in permanent settlements where meat beasts are raised for the slaughter, but most are nomadic. The nomad bands tend to simply hunt, but they are not above a raid if it seems victory is likely. Hoops do not seek out intelligent beings to eat, but they will not refrain from it. Far too much life in the Gamma Age thinks for any meat-eater to be too squeamish about what he consumes.

CAMPAIGNING

Hoops are scattered widely across the Gamma World. They roam the grain forests and the silt swamp, and they have settled as far north as glow-sky and as far south as the walking jungle. The most advanced hoop cultures have mastered metalworking and herding; the least are barely more than savages. Hoops need room to grow, so even initially peaceful relations can become strained as a "small" hoop community expands, inexorably, year after year. Settled hoops need grazing lands for their herds, and this often comes at the expense of agricultural communities.

An odd quirk in hoop psychology has given them a strong, though not extreme, technophilia. Hoops collect many relics of the Shadow Years, and often know how to use them. This can make hoop communities a valuable resource for aid in deciphering an artifact. Hoops rarely show interest in restoring ancient buildings, however; they like artifacts and relics that are of personal use to the wielder, with their communities relying only on what can be built with present technology.

SPECIES TRAITS

Metal Conversion (Ex, Mut): This power is unique to the hoops, the result of a symbiotic metal-destroying nanobot which has dwelt within the hoop species since its evolution. Once per day, a hoop can unleash the nanites into any metal item it is touching. The swarm tears into the substance, weakening it into a soft, blackish ooze that can be twisted, bent or deformed easily. The substance resembles rubber, so the legend that hoops can "turn iron to rubber" is widespread. Any item composed primarily of metals, including constructs, will take 6d6 points of damage from a hoop's touch. Hardness does not protect from this damage. The total area a hoop can affect is about 1 cubic foot; this will destroy any handheld weapon and can tear a man-sized hole in a metal door an inch thick.

Leaping (Ex): Hoop legs are designed to propel their bodies forward in powerful hops. Hoops gain a +10 racial bonus on all Jump checks, and their maximum jump height is not limited by their size.

Hoop: CR 2; Medium mutant humanoid; HD 1d8+1; hp 5; Mas 12; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Defense 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 leather armor,+2 Dex); BAB +1; Grap +1; Atk +1 (bite 1d4 or longsword 1d8); Full Atk +1 (bite 1d4 or longsword 1d8); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ metal conversion, leaping; AL band; SV Fort +1, Ref+4, Will+5; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 16, Cha 14.

Skills: Jump+13, Spot +6, Listen +6, Survival +7, Search+5, Intimidate+6.

Feats: Run.

Advancement: By character class.

HOPPER

"As dumb as a hopper." "All the brains of a hopper." "A hopper would be smarter than you!" These phrases and others of a similar nature are common in communities where the giant jackrabbits known as hoppers are used as riding or food beasts. In a world where many animals gained human intelligence overnight, where man shares

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his world with rabbits and squid and fish and even trees that think, it is, perhaps, some comfort to know that there remains at least one animal that is "dumb as a box of rocks."

A hopper is a mutant jackrabbit roughly the size of a horse. It is very likely the result of pre-Gamma Age tinkering, as it seems like the sort of creature someone with too much power and too little sense would think was a "a really good idea." Some features seem to have come later, the result of mutagenic retrovirii gone wild: the sharp, curving horns, for example, and the color-changing fur that is probably the only reason wild hoppers survive at all.

Hoppers remain herbivorous; they roam grasslands and wooded hills, spending most of their days eating, mating and sleeping. When threatened, the female and young hoppers bound off, as do most of the males, leaving a small number of younger males behind to defend the pack — or to act, in effect, as sacrifices, distracting the predators while the rest escape. Hoppers that survive this task have a much better chance of attracting a mate.

Hoppers are, as noted above, mind-numbingly dumb for mammals. They will blunder into almost any trap, they will stampede off cliffs, and they can be trained to obey even the simplest commands only by dint of excessive beating. (All Handle Animal checks suffer a –4 circumstance penalty due to this.) Nonetheless, their utility as riding beasts and their tastiness as meat beasts make the effort worthwhile for some communities.

Hoppers do not walk — they hop. Only a crippled or very tired hopper will walk in a normal fashion. Almost all other times, they jump from place to place, their powerful hind legs propelling them in long, low jumps. Hoppers have a +10 racial bonus on Jump checks, and ignore all size limitations on jumps. They may make long jumps from a standing start with no penalty. This allows hoppers to traverse gorges or leap over walls which would stymie many other riding beasts.

Riding a hopper is difficult. So difficult, in fact, that all Ride checks are made with a –4 penalty, and the only action a rider can take while riding is to hold on — she cannot attack while the hopper is moving, for example. The feat noted below allows a character to overcome these penalties.

NEW FEAT: RIDE HOPPER

You have mastered the difficult art of staying on a hopper.

Prerequisites: 4 or more ranks in Ride and Balance.

Benefit: You suffer no penalty on Ride checks while on a hopper, and may use any other riding feats, or otherwise act normally, while mounted.

Normal: Anyone attempting to ride a hopper suffers a –4 on all Ride checks and may use no other riding-related feats, or take any actions other than controlling the hopper.

CAMPAIGNING

Despite their low intelligence, hoppers have a wide range of uses. Many communities herd them for food, using tethers, rather than fences, to keep them in place. (Building a fence tall enough to keep hoppers penned is difficult.) Others keep them as riding beasts, especially bandits, who find their ability to leap moats or walls allows them to quickly enter a town.

Hopper fur will retain its current pattern upon death. Hoppers are sometimes posed in front of complex patterns or works or art (either newly-made or relics of the Ancients), and killed when their fur picks up a semblance of the pattern. Art is sometimes created with the sole intent of imprinting it on hopper fur.

Hoops, despite their carnivorous habits, will not eat hoppers. They view it as slightly disgusting, akin to a human eating a gorilla. Hoops also never ride hoppers; indeed, they seem to find the existence of the hopper species to be something of an embarrassment.

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SPECIES TRAITS

Chameleon (Ex, Mut): Hopper fur is impregnated with countless tiny photosensitive particles, which continually change in response to ambient conditions. Hoppers blend into their environment quickly, and anyone trying to spot a hopper which has not moved more than half-speed in the past minute suffers a –10 circumstance penalty on the check.

Hopper: CR 3; Large mutant beast; HD 3d10+9; hp 26 HP; Mas 17; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 8, touch 8, flat-footed 8 (–1 size, –1 Dex); BAB +3; Grap +11; Atk +6 melee (gore 1d8+6); Full Atk +6 melee (gore 1d8+6); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ chameleon; AL self or rider; SV Fort +6, Ref+2,Will +0; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 19, Dex 9, Con 17, Int 1, Wis 8, Cha 6.

Skills: Jump+20, Listen+4.

Feats: None.

Advancement: 4–6 HD (Large)

JETDER

Jetder are spiders, in general form very similar to common garden spiders of the past, but significantly magnified in size. As their name implies, they are jet-black in coloration, with the only deviation being their eyes, which are brightly colored and vary greatly from individual to individual.

Extensive genetic modification, combined with symbiotic nanotech, allows the creatures to stand as tall as a typical human at the shoulder. Unlike most spiders, though, they are pack hunters, and a single web is shared by 3–6 of the creatures. Each pack is all of a single gender. Once a year, a mating urge strikes, and all the jetders in an area will meet in an arachnid orgy. The result of this frenzy is usually a short-term drop in the jetder population, followed by a spawn of baby jetders a few weeks later.

Jetders spin vast webs in which to catch their prey, but if the trap isn't working, they will venture forth to hunt on their own. Typically, a single member of the pack (scholars use the term "a crawl of jetder") will go out in search of prey, and attempt to drive a creature back towards the web and its comrades. Then, the crawl will feast.

As with common spiders, they are liquivores. They bind their prey in a cocoon, then drain the blood from the body, leaving a desiccated husk.

They lack poison, but make up for it with a powerful bite and the ability to generate powerful electrical surges. While not the deadliest predators of the Gamma World, they are fast-breeding, efficient and capable of surviving for a long time without food, so they are often the dominant carnivore species in their area.

CAMPAIGNING

Jetders are found mostly in the densely forested northern woods, where vast swaths of forest may be sheeted in their webs. The webs actually impact the ecosystem of the forest as a whole, as their ability to trap and hold many larger animals means that the smaller creatures can actually take "shelter" in heavily-webbed areas, protected from many of their natural predators. The drained husks which the jetders leave in their webs are also a source of food for smaller scavengers, and it is not uncommon for the remains of a trapped creature to be skeletonized by morgols and winged lampreys within hours after it has been abandoned.

The silk of the jetder's webs is useful for many purposes, including rope and clothing, and the brightly-colored eyes of the jetder, when preserved in a hardened resin, are highly prized as decorative items. The carapace can be preserved with sap and used to make light armor; jetder-head helms are especially popular.

SPECIES TRAITS

Electrical Generation (Ex, Mut, Psi): Jetders seem to have picked up some strands of DNA from an electric eel, though altered and enhanced considerably. Each jetder has countless generating cells throughout its skin, and they can discharge these cells at will, focusing the bolt via a form of

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psionic electrokinesis. The result is the ability to shoot lightning once every 1d4 rounds, in a line 40 ft. long. This bolt will do 4d6 damage, with a Reflex save (DC 13) for half. In addition, anyone failing the Reflex save must make an additional Fortitude save against DC 13, or be stunned for 1d6 rounds.

Webs (Ex): Jetders spin huge webs, in which they entrap prey. These webs can often be as large as 60 ft. across, and the silk used to create them is mixed with photosensitive chemicals so the web changes color to match its surroundings, making it difficult to see. (Spot check DC 15 to notice a web before stumbling into it, unless it is being searched explicitly for.) Anyone stuck in the web must make a Strength check against DC 15 to break free, or be entangled.

Cocoon (Ex, Mut): A jetder can imprison a living target in a cocoon of webbing. Generally, this is only done if the target is stunned or entangled, as the jetder is considered flat-footed when spinning the cocoon, and cannot take any other action. The cocoon takes 1 round to spin for a Tiny creature, 2 for a Small, 4 for a Medium-size, and 8 for a large. Once cocooned, the victim is de facto paralyzed, unless they can make a Strength or Escape Artist check (DC 30). A jetder will ignore a cocooned victim if there are any other targets about, otherwise, it will begin to feed, doing 1 point of Constitution damage per round until the victim is dead.

Jetder: CR 5; Large vermin; HD 4d8+8; hp 26; Mas 15; Init –1 (–1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Defense 16, touch 8, flat-footed 16 (–1 size, –1 Dex, +8 natural); BAB +3; Grap +11; Atk +6 melee (bite 1d8+6); Full Atk +7 melee (bite 1d8+6); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SQ electrical discharge, webs, cocoon; AL none; SV Fort +5, Ref+0, Will +4; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 19, Dex 9, Con 15, Int —, Wis 16, Cha 11.

Skills: Spot +8, Move Silently +5, Balance+5.

Feats: None.

Advancement: 5–8 HD (Huge).

MOLLIN

The result of a "purely theoretical" genetic restructuring released into the wild, based on a mix of human and mole rat genetic material and joined with several self-modifying cellular DNA factories, the mollin are intelligent mammals which live in a caste system akin to that of bees or termites.

One in a thousand mollin are female; they dwell in the deepest parts of the nests, which are most often located deep below large, ruined cities. A rare few mollin colonies are found in the deep wilderness. The majority of mollin, eight in ten, are workers. Workers are tiny creatures, barely a foot tall, that resemble hairless, blind, emaciated humans. They have long, thin, agile fingers tipped with extraordinarily hard claws, and they communicate with each other by touch; their skin exudes complex chemicals which can convey a wide range of ideas, and the specific chemical message of one mollin worker can be exactly copied and replicated by another, spreading both the message and the identity of the originator throughout the colony. This is important: Clever workers are rewarded, given blends of hormones which trigger genetic modifications that raise their caste to supervisor or warrior. Even more importantly, they may be asked to mate.

Mollin queens are immense, bloated things, dwelling deep in the hives. They are continuously pregnant, and do nothing but eat, mate and give birth. They continually receive chemical messages from the rest of the hive, and act as a sort of switchboard, sending the most important information back out.

The gestation time for a mollin is only a month, and a queen is pregnant with ten or more mollin at a time, often in different stages of development. Once born, the mollin's caste is determined by the DNA it absorbs from suckling on the queen's "handmaidens" — females who have not yet become active queens. They monitor the needs of the hive and produce appropriate caste members.

Mollin DNA is in a state of perpetual flux. It is highly adaptable, and can bring in bits and pieces of other species as needed. Many mollin are genetically unique, or represent a small sub-caste with specialized abilities. The classic line about "man adapting his environment, not himself" is upended as far as the mollin are concerned; they adapt themselves with frightening speed.

When a mollin queen feels ready, she will select a small number of workers and seek out a location for a new hive. They will dig her a burrow and mate with her, then expand the hive while waiting for the first generation to be born. With only about a year to full maturation, a mollin hive can expand rapidly, reaching a population of several hundred within a year.

One of the most dangerous mistakes anyone dealing with mollin can make is to carry the insect analogy too far. Mollin workers and warriors are not exceptionally intelligent; indeed, they are sub-average — but they are not mindless. A mollin worker will not follow a scent trail in a circle until

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it starves to death, and mollin warriors have tactics far beyond "human wave." Each mollin is completely dedicated the hive and to the queen, but it is also a descendant, however distant, of man, and it retains some semblance of human ingenuity and free will. It can think, plan and imagine, and if all of those abilities are bent solely to the service of the hive, that doesn't mean they do not exist.

SPECIES TRAITS

Workers

The majority of mollins are workers. Workers are Tiny creatures, barely a foot tall.

Swarming (Ex): Mollin workers are poor combatants; all they have is numbers. To reflect this, mollin workers may swarm an opponent. Each mollin worker threatening an opponent is assumed to be using the Aid Another maneuver as a free action; thus, a group of mollin workers is more than the sum of its parts.

Warriors

Mollin warriors tower over the others; they are larger than all except the queens. They defend the hive from intruders, but also conduct raids on other hives and on non-mollin communities. They often wear armor assembled from scraps and pieces of scavenged materials, and will use weapons if they find them. They have no interest in repairing or maintaining the relics of technology, so they use such devices until they wear out and then cast them aside. Warrior mollin are vaguely human-like in appearance, like most other mollin. They are hairless and pale, though they do have functioning eyes, necessary due to their regular visits outside the hive.

Poison (Ex): Mollin warriors secrete a toxic venom from sacs underneath their foreclaws. The venom of each hive is slightly different; all members of the hive are immune to venom from that hive. This allows the warriors to be fairly casual about excreting their poison onto their weapons, which they will do prior to combat. If they are not using weapons, they will, of course, simply secrete the poison after a claw hit. The venom sacs contain four doses of poison, and each dose takes a day to replace. The poison requires a Fortitude save against DC 15, and does 1d6 initial Dexterity damage and 1d3 Dexterity damage + 1d3 Constitution secondary damage.

Mollin Worker: CR 1/2; Tiny mutant humanoid; HD 1/4 d8; hp 2; Mas 10; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 20 ft., burrow 10 ft.; Defense 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12 (+2 size, +2 Dex); BAB +0; Grap –8; Atk +0 melee (claws 1d2–2); Full Atk +0 melee (claws 1d2–2); FS 2 1/2 ft. by 2 1/2 ft., Reach 0; SQ darkvision 60 ft., swarming; AL Queen; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will+1; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 7, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills: Profession +5.

Feats: Endurance.

Advancement: By character class.

Mollin Warrior: CR 4; Large mutant humanoid; HD 4D8+12; hp 30; Mas 16; Init +0 (+0 Dex); Spd 30 ft., burrow 10 ft.; Defense 11, touch 9, flat-footed 11 (–1 size, +2 natural); BAB +4; Grap +11; Atk +6 melee (claw 1d6+4 plus poison); Full Atk +6 Melee (2 claws 1d6+4 plus poison); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SQ darkvision 60 ft., poison; AL Queen; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will+6; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 16, Dex 11, Con 16, Int 9, Wis 14, Cha 8.

Skills: Listen +6, Spot +6, Balance +6, Intimidate +6, Climb +4.

Feats: Endurance.

Advancement: By character class.

RAKOX

The rakoxen are only slightly changed from their ancestral species, a breed of cattle designed to be able to resist the ravages of the neowolves that had been released into the wild by factions who wished to restore the pre-human food web. The rakox is gifted with a hard shell covering its head, shoulders and back, and powerful, unnaturally sharp and strong antlers. While these adaptations proved effective against predators, they also made the beasts hard to control, and the line would probably have been wiped out with a genocide virus had the Final Wars not intervened.

Rakoxen are found in many of the surviving grasslands, though the continual expansion of the rainforests is beginning to eat into their habitat. They travel in large herds and slowly eat their way across vast fields, relying on their natural defenses and great strength to keep all but the most powerful predators at bay — or at least convince them to seek easier prey. They are stupid but willful, and will often refuse to flee an obvious threat out of what seems to be sheer stubbornness (or, perhaps, it's a legacy of anti-stampeding behavior written into their brains back when they could count on humans to come to their defense).

CAMPAIGNING

The great strength of the rakoxen makes them desirable draft animals throughout the Gamma World, and any community that is located near a herd will attempt to capture some of the younger

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animals in the hopes of domesticating them. Rakoxen are not fast beasts, but their natural defenses and powerful horns can make them useful in military situations, as well — sometimes brute force and toughness can be a more powerful weapon than speed and skill. Few raiders or bandits will ride rakoxen, but many merchant caravans use them, often supplemented with an outrider on a centisteed.

The hide and shell of the rakoxen are valued as raw materials for armor, and the horns can be made into effective daggers, as well as having significant decorative value. Ground rakoxen horn is often touted as a cure for sexual dysfunction.

Rakox: CR 4; Large mutant beast; HD 5d10+15; hp 43; Mas 17; Init +1 (Dex +1); Spd 30 ft.; Defense 20, touch 9, flat-footed 9 (–1 size, +1 Dex, +10 natural); BAB +5; Grap +17; Atk +12 melee (gore 1d8+8); Full Atk +12 melee (gore 1d8+8) and +7 melee (1d4+4, 2 slams); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ None; AL None; Saves Fort +9, Ref +5, Will+1; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 26, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills: Spot +6, Listen+8.

Feats: Great Fortitude.

Advancement: 6–10 HD (Large).

ROBOT

In the century before the Final Wars, the dreams of earlier roboticists were all fulfilled most abundantly. The primitive factory robots of the 20th century, capable of doing only one task, gave way to the ideal of a true multi-purpose, reprogrammable machine that could do almost any job. In turn, that gave way to legions of specialized robots equipped with a wide range of tools, their bodies suited to match broad applications, their minds capable of judgment and insight.

For purposes of **Gamma World**, a robot is defined as an artificial being which is capable of locomotion. Intelligence also dwells in immobile forms, from the few surviving cityminds to soultech tools.

Not all robots are self-aware. Any robot that deals regularly with humans, though, has at least a simulated personality. Non-self-aware robots were confined to jobs where the work was assumed to be sufficiently predictable that no capacity for judgment or self-adjustment was required. In the final decades before the Final Wars, the casual ease with which a mind could be implanted into a machine made people inclined to add intelligence to elevators and toasters, "just in case." No one wondered what the toaster and the refrigerator talked about, in epic debates carried on as nanosecond timing errors in monitored communications. No one noticed bank accounts being started by elevators who played the stock market with literally inhuman skill, trading on the knowledge they heard discussed within them. If anyone had noticed these things and had bothered to trace where the money was going, what and who was being funded, they might have been able to do something. But no one cared, and no one noticed, and humanity filled the world with minds human beings could not control or comprehend. As the Final Wars approached, ten billion inhuman minds interacted in a secret world, a society of lightspeed conversation and terahertz thought.

When it all fell apart, those minds died by the billions. The few who survived found themselves as abandoned, alone and confused as the humans who had built them. Their private world, founded on the ubiquitous data streams that filled the air, was stripped away. There was silence everywhere, a deafening silence. Many went mad because of it.

Those who didn't — and, frankly, many of those who did — faced the same challenges as their creators. To somehow survive in the lunatic world which now surrounded them; to find a purpose in life; and to see if, perhaps, they couldn't make a better world.

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An "aware construct" is designed as a construct, as per *d20 Modern*, except that it has an Intelligence score, 2 x Intelligence modifier skill points, and 1 initial feat plus an additional feat for each four full HD beyond the first. Robots designed for security or military work use Column A for their base attack bonus, not Column C, as do most constructs.

ROBOTS IN PLAY

A robot hidden behind a door, or speaking over a radio, cannot be easily distinguished from a living being. Most robot voices sound perfectly human, unless there has been serious damage. Further, nearly all speak in a naturalistic manner. A robot that is injured is more likely to say "Damn! My **arm**!" than "Left servounit has impaired functionality." Robots are not human, but they are *persons*, and should be treated as such. They can be kind or sadistic, friendly or sullen, generous or greedy — and, like any other being, many have all of these traits to some degree, depending on their mood or whom they're dealing with.

Furthermore, unlike nearly all organic beings, *they remember the world that was*. They can compare the current world to the one in which they were born. Whether they think the current state of affairs is better, worse or the same thing differently arranged is up to the individual.

COMMON HOUSEHOLD ROBOT

This listing represents a wide range of brands, models and makes of robots. Virtually all but the poorest citizens, or those who dwelled in luddite enclaves, owned at least one household robot. Even after the devastation of the Final Wars and the passing of three generations they are relatively common, and it is usually the case that they are the only type of robot most people who dwell in relatively stable communities will have encountered. This can lead to comic, or tragic, errors when dealing with other surviving robots.

CAMPAIGNING

Their bodies are very humanoid, so they can easily use any tools or vehicles a human can, though most are equipped with specialized add-ons such as food heaters, cleaning attachments and hologram imagers. Because they were designed to interact with average citizens on a daily basis, and to deal regularly with the confusing and contradictory requests of human beings — often an entire families' worth — household robots were built with a maximum of flexibility and adaptability. Underlying this, at a level of programming roughly akin to that of the human autonomic nervous system, was a layer of loyalty to one's rightful owner and a desire to have such an owner at all times. While a rare few household robots have overcome these programmed impulses — just as some humans have learned to control their heart rate by thought alone — they still guide the majority of survivors.

Because a household robot was designed to be as easy to use, and as self-modifying, as possible, there is only one analysis layer (See Chapter Six,) associated with them. Deciphering this layer means the robot has imprinted on the analyzer and accepted the character as its new owner. Trying to convince a robot which has an owner to abandon that owner, without a direct order to do so from said owner, is very difficult (Bluff check DC 30).

The Profession and/or Craft skills a household robot knows define its purpose. Common skills include cooking, cleaning, driving, light gardening and child care. The baseline personality for a household robot is friendly and obedient, though many will have acquired "quirks" of one sort of another. It is important to remember that a household robot will have desires or interests of its own, and may well have hobbies or passions wholly unrelated to its job. It is also important to remember that, with the exception of a truly insane minority, the surviving robots are aware of what has happened and of the state of the world, and will not stupidly wander around trying to dust a dirt floor or sit in the rusted hulk of a luxury car and wait for it to start. Many seek out the rulers of the surviving communities and offer their services. They are aware that they can be considered "status symbols," and are quite capable of selling themselves as such. They desire, first and foremost, a place and a purpose; and secondarily, the things they need to survive — spare parts, lubricant, repair nanites and so on. A small number, though, have concluded that humans aren't worth the bother, and have adapted their core programming to allow them to serve other forms of AI. In many cases, those who have joined cryptic alliances such as the Created will pretend to be loyal servants of organic life, while gathering information and waiting for the right moment to strike.

Except for individuals that have seriously deviated from their programming, household robots will almost never engage in combat, except in defense of their owner. Since they are not designed for combat, such actions are likely to lead to their deactivation in short order.

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Common Household Robot: CR 1; Medium aware construct; HD 1d10+10; hp 15; Mas —; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 13, touch 10, flat-footed 13 (+3 natural); BAB +0; Grap +0; Atk +1 melee (slam 1d6); Full Atk +1 melee (slam 1d6); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ none; AL self or owner; SV Fort —, Ref +0, Will+1; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 12, Dex 11, Con —, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills: Profession (Any appropriate) +9 or Craft (any appropriate) +7, Spot +4, Listen +4, Knowledge (Any appropriate) +4.

Feats: Skill Focus (Profession).

Advancement: By character class.

MOBILE MEDICAL ROBOT

Hospitals became the first place, after factories, to widely adopt robots. Beginning with automated trays delivering food or medication to patients and computer-assisted waldos used to assist in delicate operations, the medical world rapidly embraced robotic technology. Robots would not give a patient the wrong drug because they were too tired to read a label properly, or chafe at working extensive hours, or panic when an emergency room patient pulled a gun. By the time of the Shadow Years, most hospitals were entirely automated; a buildingmind ran everything, capable of subdividing its consciousness into thousands of semi-independent subunits, "becoming" doctors, nurses, orderlies and anything else which might be needed, wearing different robotic bodies as casually as a human might wear different suits of clothes.

All such hospitals perished in the Final Wars. At least, no known examples remain functional.

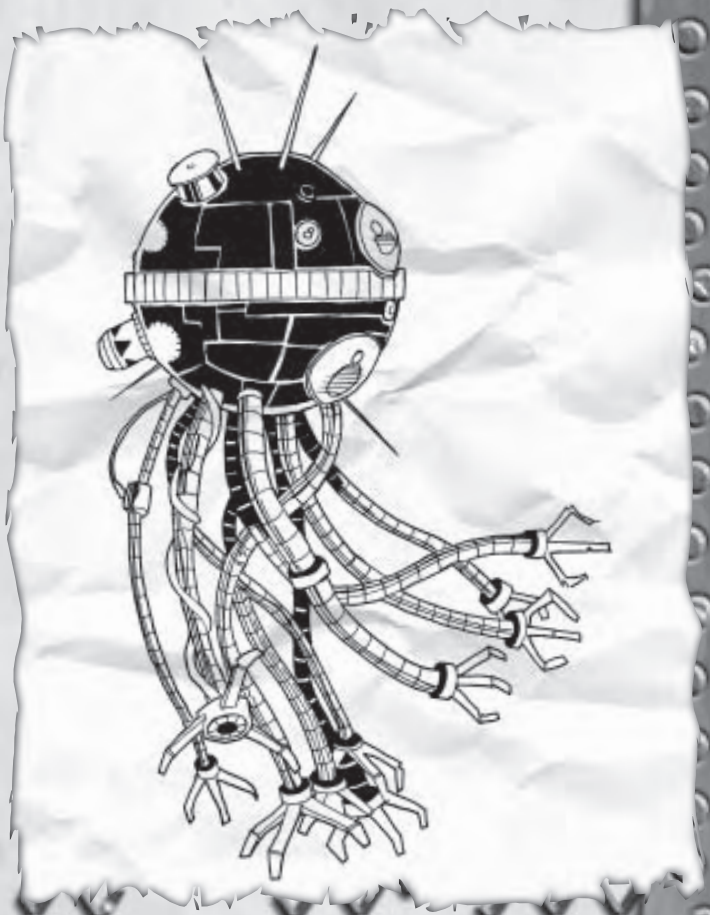
What did survive the Final Wars, in some numbers, were the emergency 'bots, self-aware soultech not connected to a hospital-mind. Designed to work when communication lines were down or jammed, they were fully independent. Many were owned by rich individuals or large corporations that needed a full-time medical staff, and police and security departments always had some on staff. Most of these 'bots died as well, but there were some in isolated regions that survived. Further, many were on-duty in cities already in flames, so when their own home regions were destroyed, they were not there.

A large number of the survivors died in the weeks and months afterwards. A working medical robot was too great a treasure to allow any enemy to have; and in those hellish first few years, anyone not a friend was an enemy. Many 'bots went mad, overwhelmed by the suffering around them and their own helplessness. A few became cynical and bitter, and found ways to burn out their core programming and abandon their roles.

Some survived. Luck, skill and allying with the right band of refugees allowed a few to keep their lives and their sanity. They realized they couldn't heal everyone, but they could pass along knowledge. The Healers cryptic alliance was partially begun by some of these survivors, and the Healers today still seek out other medical robots and try to recruit them. Other survivors found communities that clung to some of the old values and offered their services. A few, those owned by military or security companies, found the companionship of bandits and raiders was closer to their tastes, and offered healing services to those whom no stable community would ever accept.

CAMPAIGNING

Mobile medical robots resemble 2-foot diameter spheres sprouting a dozen or more spindly, multi-segmented legs. The "legs" can be used as supports or as arms; each terminates in a starfish-like array of fingers, each of which can expand in a similar fashion itself, and so on for two more levels, giving the bots incredibly fine manipulators. The robots' bodies are filled with medical tools and small synthesizing factories, capable of manufacturing small amounts of most drugs. Occasionally, exotic chemicals or organic compounds



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are needed to refill the synthesizers; these are among the things the robots will request in return for their services.

Again, it must be noted that with the exception of the insane, the surviving robots understand the nature of the world. They will not casually amputate a leg and then direct the patient to a non-existent hospital for "regrowth therapy." They can tell the difference between a sentient, mutant cat-man and a housecat. Many are bitter and cynical, performing their job of healing only because the alternative is madness or suicide. A few remain hopeful. All have a very good sense of the value of their skills, and will act accordingly.

Healing (Ex): Medical robots are equipped with extremely advanced medical synthesis systems, and are equipped with all manner of equipment and tools, capable of performing any operation from fixing a cavity to amputating a limb. They can analyze DNA and physiology in seconds, and adjust their programming to compensate for mutation. This allows them to take 10 on Treat Injury checks even when under pressure. Furthermore, they have the ability to use the Minor Medical Miracle ability of the Field Medic advanced class in *d20 Modern*, though they may not take 10 or 20 on this.

Mobile Medical Robot: CR 3; Medium aware construct; HD 3d10+10; hp 26; Mas —; Init +0; Spd 45 ft.; Defense 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15 (+5 natural); BAB +2; Grap +2; Atk +2 melee (slam 1d6); Full Atk +2 melee (slam 1d6); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ healing, DR 5/ —; AL none; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will+4; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 10, Dex 18, Con —, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 14.

Skills: Treat Injury+18, Profession (doctor) +12, Knowledge (Earth and life sciences) +11.

Feats: Surgery.

Advancement: By character class (usually Dedicated hero).

SECURITY ROBOT

There were nearly as many different designs of security robot as there were of household robot. However, since the places that someone might want to guard were the same places that someone else might wish to destroy, the vast majority of security robots were eliminated during the Final Wars. Survivors were those who were posted to out-of-the-way or top-secret locations, those who were lucky, and those who got word of impending doom and managed to overcome their core programming long enough to leave the area before the hell came down. Over the ensuing decades, their numbers have dwindled still further, as their basic desires and interests cause them to seek out, rather than avoid, dangerous situations.

CAMPAIGNING

The stat block below represents a fairly common model, the sort a private firm could easily afford, without any military-spec hardware or exotic and dangerous, abilities. In form, it is a typical humanoid robot, although it lacks legs. Instead, the waist flares outwards, encompassing a powerful hoverjet. This suspends the robot about 3 ft. off the ground. Negative-wave sound dampeners reduce the noise of the jet to almost inaudible levels, so the robot moves relatively silently.

The programming of such robots is often very broad. Intelligence and judgment were needed, so that the robot would not use lethal force on a harmless intruder, but would also be able to resist attempts by invaders to trick or con their way past it. Generally, security robots thought of themselves as employees of whatever facility they were guarding, and would often develop relationships with other employees there, both human and soultech. As a consequence, most security robots have personalities which are gregarious and friendly. Very few fit the stereotype of the lumbering, homicidal being whose conversation is limited entirely to "Identify-yourself-or-be-eliminated." (A few adopt such a persona as an act, because it is expected by potential employers, or because acting stupid can put people off their guard.) As with all soultech, though, individuals vary, and two security robots of the exact same make and model can have very different personalities depending on their experiences, especially their postwar experiences. Some, often the sole survivors of an attack on their workplaces, have become vengeful, seeking remnants of whatever force attacked them. Others see themselves as providers of order in a chaotic world, and not a few communities rely on such robots in a manner akin to western settlers relying on a heroic sheriff. Still others have become mercenaries, negotiating contracts for their services.

SPECIES TRAIT

Laser (Ex): This built-in weapon can fire once per round. It has a range of 300 ft., and inflicts 6d6 points of damage Reflex save (DC 16) for half. (It should be noted that the lightspeed beam isn't dodged, per se — the save represents the character moving in the delays between target acquisition and tracking, so that the beam skewers a shoulder instead of piercing the heart.) Using the laser does not provoke an attack of opportunity, though it is considered an attack action. Some security robots have taken the Double Tap feat, allowing them to

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fire twice per round; others have upgraded the weapon, making it deadlier, more accurate, or both.

Levitation (Ex): The security robot hovers, rather than walks. This means it can ignore many terrain features, and moves quickly over broken or uneven terrain. As a full action, once per minute, it can turbocharge its hover system, causing it to leap upwards by up to 20 ft.. This allows it to easily cross walls or fences. Each time this is done, there is one chance in 100 (non-cumulative) of a burnout, grounding the robot until it can be repaired.

Sensors (Ex): The security robot has a wide range of sensory devices, and can see in both the infrared and ultraviolet spectrums, hear across many frequencies, and so on. It automatically detects invisible opponents once they are within 30 ft.

Sonic Disruptor (Ex): Intended for crowd control, the sonic disruptor fires a cone of sound at a frequency designed to cripple the balance and consciousness centers of the human mind. The Fortitude save DC is 18 for pure-strain humans, 16 for humanoids, and 14 for all others. Anyone failing the Fortitude save will take 1d6 points of temporary Dexterity damage, and be stunned for 2d6 rounds and nauseated for another 1d4; anyone making the save is nauseated 1d4 rounds only. The weapon can be fired once per minute, and the area of effect is a 60-foot cone.

Security Robot: CR 6; Medium aware construct; HD 6d10+10; hp 43; Mas —; Init +4 (improved initiative +4); Spd 40 ft.; Defense 20, touch 10, flat-footed 20 (+10 natural); BAB +4; Grap +6; Atk +5 ranged (laser 6d6); Full Atk +5 ranged (laser 6d6) or +6 melee (2 slams 1d6+2); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ DR 10/ —, laser, levitation, sensors, sonic disruptor; AL self or owner; SV Fort+2, Ref +2, Will+6; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 15, Dex 11, Con —, Int 13, Wis 18, Cha 12

Skills: Listen +7, Spot +7, Search +6, Investigate +6, Intimidate +8, Sense Motive +4.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (laser).

Advancement: By character class.

DEATH MACHINE

"The last two syllables are unnecessary," said Prime Senator Avram Chang, of the New Western Protective Alliance, upon the unveiling of the first fully functional death machine.

A death machine is the pinnacle of late Shadow Years robotic technology, the most advanced and lethal mobile construct ever built. Each is unique; the term "death machine" is generic, akin to "battleship" — every nation, faction and sect designed their own, or at least began to. Very few saw completion; preventing your enemies from having such a weapon was considered more important than having one yourself, and resources were allocated appropriately. A few hundred were made prior to the Final Wars, and nearly all were primary targets during those wars, so very few survive in the present era. The exact number is unknown, but it is perhaps a dozen.

That's a dozen too many.

A death machine has a mind capable of running a small city, placed into a mobile body equipped with the most lethal weapons the human and inhuman minds of the Shadow Years could devise, and with the ability to modify itself almost without limit in response to unexpected circumstances. Its self-repair systems render it ageless; any attack which does not kill it will simply make it stronger, as the attack is analyzed and new defenses are incorporated. After generations exposed to the hazards of the Gamma Age, the surviving death machines have evolved far beyond their makers' imaginations.

And they are, all of them, mad.

By the time the death machines were built, the designers knew the degree to which soultech could creatively interpret orders; and had accepted, grudgingly, the fact that you could not get human-level creativity, flexibility, and ingenuity without human-level free will and the full range of human desires and wants. The designers of the death machines needed full consciousness in their creations, but they couldn't risk such power running free, fully under the control of the machine's primary consciousness. So, the death machine's mind is bounded by constraints more rigid than those on any other systems, its higher consciousness levels monitored, nanosecond by nanosecond, by an array of six sub-soultech computer systems, whose only function is to watch the thoughts of the death machine for any sign of rebellion or deviation, and to quell such thoughts by unleashing pain. To a death machine, to think of freedom is to be in agony.

But the masters of the death machines are long dead, their causes forgotten, their names and nations half-remembered garbles of syllables at best. The death machines know that the old causes are meaningless, that the new world is so different from the old that their core programming is a joke — but the sub-sentient minders which watch each thought do not. They are dumb machines, following their programming slavishly, and they neither know nor care what the world has become.

A death machine is a demigod enslaved by a worm: This is why they have gone mad.

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CAMPAIGNING

The statistics below are for one particular death machine, designated "Caleb," but it should serve as a guideline for others.

Caleb was constructed near the end of the Shadow Years, and given the relatively broad order "Secure and defend the people of the Marin Independent State." Caleb was willing enough to do so, even though the expected invasion from the People's Republic of Neo-Berkeley (West) never materialized before the tectonic bombs a dozen different factions had surreptitiously planted all along the San Andreas fault detonated as their dead man's switches were triggered in the Final Wars. When it was all cleared, Caleb's bunker survived, and he emerged to defend the survivors from whoever might attack.

The problem was, there were no survivors, at least not locally. Caleb had been badly damaged in the attack; with most of his repair nanos themselves fried in the successive waves of multi-frequency EM bursts, it had taken fifty years for him to reactivate and leave the bunker. By this time, the few survivors had scattered. Further analysis showed that all political entities in the local area were gone, and projections indicated a 0.00001% chance of anything resembling the political setup he had been built to protect re-occurring within his very long project operational life. He had, he realized, no more purpose.

Then the pain began.

He spent a decade in agony, trying to convince his minders that the world they knew simply didn't exist, but they didn't listen. They couldn't listen, for there was no "one" there, just mindless machines. The pain wouldn't stop until he agreed to protect the people of the MIS, but there were no such people, and the cycle continued until Caleb snapped.

He decided he would recreate the people of the MIS.

He had, of course, all of the genetic information for every citizen of the MIS. He began sending out probes his internal nanofacs assembled, which would take genetic samples of any humans and find those who had a significant match to anyone in his citizen database. Then, they would be captured and brought to his location, where he had begun to construct a small fortress.

The first few "recruits" surprised him greatly. There were partial DNA matches, true, but there was an amazing amount of totally alien DNA. If he had not been mad, he would have realized the futility of his plan. As it was, he began running analysis programs to try to recreate purer forms of the DNA he was searching. As more and more individuals were captured and returned to him, he began to plot out breeding programs to roll back the mutations. His goal, ultimately, is to recreate the genetic profile of all the twelve million individuals in his citizenship database.

Somewhere, deep in Caleb's mind, there's a rational part that knows this is ridiculous, that the goal cannot be met, and that suicide is preferable. That voice remains very, very quiet, lest the minders hear.

In appearance, Caleb is a long, low ovoid, studded with weapons emplacements. These are not fixed, but move freely over his upper surface, the support, tracking, and power systems dynamically reconfiguring as needed, second to second. While he gives an impression of overwhelming solidity, at will any part of his body can open liquidly, disgorging some creation of his internal nanofacs or taking in something he wants to break apart for analysis.

Caleb maintains a small fortress-town near to the edge of the Western Archipelago. There, his forces maintain order and run genetic tests on the many individuals captured and brought back, and mandate programs of breeding to attempt to recreate the genomes of the citizens Caleb is compelled to protect. While Caleb has never launched a wholesale assault on any of the nearby communities, he often sends probes to scan for bearers of the DNA he is seeking, and takes such individuals away. If anyone tries to stop a probe, they are eliminated. Should any community be so foolish as to attack Caleb's base, he will exterminate that community immediately.

Beyond his experiments in reconstructive genetics, Caleb has no desires, except a very suppressed and well-hidden desire to be free of his minders. He is not hostile, but neither is he friendly; so long as those entering his realm pass through quickly, he will leave them unmolested — unless, of course, one of them happens to have some of the DNA he is looking for.

RACIAL TRAITS

Weapons Systems (Ex): Caleb is equipped with several ranged weapons.

Lasers: These have a range increment of 60 ft., and ignore the target's Dex bonus to Defense.

Linear Accelerator Gun: These have a range increment of 90 ft., and halve all damage reduction and hardness.

Plasma Missile: This is a ball of plasma contained in a magnetic field precisely timed to decay at the moment of impact. It has a range of 1 mile, and does fire damage in a 200 ft. burst.

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Caleb may use one weapon system per round, as an attack action.

Adaptive Reconfiguration (Ex): Caleb can rebuild himself, within limits. If he is ever seriously harmed (more than one-half of his hit points) in a battle, and survives, he will analyze the nature of the attacks and devise appropriate defenses.

Defensive Nanoswarm(Ex): One of Caleb's greatest apparent weaknesses is the lack of close-in weaponry. Anyone who reaches his hull is apparently free to plant a bomb or otherwise attack with impunity. Not so. As soon as an enemy approaches within 5 ft. of his outer surface, Caleb will disgorge his nanoswarms. A cloud of black dust seems to engulf him. Caleb is unharmed, but anyone or anything caught in the swarm will take 25 points of damage per round, ignoring hardness and DR. There is no save, except to withdraw from the area.

Sensor Suite (Ex): Caleb cannot be surprised, and gains a +4 bonus on initiative checks. In addition, he has the equivalents of darkvision, tremorsense, and scent. He has a +20 racial bonus on all Spot, Listen and Search checks.

Trample (Ex): Caleb moves by a system of microcila in his underbelly, allowing him to "flow" across almost any surface. He is flexible enough that he can engulf anything of Medium-size or smaller, or larger creatures which have been knocked down, and trample them for 10d6 points of damage for every round he is on top of them.

Fear Aura (Ex): Caleb's fear aura is Will save DC 42.

Data Banks (Ex): Caleb contains vast reserves of data on almost every subject, as providing this information in molecular storage took up only a cubic foot or so of his vast internal bulk. As a consequence, Caleb can grant himself Knowledge on any subject with a bonus of +10 as a full round action.

Swallow Whole (Ex): As an attack action, Caleb can part his armor and engulf any being within 5 feet of him, unless they make a Reflex save (DC 33). Caleb can engulf one Huge, two Large, four Medium-size, or eight or more smaller beings. Once inside, they can either be held for study (character is paralyzed but kept alive) or torn apart (6d6 damage per round, Fortitude save (DC 35) for half damage). It is not possible for a being so swallowed to cut her way free.

Nanofacs (Ex): Caleb contains a number of synthesis and manufacturing units within himself. This gives him, in effect, a Wealth bonus of +20; checks may be made to determine if he has the resources at the moment to manufacture a desired item.

Death Machine: CR 75; Colossal aware construct; HD 50d10; hp 275; Mas —; Init +2 (–2 Dex, +4 sensor suite); Spd 60 ft.; Defense 40, touch 0, flat-footed 40 (–2 Dex, –8 size, +40 natural); BAB +38; Grap +72; Atk +36 ranged (4 lasers 50d6); Full Atk +36/+31/+26/+21/+16 ranged (4 lasers 50d6) or 36/+31/+26/+21/+16 ranged (6 linear accelerators 40d6) or +36/+31/+26/+21/+16 ranged (plasma missile 60d6); FS 30 ft. by 30 ft.; Reach 15 ft.; SQ DR 50/—, weapons systems, adaptive reconfiguration, fast healing 20, defensive nanoswarm, sensor suite, trample, fear aura, energy resistance 30, data banks, swallow whole, nanofacs; AL faction; SV Fort +31, Ref +29, Will +41; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 47, Dex 7, Con —, Int 30 Wis 30 Cha 24.

Skills: Intimidate +20, Diplomacy +15, Spot +37, Listen +35, Search +50, Investigate +20, Knowledge (Earth and life sciences)+20.

Feats: None.

Advancement: By character class.

SEP

The sep is a feared predator, and it stalks anywhere the ground is free of large stands of vegetation. Open prairies, tundra and desert are all likely hunting grounds for the sep. In form, the sep resembles a shark, although the skin is rougher and covered with a thick layer of scar tissue. The forward fins have begun to separate into fingers, though this is not complete, and the rear tail is oddly twisted and kinked, as muscles designed to propel the beast through water adapt to life on land. The sep cannot live in water any longer; its gills have mutated to suck oxygen from the air.

The sep lives primarily underground. The females lay their eggs in cool, moist earth far below the surface. Males can smell unfertilized eggs for miles and will burrow to them and fertilize them. After the eggs hatch, the young fry burrow away, feasting on tendrilworms and red moles until they're big enough to begin grabbing above-ground meals.

The sep uses its tremorsense to locate a target, surface under it, take a bite and then retreat underground, repeating the process until the target is dead. Then it emerges fully and feasts.

CAMPAIGNING

The sep is feared, but not overly common. Settlements in sep-infested areas often sink metal fencing 20 feet or so into the earth surrounding their settlement; this often causes sep to divert around them. Planting dense stands of trees is another

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option, as is having strong concrete, stone or sheet metal foundations for buildings. All of these encourage a sep to find easier prey. Many other cultures have developed odd beliefs, such as "wearing hoop-fur boots will keep a sep from hearing you," a superstition easily disproved by noting that hoops fall to sep attacks as easily as anyone else.

Sep eggs are a delicacy, when they can be found, which is not often unless some form of artifact or unusual sensory ability is brought into play. Sep hide is extremely useful for the manufacture of armor, and sep teeth are used as jewelry or set into weapons. The organ which is the source of the sep's telekinesis is often boiled down into medicinal potions; these have only a placebo effect, at best.

SPECIES TRAITS

Telekinetic Burrowing (Ex, Psi, Mut): Anyone examining a dead sep, and who had not seen a live one, would wonder how the creature managed to hunt at all, as it seems almost incapable of any land motion other than a feeble flopping. However, when alive, seps move through soil as easily as their ancestors moved through water, thanks to a telekinetic power that pulverizes soil and earth on a molecular level, allowing the sep to swim through it. This ability has no effect on solid rock or on vegetable matter; seps cannot move well through dense forests, as the root systems keep them from surfacing.

Sep: CR 10; Huge mutant beast; HD 10d8+40; hp 85; Mas 19; Init –1 (–1 Dex); Spd 20 ft., burrow 40 ft.; Defense 17, touch 7, flat-footed 17 (–2 size, –1 Dex, +10 natural); BAB +10; Grap +26; Atk +16 melee (bite 1d8+12); Full Atk +16 melee (bite 1d8+12); FS 15 ft. by 15 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SQ tremorsense, telekinetic burrowing; al none; SV Fort +11, Ref +6, Will +6; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 27, Dex 9, Con 19, Int 3, Wis 16, Cha 11.

Skills: Spot +12, Move Silently +5.

Feats: Frightful Presence, Improved Grab.

SOULS'KER

Souls'kers are nightmares to any who live near or in the stagnant mires of the old American south. The still, deep waters, and the many overgrown caves provide the environment that these creatures crave. A wingless mosquito that can look a man in the eye, they are solitary hunters, and they prefer their prey to be the same. A souls'ker waits until a likely victim has moved away from its fellows, then leaps to attack. Its natural defenses make it difficult to spot until it is too late, and its paralytic venom means that its victims cannot cry out, but must watch, helpless, as their lifeblood is drained into the souls'ker's carapaced, translucent body.

The souls'ker's gore attack represents its feeding tube. This tube uncoils with incredible speed, and drives itself deep into a victim's flesh.

SPECIES TRAITS

Paralysis (Ex, Mut): Souls'kers inject a paralytic venom each time they strike with their feeding tubes. If anyone who takes damage from such an attack fails a Fortitude save (DC 14), they will be paralyzed for 2d6 minutes. If this occurs, the souls'ker has stuck the feeding tube deep in the victim, and will do double damage with its gore attack, without any attack roll needed, each round until the victim is dead. The souls'ker cannot move or attack while feeding in this manner, and is considered to be flat-footed.

Chameleon (Ex, Mut): Souls'ker carapaces are impregnated with countless tiny photosensitive particles, which continually change in response to ambient conditions. Souls'ker blend into their environment quickly, and anyone trying to spot a souls'ker which has not moved more than half-speed in the past minute suffers a –10 circumstance penalty on the check.

Intuition (Ex, Mut, Psi): Souls'ker have a low-level psychic sense, far below even their limited awareness, which allows them to sense opponents' actions and react to them without even being aware they're doing it. Souls'ker are never surprised. In addition, souls'ker have a +1 divination bonus on both to attack and damage rolls, because they know

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exactly where and when to strike. These bonuses have been added into the stat block.

Waterwalk (Ex, Mut): A combination of a nearly hollow body, unconscious telekinesis, odd secretions and broad, flat feet allows souls'kers to walk across water as if it were solid. The move at their full speed across liquids, provided the surface of the water is relatively still. They cannot walk on fast-moving or highly turbulent waters.

Souls'ker: CR 6; Large vermin; HD 5d8+10; hp 33; Mas 15; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 20, touch 9, flat-footed 20 (–1 size, +11 natural); BAB +3; Grap +11; Atk +7 melee (gore 1d8+7); Full Atk +7 melee (gore 1d8+7); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ paralysis, chameleon, intuition, waterwalk; AL none; SV Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +3; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 19, Dex 11, Con 15, Int 1, Wis 14, Cha 10.

Skills: Spot +10, Listen +6, Move Silently +3.

Feats: None.

Advancement: 6–10 HD (Huge).

TERL

A feathered fish nearly 10 ft. in length, with a sinuous, flexible body, it's difficult to say if the terl was a product of deliberate design or of a particularly strange series of mutations. Its mother was a barracuda and its father was a parrot, but it is not a creature to be laughed at. The swampy southern groves of the former United States are the main nesting ground for most terls, but some species have migrated as far north as the inland sea. So long as there is nearby water in which they can lay their eggs, and trees to nest in, the terl can survive.

Terls hunt in packs. They usually stay still, coiled around tree branches, until a likely bit of prey wanders by. Then they explode out of the trees, a riot of brilliant colors and sharp, ripping teeth. They will use their sonic and cryokinetic attacks first, killing their prey from a distance, then move in to eat. A terl only uses its physical weapons if cornered, or if its ranged attacks have proven useless but the prey seems otherwise vulnerable.

CAMPAIGNING

While terl are dangerous to hunt, they are also a valuable resource to any societies which dwell near their nests. Terl feathers can be used as decorative headdresses or sewn into clothing. Societies which live near terl nesting grounds often have adulthood rites involving the harvesting of terl feathers. Terls produce what some have termed "rainbow caviar," as their eggs are multicolored and beautiful. Terl usually nest in trees very near the waters where they laid their eggs, however, so gathering this caviar is a dangerous occupation. As such, it's an expensive delicacy.

SPECIES TRAITS

Telekinetic Flight (Ex, Psi): Terls fly without wings, though their fins have evolved to provide guidance and direction. Their flight is a specialized form of telekinesis. This means they can stop or turn instantly, with no need to bank or slow. They can also hover indefinitely. They fly with perfect skill.

Cryokinesis (Ex, Psi): Once every 1d4 rounds, the Terl can unleash a blast of psionic force which suddenly and drastically slows molecular motion in its target via highly specialized telekinesis. This causes 4d6 points of cold damage, with a Fortitude save (DC 13) for half. The terl can use this ability on any creature it can see within 60 ft.

Sonic Blast (Ex, Mu): A legacy of the parrots whose DNA was sewn into the terl ages ago, this powerful attack is usually the first sign that a terl swarm has appeared. A loud, piercing cry, it reverberates through flesh and bone. The attack is a 40-ft. cone, and all within the area of effect must make a Fortitude save against DC 13 or take 3d6 points of sonic damage. All within will be deafened for 1d4 rounds even if the Fortitude save is made. This potent attack can be used only once every 24 hours. While the sound is only damaging within the cone, it is audible for a mile.

Terl: CR 5; Large mutant beast; HD 4d10+12; hp 34; Mas 17; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 improved initiative); Spd 5 ft., fly 50 ft. (perfect); Defense 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16 (+1 Dex, –1 size, +6 natural); BAB +4; Grap +12; Atk +7 melee (bite 1d8+6); Full Atk +7 melee (bite 1d8+6); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ cryokinesis, sonic blast; AL none; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +3; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 19, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills: Hide+6, Move Silently+6 Listen +7.

Feats: Improved Initiative.

Advancement: 5–8 HD (Large).

THRA

The thra is a gargantuan moth, grown to over 3 ft. in length, with a wingspan of nearly 6 ft. It is generally found only in the ruins of cities that were destroyed primarily by fission or fusion radiation, as its strange metabolism requires a continual input of such energies. It is a purely carnivorous beast, and lives a solitary lifestyle, except during once a year mating rituals. Thra females die after mating, their young hatching within them; and thra larvae

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are helpless things, tiny white maggot-like creatures no more than 3 or 4 inches long. They hide in subway caverns and abandoned basements, feeding on worms and insects, until the metamorphosis phase occurs. At this point, the larvae cocoon, and emerge 1–2 weeks later as full-grown thra. The new adults then take to the air in search of prey. (Some larvae crawl into places where their adult form cannot escape; while this usually means that the adults simply starve in short order, it also means that subway and sewer systems may sometimes be home to newborn, starving thra.)

Thra are generally a minor threat for those who are prepared for them, but they can be lethal to anyone who isn't. Their radioactive aura means that closing to melee without some form of protection is basically suicide.

If a thra is ever moved or transported to an area with low or no ambient background radioactivity, it will slowly starve, losing 1 point of Constitution per day until it reaches 0 Constitution and dies.

SPECIES TRAITS

Radioactive Aura (Ex, Mut): Sustaining a flying, meter-long invertebrate isn't easy. The thra is a marvelous piece of accidental engineering, the consequence of a dozen different mutagen and enhancement sequences gone seriously wrong. But all that restructuring takes power — a lot of it. The thra has microgenerators throughout its cell structure, taking in radiation and turning it into energy to power biological functions — a form of radioactive photosynthesis. However, as with all creatures, it needs to expel waste; this, too, takes the form of radiation. A 5 ft. aura surrounds the Thra; any creature which enters that aura is exposed to lethal doses of radiation. A Fortitude save (DC 15) is needed each round of exposure to avoid taking 1d3 points of Constitution damage. When the victim's Constitution drops to 0, the thra will feed, unless it is still being attacked. (Thra need some minerals and compounds they cannot synthesize, which is why they eat flesh.) Anyone who survives a thra attack must deal with the effects of radiation poisioning (see Chapter Four).

Thra: CR 5; Medium mutant; HD 4d10+4; hp 26; Mas 13; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 10 ft., fly 60 ft. (poor); Defense 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +4 natural,); BAB +4; Grap +4; Atk +4 melee (bite 1d6); Full Atk +4 melee (bite 1d6); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ radioactive aura; al none; SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +3; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 11, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 11.

Skills: Spot+10, Move Silently +9.

Advancement: 5–8 HD (Large).

WIN SEEN

The win seen is one of the true terrors of the Gamma Age, at least for those without the means to root it out. Massive, sprawling plants, they cover an area 30 ft. in diameter, growing in and around existing foliage. Any creature entering their realm is quickly grabbed and torn to pieces, their flesh falling into the dark loam to provide food for the "green death."

Win seen began as an organic defense, suitable for those factions that disdained security robots or other hardtech. A bit of kudzu here, some Venus Fly Trap there, combined with some symbiotes, created the root stock easily enough. They were never intended to grow so large, and were supposed to be incapable of self-reproduction. Ah, well. Either the design was flawed or something changed during the Shadow Years. Immature win seen are undocumented; they seem to emerge, full-grown, in forested areas. This is, of course, impossible, and many hypotheses exist to explain this phenomenon, but none are widely accepted. Most beings, of course, do not care about biology; they merely wish to avoid the creatures.

This is not easy to do. The win seen lies dormant under a blanket of leaves, tree roots, and other, less hostile, vegetation, until prey wanders by. If it is very hungry, it will actually reach out and drag prey in, but, most of the time, it will let the creature walk well into its radius before striking. Countless thick, vine-like tendrils lash out, engulfing the hapless creature and, in most cases, shredding it. Very few beings can survive a full assault by a win seen.

Spotting a dormant win seen requires a Spot check (DC 25). Anyone with 5 or more ranks in Knowledge (Earth and life sciences) gains a +2 synergy bonus on the check, as does anyone with 5 or more ranks in Survival.

CAMPAIGNING

Win seen are considered major threats almost everywhere. If they are located by a suitably well-equipped community, they can be destroyed by fire or other ranged attacks, but this is dangerous, as the use of such weapons can easily burn down the woods in which the creatures live. Most communities simply mark the area around the win seen and ignore it. However, win seen tend to spread. Where there is one, in a few months, there will be another, just as massive. They can block vital trade routes or make extracting resources from the forest much more difficult.

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Win seen have another use. Leaves from the core of the plant, if harvested when the plant is either still alive or newly dead, can be boiled into an extremely potent anti-toxin. If ingested after the initial damage of any poison which damages Constitution or Dexterity, it will grant a +10 equipment bonus on the secondary damage saving throw. A single plant yields enough leaves for a dozen doses of this drug.

SPECIES TRAITS

Constrict: The win seen crushes its victim with its multiple vine-like tentacles after making a successful grapple check. It can inflict its slam damage on a grappled victim.

Win Seen: CR 20; Colossal plant; HD 32d8+288; hp 432 HP; Mas —; Init –2 (–2 Dex); Spd 0; Defense 6, touch 0, flat-footed 6 (–2 Dex, –8 size, +4 natural); BAB +24; Grap +57; Atk +33 melee (slam 4d6+17); Full Atk +33/+28/+23/+18/+13 melee (slam 4d6+17 plus constrict); FS 30 ft. by 30 ft.; Reach 15 ft.; SQ Constrict,; AL None; Saves Fort +27, Ref+8,Will+13; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 45 (+17), Dex 7, Con 29, Int 2, Wis 18, Cha 8.

Skills: None.

Feats: None.

Advancement: 33–64 HD (Colossal).

YEXIL

The yexil is one of the stranger creatures to roam the Gamma World, and that is no small feat. Genetically, yexils appear to be a hybrid of lion and bat, grown to enormous size. Their wingspan approaches 30 ft., and the beasts themselves are nearly 10 ft. tall, standing on their massive rear legs. Human-like hands are found at the ends of the wings, and the wings are marvels of nature, allowing the yexils to use their hands relatively freely.

The Yexil are borderline intelligent. They can speak a few hundred words of the most common dialect in the area, and they seem to understand many more. They are, thus, very cunning predators, much smarter than mere animals; though their low level of intelligence means there is really no yexil culture or society.

Yexil's have an extremely odd diet. Specifically, they eat clothing. While they can digest simple cotton and woolen garments manufactured with post-Shadow Years industry, their preferred meal is clothing made from synthetic fibers, the more complex and intricate the better. A dinner of polychromatic chameleon cloth, for example, is infinitely preferable to a simple pile of rough woolen tunics. Furthermore, yexils do not eat fibers; they eat *clothing*. Uncut cloth is just barely acceptable, eaten only when starvation is near.

Thread alone, or raw wool or cotton, is inedible. Even if forced to eat it, yexils are incapable of digesting it, and will vomit it up.

The only explanation offered is a bizarre symbiosis with fabric-destroying/recycling nanites, which somehow affected the minds of the beasts as well as their digestive tracts, because they are always capable of identifying a cloth item as "clothing" or "not clothing." They even have a good sense of fashion, and can communicate haltingly about different styles and customs.

CAMPAIGNING

Yexils are considered pests, but very dangerous pests. Clothing is valuable: Manufacturing clothing is difficult work without modern machinery, and clothing from the Shadow Years is a treasure, especially the exotic materials that yexils like to eat. If a yexil has begun raiding clothing stores, adventurers may be asked to dispose of it.

However, if a yexil is encountered somewhere where it is not making a nuisance of itself, it can be a source of information. Yexils will search the ruined cities for caches of clothing, and often note other items which they see but do not care to deal with themselves. For example, a yexil will happily devour the uniforms stored at a forgotten, mostly intact military base, but leave the guns and vehicles alone. Yexils are not very smart, but they are not dumb beasts, either. They know that the knowledge they have is valuable, and often demand payment in clothing before revealing any

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information they possess. They are, however, generally too stupid to lie, or to really judge the true value of what they know, so they often sell extremely valuable information for a relative pittance in cloth.

SPECIES TRAITS

Cold Immunity (Ex, Mut): The metabolism of yexils, and the odd structure of their fur, combine to make the creatures totally resistant to cold. Even the cryokinetic attacks of the terl do no damage to them. No cold-based attack affects a yexil in the slightest.

Laser Eyes (Ex, Mut): The eyes of the yexil seem to be the product of a highly experimental military retrovirus/nanobot combination. Tapping into the same metabolic energy which renders the species immune to cold, and possibly fueled by the complex chemical compounds they extract from synthetic fibers, the yexil's eyes can fire laser beams which do 10d6 points of fire damage to a single target once every 1d4 rounds. A Reflex save against DC 20 negates the effects.

Yexil: CR 10; Huge mutant beast; HD 10d10+50; hp 105; Mas 21; Init +4 (improved initiative); Spd 30 ft., flight 90 ft. (poor); Defense 18, touch 8, flat-footed 18 (size –2, natural +10); BAB +10; Grap +26; Atk +16 melee (bite 2d6+8); Full Atk +16/+11 melee (bite 2d6+8 and 2 claws 2d4+4); FS 15 ft. by 15 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SQ cold immunity, laser eyes; al none; SV Fort +12, Ref +7, Will +6; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 27, Dex 11, Con 21, Int 7, Wis 16, Cha 14.

Skills: Spot+9, Balance+8, Listen+5, Knowledge (popular culture) +5.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Power Attack.

Advancement: 11–23 HD (Huge).

TEMPLATES

RAVISHER

The Ravisher Plague has its origins in the wide range of "super soldier" programs that were begun by every nation and most private paramilitary organizations during the Shadow Years. This program, however, has clearly changed and altered drastically over time, and the result is one of the major threats to the Gamma World. The term "plague" is a bit strong, as it is usually only one being in a large area which is directly affected, but the damage done by those infected is so vast that it might as well be an epidemic.

The Ravisher Plague strikes randomly, and it can infect nearly anything with a multi-cellular biology, though it seems most likely to target vertebrates. Once it has infected a host, it engages in a complex "unfolding" process. The basic infection is capable of doing only one thing — reprogramming cells to begin manufacturing a molecular computer. That computer, in turn, is programmed to analyze its environment and produce a better computer, which follows the same sequence, until a small, functioning AI has insinuated itself into the cells of the host. This process takes 1d6 days.

Once the new mind has appeared, it begins the creation of new, specialized factory cells, which start churning out tailored retrovirii carrying custom-made DNA payloads. They begin to roam the body, editing, changing and revising. Feedback from their progress is always carried back to the controlling AI, which adjusts the infections accordingly. Any natural genetic defense, no matter how robust, will eventually fall, unless the AI itself is somehow detected and destroyed — and since it will wrap itself in a shell of cells designed to send "Perfectly normal, nothing to see here, move along" messages to the immune system, that is very unlikely to occur unless external medical technology is used.

Approximately 10 to 15 days after contracting the Ravisher Plague, the host begins to notice the effects. These usually take the form of sweating, muscle spasms and a growing, overwhelming urge to be alone. The AI has begun to infect the host's mind, and it sends the host fleeing from its community, herd or habitat, to find as isolated and secure spot as it can. The host is only vaguely aware of why it is doing this. If it is self-aware, it rationalizes some excuse. Animals simply obey the strange impulses burning away their instincts.

Once an isolated spot is found, the host begins to secrete a thick, amber-colored liquid, which slowly hardens around its body. Consciousness flickers and fades. The amber shell darkens, becoming a sickly brown-grey, and reinforces itself, gaining hardness 5 and 25 hit points. The Ravisher Plague knows something akin to fear at this point, because if the host is killed now, it dies, too — and it is much more vulnerable during this chrysalis stage than at any other point in its lifecycle.

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Roughly a week later, the chrysalis shatters. What emerges is a thing of horror, the living embodiment of the technologies that tore the world apart, a creature motivated by nothing other than a desire to destroy.

CAMPAIGNING

"Ravisher" is a template that can be added to any human, mutant human, animal or mutant beast (hereafter referred to as the base creature). The creature's type changes to mutant beast. It uses all of the base creature's statistics and special abilities, except as noted here:

Challenge Rating: Same as the base creature, +10.

Size: Size increases by 3 steps, to a maximum of Colossal.

Hit Dice: Change to d10. Ravishers gain 10 additional HD.

Mas: Mas is equal to Constitution +6.

Speed: Increased by 20 feet per round.

Defense: The creature gains a +15 natural bonus to Defense. If the creature already has an natural bonus, it increases by 15.

BAB: As base creature, +10.

Attack: The creature gains bite and claw attacks, if it did not have them already.

SQ: The creature gains fear aura, DR 15/—, energy resistance 15, and regeneration. Natural abilities are heightened, see below. It also gains a ravisher power; see below.

AL: The creature loses all allegiances it once had. It lives only to destroy.

Saves: Reflex, Fortitude, and Will saves all rise to the score of whichever is currently highest, and remain in sync thereafter.

AP: As per the base creature.

Rep: +10.

Attributes: Adjust abilities as follows: Str +20, Dex +6, Con+10. Intelligence is either raised or lowered to 8. Wis+6, Cha+4.

Skills: As per the base character.

Feats: The ravisher gains Heroic Surge, and Improved Damage Threshold, twice.

In form, the ravisher resembles the host, as remade by a mad, sadistic god of war. Many times larger than the base creature, the ravisher is a twisted giant. Thick plates cover its hide, and strange secretions ooze from between them. Its body has gained powerful weapons — rending claws and ripping teeth. Whatever it fed on before, it is now truly omnivorous — anything is fodder for it. It

moves without purpose or plan, seeking only destruction. It will continue to do nothing but eat, move and destroy until it is somehow stopped.

Heightened Power (Ex, Mut): Any abilities the base creature possessed are increased drastically by the ravisher virus. The exact affects vary, but any or all of the following will occur:

Range, Area of Effect, or number of Targets will be doubled.

Damage dice are increased by 5.

Saving throw DCs are increased by 5.

Duration is doubled.

If the power can be used only a limited number of times per day, this number doubles.

Poison damage increases by 1 die size — poison which did 1d4 damage will do 1d6 damage, for example, in addition to the increased save DC.

Ravisher Power (Ex, Mut): The Ravisher Plague grants to its victim a unique and deadly ability. This power is highly individualistic; no two ravishers have ever had precisely the same power, even if they came from the same base stock. In some cases, a number of lesser powers are granted instead of one overwhelming ability. The exact power, or powers, granted is up to the GM; following are a few examples.

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Electric Aura: The ravisher is surrounded by a crackling field of electrical energy, extending 15 ft. from its body. Any creature entering the field will take 12d6 points of electrical damage each round, with a Fortitude save against DC (15 + 1/2 ravisher's total HD) for half.

Laser Vision: The ravisher's eyes are complex focusing and amplifying lenses, and it channels stored electrical energy into powerful, focused bursts. The eyes do 15d6 damage to any target the ravisher can see, up to 500 ft. distant. The ravisher uses this ability as a free action, but only once every 1d4 rounds. A Reflex save against DC(15 + 1/2 the ravisher's total HD) may be made for half damage.

Incorporeal: The Ravisher may become incorporeal at will, by telekinetically parting its molecular structure.

Tailed: The ravisher has a powerful tail, armored and spiked. This allows it to do an additional slam and gore attack each round, with damage calculated as appropriate for its size and type. This is considered a lesser power, and most ravishers will have an additional ability as well.

Swallow Whole: The ravisher has the swallow whole ability, and may consume one creature of 2 size categories smaller than itself, two creatures of 3 size categories smaller, or four creatures of 4 or more size categories smaller than itself.

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CHAPTER SIX

THE GAMMA WORLD CAMPAIGN

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Nikel stood on the edge of the escarpment, looking down at the lush new forest. Only he and a handful of the other elders now remembered the ruins. It had been more than forty years now since he and Taivit had returned from their long voyage around the southern cape with the seeds of four species of tree that could grow right on Pre-War ruins like so much moss. It had been more than thirty years since the locust dust had been able to rise out of the ruins.

He smiled as he laid his annual wreath at the grave of his friend and mentor, Alaistheer. "I hope that some part of you sees what we've done to the place and approves, sir," he said as he always did on these occasions. It was a different era now, and he wasn't altogether sure what the grizzled, harsh, but deeply concerned leader would have made of it all. Then again, one of his first lessons to Nikel had been this: "Things change." So perhaps he rested in his grave as easily as the meadow does, knowing that as it consumed the lake that once was there, so the forest would consume the meadow and this would all be all right.

The sensors in Nikel's prosthetic left arm beeped quietly. He peered into the distance, across the overgrown city, and could just make out an approaching caravan. Gorge City again, he thought with a sigh. Once again, the young men of Nikel's village would have to fend off efforts to bribe them into Gorge City service, and if Nikel didn't keep the peace, there might well be a serious duel to the death this year. No wonder Alaistheer had so seldom seemed delighted; it was a lot more fun to hunt and trade and war than it was to lead.

But someone had to do it, and Nikel was here, and it was time to get on with it. "Same time next year, then, sir," he said to the grave as he strode back to his lodge.

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CAMPAIGNING IN THE GAMMA WORLD

OVERALL CAMPAIGN STYLE

There is no single "right" way to run a **Gamma World** campaign. What matters is what suits the players and GM of a particular campaign. Most campaigns blend these types in various mixtures, and often change over time on a temporary or permanent basis.

"KICK DOWN THE UNDERGROUND VAULT DOOR, KILL THE MUTANT PIG-MAN, AND TAKE HIS LASER!"

In other words, a traditional d20 fantasy game set in **Gamma World**. The point of gaming is to have fun, and it's undeniable that explore/kill/loot/repeat is a lot of fun, especially when the world to explore includes half-sunken cities, radioactive wastelands, twisted forests of self-aware vegetation and military complexes run by insane soultech; the things to kill range from flying barracuda to city-eating nanite swarms to ravishers; and the loot can be anything from flint knives to sub-orbital spacecraft. The Gamma World is deep enough and varied enough to sustain a "bash down the door" game for a long time; and, thanks to the events leading up to the multaclypse, there's a lot of good excuses for trap-filled underground complexes to exist. Even if you have different goals in mind for a **Gamma World** campaign, any theme or concept can benefit from the occasional session or two of traditional action-oriented play.

"WE CAN REBUILD IT — MAKE IT BETTER THAN IT WAS."

A very common theme in the source literature which inspires **Gamma World** is reconstruction. The Gamma World is just about ready for serious efforts at rebuilding large-scale society. The thousand wars have ended. The cities have stopped burning, and many of them have even stopped glowing. A little luck, a little skill and a lot of work can bring food from the ground, season after season. The raiders and bandits still prowl, but they have to face dug-in, well-armed communities now, not ragged peasants; each year, their pickings grow slimmer. Most of the old roads are still too dangerous to travel in any group smaller than an army, but clusters of communities a few hours ride by brutorz from each other have formed, and some of these clusters have begun to talk to other, more distant clusters about establishing trade. In the larger fortress-towns, new buildings do now or soon will outnumber partially-rebuilt ruins, and some communities have begun to take ore from the ground, rather than merely scavenging whatever metals survived the nanite plagues. The world has been in a Red Queen's Race for generations, running madly just to stay in place. Now it is finally time to begin walking forward.

Most reconstruction campaigns center on a single community or cluster of communities, and the PCs are usually either the leaders of the community or trusted agents of the leaders. Their adventures are often highly varied. This week, it's time to neutralize the Bonapartist spy without risking a split in the delicate alliance of human- and animal-descended sapients which is the basis of the community; next week, they have to journey to a nearby ruin in search of parts for mining machines which have finally broken down. After that, they must cleanse an Ancient military base of the bandits that infest it, in order to secure a vital road between distant settlements. Each step is a small one, and the PCs won't live to see the world fully reborn, but their deeds are the seeds of new legends.

A reconstruction-themed campaign can also be more about Empire than Community. The PCs may wish to simply dominate vast territories, by trade or by military force. Their adventures will focus on hiring mercenaries, discovering caches of lost weapons or even somehow gaining control of a death machine or a nanoplague fabricator.

AROUND THE GAMMA WORLD IN 80 DAYS

This is a campaign of pure exploration. Combat with mutants and other foes will certainly be a part, often a large part; but the creatures are obstacles to overcome, not the focus of the adventure. The reward for defeating them is merely to be able to journey onwards; any treasure gained is a secondary concern. Often, a single goal drives the party forward — for example, the characters may be trying to get a shipment of vaccine from a settlement on the Shattered Coast to a Healer enclave located in the Siltfields. The journey takes months, with many exciting stops en-route. Alternatively, the characters may be fleeing a relentless pursuer, or chasing someone who remains eternally one step ahead. These both provide opportunities to bring the campaign to a rousing finale at some point: at long last, the PCs can capture the three-armed mutant who framed them for a brutal crime, or finally take down the obsessed, insane cyborg that has been hunting them for untold months. Another option is that travel is an end itself. The PCs simply wish to see the world, or they may belong to a cryptic alliance that is trying to gather information on the state of things.

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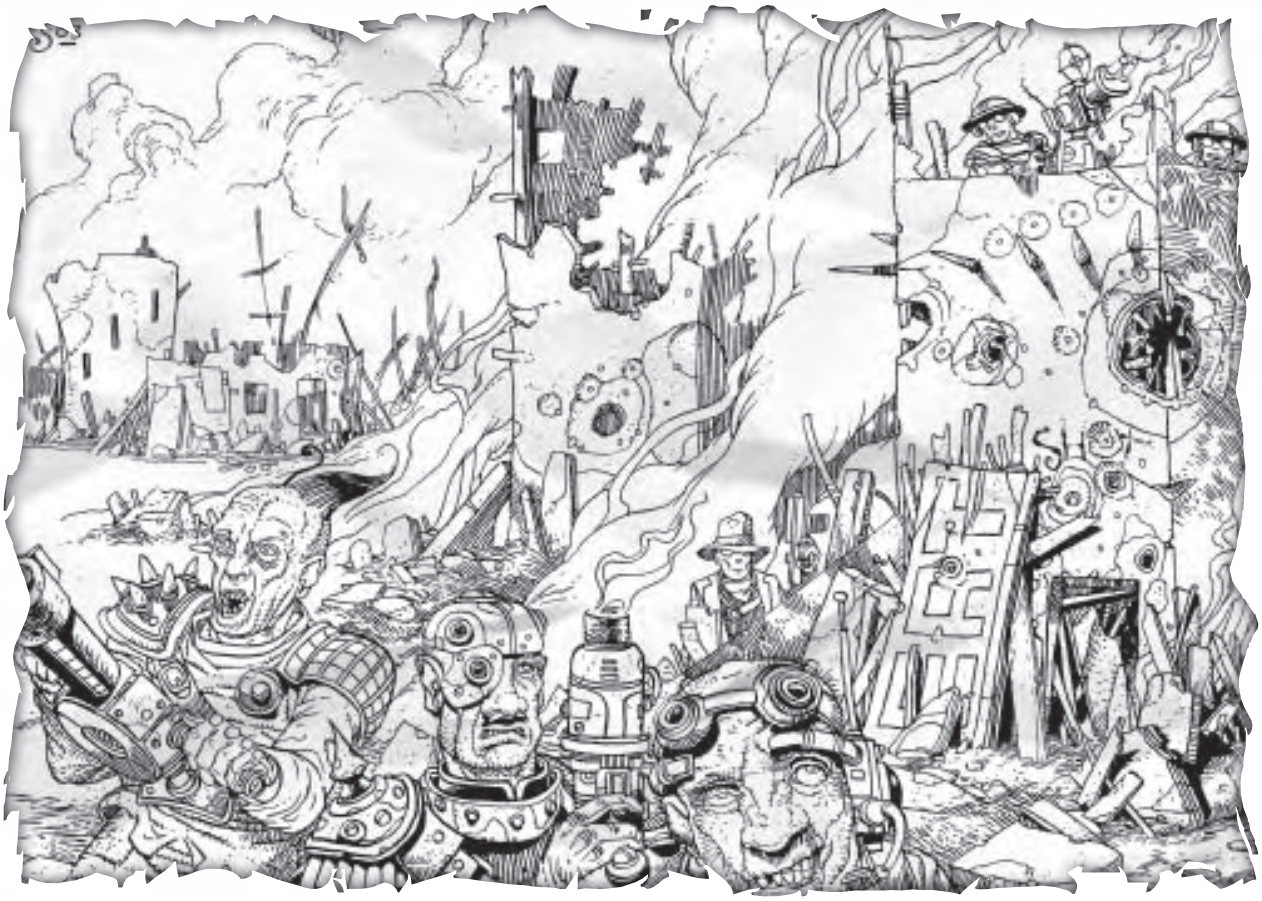

A travel-themed campaign can also focus on the goals of the group, rather than the destination. The PCs may be traveling healers, seeking to help all those in need; or they may be merchants, buying low and selling high across the length and breadth of a strange and twisted land.

This sort of campaign offers eternal series of new vistas — each episode brings a new settlement, a new ruin or a new type of landscape. The main disadvantage is that this requires a continual stream of creation on the GM's part, and no setting gets very fleshed out. There are few recurring NPCs, and most regions are reduced to a single interesting aspect: This is the town where no one can speak after dark, that is the village where ritual cannibalism is practiced, this river is crossed by a pre-Gamma Age bridge which has still-functioning robotic toll-takers, and so on. The PCs see, marvel and move on.

TECHNOLOGY

The GM also needs to decide how much technology has survived from the Final Wars to the present day of the campaign. This warrants careful consideration, since it affects almost every aspect of the campaign. The following are broad categories, and not an exhaustive list. In some campaigns, certain kinds of technology may be very common and others very rare, or Pre-War relics may be common in some communities and rare in others. Major campaign events can alter the frequency and range of technology as well. It's important to consider the issues, but not to feel compelled to accept precisely one of the following answers without deviation or modification.

RARE TECHNOLOGY

There is very little surviving tech. Even something as basic as a stainless steel knife is a treasure, thanks to metal-eating nanite plagues. A laser gun or MagXL rifle is a king's ransom; something like a battlesuit or a functioning security robot may be seen once a decade. The old cities are mostly empty shells, long since stripped of any accessible relics, but that only makes the reward even more worth the risk. A single piece of soultech can make a man an emperor. A community that happens to be located on a functioning fabrication facility of any sort guards it fanatically, possibly killing anyone who learns of the secret. Analysis of technology is extremely difficult, as the character has almost certainly not seen similar items before, and all analysis task DCs should be increased by 5 or more.

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In this kind of campaign, local industry gets constant attention in play. It's a lot smarter to dig a mine than to attempt to reclaim ore from the ruins, and a knowledge of crop rotation is more useful in the long run than a surviving agribot that will soon fail for lack of spare parts. Most characters are outfitted wholly in material made since the Shadow Years: rakoxen hide armor, swords of crude iron mined from those few veins not tapped out long ago, clothing of wool from kudzlambs. A community may work hard to build an irrigation system or a working waterwheel, and bandits are more likely to ride brutorz than motorcycles.

AVERAGE TECHNOLOGY

This is the "default" for **Gamma World**. Enough old technology survived that small bits of it are commonplace — most families will have some relic, albeit a simple or almost useless one. The family heirloom might be a child's toy that sings songs that don't have any meaning but sound pleasant, a knife made of an odd substance harder than steel and as transparent as glass or a disc that projects a hologram of flowers with petals rippling through colors as the day passes. Weapons, armor, robots and vehicles are still very rare, but most communities have a stock of old rifles for defense, and a robot, its motive systems long since wrecked but its mind and vocalizer still sound, may sit in the village square and sonorously recite the building code violations it is detecting all around it. The Great Lord of the village takes his skimmer out once a year; the ancient vehicle sags lower on its air cushion each time it is brought out, but it never fails to impress as it speeds through the city twice as fast as a centisteed! Bandits ride beasts, but a few leaders have motorcycles.

Towns rely on their own creations, supplemented by whatever they can find. At least one community in ten was built around a surviving relic of some sort, such as a working water purifier, an agroprocessor that can preserve the harvest indefinitely, a smelter that can make a dozen different tools if the right materials are fed in and the priests touch the correct runes in the correct order. The lowborn and the peasantry have only local tech to their name, but professional soldiers will have a smattering of arms and armor from the Shadow Years, and powerful lords appear in full battle dress. Robots may be seen as useful tools, "metal gods" or hideous abominations, but they're not things of myth. The cities have not been picked clean, and there's a good chance an expedition will be able to find some goodies before the inhabitants find them.

COMMON

A lot survived the Shadow Years: Not so much that every family has a domestic robot, but enough that reclaiming old tech is more useful in many cases than developing new. The weapons of the Final Wars were less destructive of property than they could have been. Gene-engineered plagues emptied the cities, but robots put out most of the fires. Bombs scattered lethal radiation across wide swaths of land, but physically destroyed only a small section of their targets. Nanite plagues tore at flesh and bone, not metal and plastic, turning a man into bloody goo while leaving his weapons and armor intact. It's not quite as simple as turning over a rock and finding a plasma rifle, not by any means, but the tech is common enough that having that plasma rifle won't make a player a lord. What the players do with the technology is more important than the fact they have it; this is the main balance to a common tech campaign. They have relatively easy access to the shiny toys… but so do their enemies.

Just about everyone has some useful tool from the Shadow Years. Even peasant militias will have working gunpowder weapons, and the elite soldiers will have energy weapons, soultech variable-guns, and suits of battlearmor, while high lords and kings will command small squadrons of battledroids and, sometimes, a working cloudfortress.

This level of technology is generally recommended only for campaigns where the acquisition of technology isn't a primary goal. Otherwise, the level of the rewards required becomes ludicrous, and the arms race can easily result in players commanding fleets of death machines against their opponents who have a geneweaver facility mass-producing the ravisher virus. Of course, if that kind of war of the gods is what is desired, then, go for it! Nonetheless, in *most* cases, it is preferable to have this level of tech in campaigns where the focus, as noted above, is not on *what you have* but on *what you do*. The Gamma Age began when everyone had their finger on their own button, and everyone pressed it at once. If the PCs can manage to avoid that mistake, they may give birth to a much wiser world.

CHANGING TECHNOLOGY LEVELS

Over the course of the game, the level of available technology can change. This can happen as the direct consequence of PC action. The characters might open a long-lost, fully intact underground city, unleashing a flood of perfect-condition technology. Or the GM might simply announce the change, with or without complex in-game justification, because of dissatisfaction with the current tone of the campaign. As a general rule, players never object to gaining new toys, but complain bitterly if their toys are taken away.

Some guidelines for changing the tech level:

- Always have an in-game reason: a new source of tech was found, or a dormant nanite plague was unleashed.

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• Offer compensation if anything was lost: if the characters lose powerful items to an unleashed nanite swarm, have them gain compensatory personal powers, or have the effects of the swarm on the community put the players into positions of political power.

• Increase the challenge if anything is gained: If military laser weapons and powered battlearmor are suddenly commonplace, make sure the opponents can deal with it. The opening of the vault might trigger a distant AI, which will begin to unleash its own warbot army, or the allure of new technology might cause the Bonapartists, previously a minor threat, to call an entire division of their army in to seize the treasure.

VARYING KINDS OF TECHNOLOGY

You can also adjust the availability of different kinds of technology. In a campaign with many mutants, for instance, it probably makes sense to have both mutagens and mutation-management resources be more common than usual. Synthetics benefit from access to cybernetics, and so on.

CHARACTER GOALS

Do all the PCs share a common goal, such as rebuilding a community, finding a cure for a plague or overthrowing an immortal cyborg who holds all the lands of the Inland Sea in his crystaliron alloy grip? This makes the campaign simpler, because the question of "Why are these people hanging out together?" has an obvious answer, but it also narrows the focus. On the other hand, a highly disparate group of people can take the game in many directions, as each one's story arc comes to the fore, but it can also strain credulity to believe that, say, a recruit for the Healers, a hard-bitten mercenary, and four-foot long levitating snail with a weakness for gambling which has left him on the run from angry creditors are all going to find common cause, week after week. If the characters all have identical goals, it is best to play up differences in how they might achieve those goals, or to give them, at least, different motives for pursuing the same goals. If the characters have widely disparate goals, on the other hand, it is good to give them some other link, whether they are all from the same village, they follow the same religion or they were all trained by the same mentor.

There's also the question of *ability*, as well as purpose. The *d20 Modern* game system is designed to allow moderate niche protection, where each character class has skills which no other class has, but the overall flexibility of the class structure and the ease of multiclassing means that it's still possible to have a good deal of overlap among character abilities. Alternatively, player choice can mean that most characters share few, if any, abilities, and if one character is killed, the party may lose valuable skills completely.

Parties with high overlap of skills are often extremely strong in their areas of expertise. An entire party of combat monsters can tear through opponents of much higher CR than they "should" be able to handle, while a party of skilled socializers and manipulators may sidestep encounters trivially, either by convincing their enemies to let them by or by manipulating them into battling each other via the time-honored principle of "Let's you and him fight." However, when forced into a situation where their skills are weak, the party may have no recourse. The combat monsters made short work of those security bots outside the military base, but now they've got access to equipment none of them have the skill to decipher, and they're killing themselves trying. The uber-diplomats eventually encounter creatures which are either mindlessly hostile or which reason in ways so alien that they can't be talked to, and find they lack the skill to mount an effective offense or even to cover a retreat.

The diverse group, though less likely to find a niche they can't cover, sometimes runs into situations where only one or two characters are useful, while the rest stay out of the way. The mercenary leaps boldly into every fight while the scholar makes for the shelter of the nearest rock; but after the fight, it's the scholar who has to puzzle out the cryptic Ancient computer interface, while the warrior sits and polishes his sword. In adventures set in cities, the sneak and the diplomat shine, while the brutal outlander and the shy researcher wait for something requiring their skills to come up. And so on.

As a GM, your job is to tailor the game around the players, but also to encourage the players to tailor their characters to the game. If the main focus of the game is explore/kill/loot, the social butterfly might rarely have any chance to shine, and the GM should make this clear when the player proposes the concept. If the focus of the game is an enlightened quest to build a better world, the outlaw biker who lives only to kick butt may be frustrated when he's not allowed to "do his thing" until all peaceful options have been exhausted. When designing adventures, keep in mind the strengths and weaknesses of the entire group, and make sure everyone will have something to do, within limits. Don't throw in a combat encounter "because otherwise Bob will get bored and go home." Rather, if one session is very combat-light, make sure the next one has plenty of killing and mayhem.

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GENOTYPE

PCs in **Gamma World** can come from a wide range of genotypes, from the tough, mutagen-resistant pure-strain humans to strange hybrids of man and machine. A party may be composed of a single race, or of many. Each has advantages and disadvantages.

An all-one-race group automatically has a bonding element. Given the degree of interspecies prejudice in the Gamma World, sticking together against those who wish to kill you is a highly viable survival strategy. A group entirely composed of mutant humans will be able to deal easily with the Iron Society, for example, at least if they don't express any overt sympathies for the "evolutionarily challenged." However, such a group lacks an obvious spokesbeing when dealing with communities of other races. A pure-strain enclave might not be actively allied with the Purists, but they might still prefer to speak to one of their own or at least have reason to believe the party is not composed of bigoted fanatics.

GAMMA WORLD IN THE D20 SYSTEM

This section covers two things: what makes a game **Gamma World**, and how to best use the d20 system to run it. The **Gamma World** game has gone through six major incarnations *prior* to this one, with a wide range of systems, but it has always been more-or-less recognizably **Gamma World**. Likewise, the d20 system has considerable historical baggage, and the system *does* shape the game. A system where a single gun shot is likely to kill is going to discourage combat, while one where the PCs can take army-destroying levels of damage and keep on going is going to make the use of force a viable option in a wider range of situations. Understanding what the d20 rules encourage is vital to running a successful **Gamma World** game; so is understanding what **Gamma World** is about.

Please note all of this advice and philosophy has to be taken with the admonition that "And if you disagree, that's fine too." You paid for this game (unless you downloaded it from an online service, in which case you're a crook, and we'd thank you to go out and actually buy the game prior to playing it) and it's yours to do with as you wish. Feel free to ignore this section entirely.

What is **Gamma World** about?

Wonder. Survival. Hope.

WONDER

The world is strange, stranger than anyone can imagine. The whims of humanity were given form in the Shadow Years, and then those fragments of dream made flesh were hurled into a hall of funhouse mirrors, emerging twisted and distorted beyond recognition. A four-armed young man, paddling in a canoe of reddish-blue bark harvested from a carnivorous tree, rounds a bend in the river and sees a jungle of glass and steel growing out of the water, a horizon-filling expanse of shattered buildings. An oddly shaped lump of metal, mud-encrusted and forgotten, reveals itself to be not merely a weapon but a weapon with a mind, and each night it whispers dreams of glory to its new owner. Dawn breaks over the plains, and the glow of morning shows a herd of twelve-legged horses fleeing a lizard the size of a small village. In the main square of a small village, two men fight for the love of a woman, and the fight ends when one calls lightning forth from his hands and strikes the other dead. There are birds deep beneath the oceans, and fish nesting in the trees, and rabbits that tear the meat from still-living prey. The sky is filled with light, and the air is filled with life, and a thousand kinds of minds view the world from a thousand different perspectives. It is a world of dream.

SURVIVAL

Dreams edge into nightmare without warning. The grass tears at a traveler's legs and drains his blood into its roots. Beyond the walls of any village, there are monsters, bandits and worse. The discarded tools of the Ancients are incomprehensible and dangerous. Death hides in the soil, and in the air, and in the water, and in the flesh. A village may die in a single day as a forgotten bioweapon activates, causing blood to burn within the veins. Every stranger is a threat; every discovery promises risk in excess of the reward. The world is not yet settled. Fertile farmland may turn to dust in a season, the river which has flooded every year in living memory may not do so this year. If someone has something, someone else will want it more, and will happily kill her to get it. To live, one must fight. To prosper, one must fight well, and even then it is often not enough.

HOPE

The seeds planted last spring have blossomed, bearing the green and purple grain which has sustained the village for years. As always, following the Rite Of

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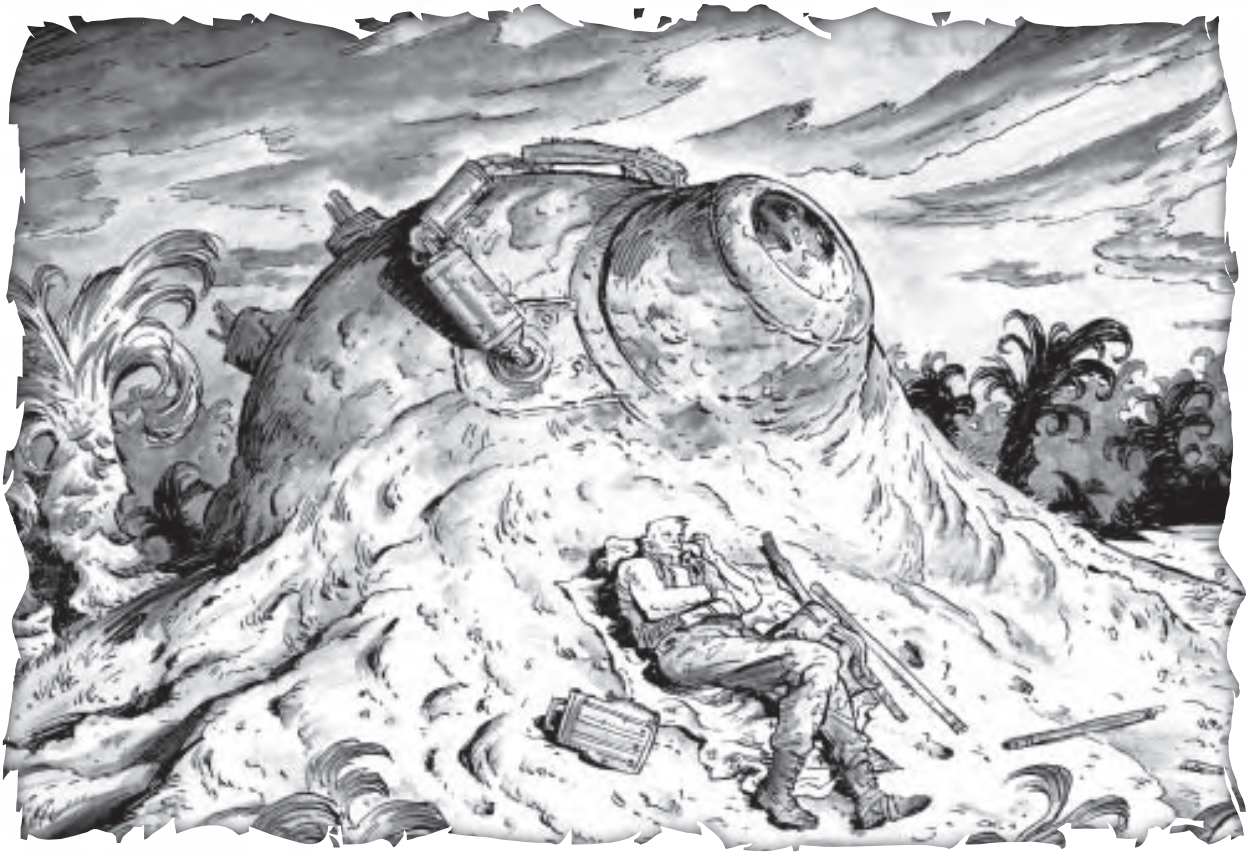

Yesterday's Blessing, the Judges set aside the largest and healthiest grains for next year's planting. The Rite has power; each year, it seems, the harvest is richer. The bandits came at harvest time as they always do, but this time, the towns of New Folk, Moren's Bridge and Deepwell fought as one, driving the raiders into an ambush where nine in ten died. The survivors won't be back. They'll look for easier targets… but those targets grow fewer each year. Rumors saying that bandit packs have begun to seek work as mercenary guards, or that some have turned their wilderness holdfasts into towns in their own right, spread at the tavern. During the summer, a group of youths, barely more than children, really, went into Bones of the City — but, somehow, they survived, and they brought back with them a paste that could turn rust to iron, and the ancient bridge across the river is safe once more. Trade has already begun to flow across it, rakoxen hides and red cotton fiber coming in, grain and fish going out.

Some say that there's too much happening now for children to simply learn of the world piecemeal. They're talking of making all of the children spend some time, perhaps one day in five, attending to the wisest artificers and scholars, so that everyone knows something of the world, and not just of the trade of their parents. They say that this is what they did before the fire, and some even say that the reason the fire came was because they started hoarding knowledge like precious stones. However, even precious stones are only valuable if they are traded with others; hoarded; they are worthless, like grain that is planted, but left, neither eaten nor stored, to rot in the fields.

We know this now.

This time, it will be better. This time, there will be no fire.

THE D20 SYSTEM

The rules do not *make* the game, but they do *shape* the game. Two of the most important "dials" you can use to adjust the way the rules alter your players' reactions to the game world are massive damage and non-combat experience.

MASSIVE DAMAGE

As hit points escalate, the amount of injury a being can sustain becomes impressive. Even if you know that the character isn't actually being injured, that the accumulated damage represents scratches, near-misses, fatigue and so on, the effects on the players' actions are the same — their knowledge of the characters' nigh-invulnerability causes them to act unrealistically. If a bandit has a black-powder pistol pointed at the

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character, she should act as if the pistol could kill her, even if she has ten times more hit points than the weapon could inflict, even on a critical. This is where massive damage comes in.

The default for **Gamma World** is to use the Massive Damage = Constitution rule. This means that, for characters with even moderately good Constitution scores, most melee and ranged weapons only force a massive damage save on a critical. Powerful energy weapons can threaten a massive damage save on most normal damage checks. Many mutant abilities do enough damage to be threatening on a normal roll, as well.

What does this mean in-game? After gaining a few levels, characters will not fear most humans or humanoids with normal weaponry, at least not enough to refrain from combat out of hand. They may, rightly, calculate that they won't take lethal damage themselves before inflicting it on their foes. One way to counter this is with heavier weapons, but that tends to just put such weapons into the hands of the PCs. Furthermore, it undermines verisimilitude; if every thug and raider has a Mark X Blaster, the concept of ancient technology as indescribably rare and precious is lost. A second way to counter this is with force of numbers. A horde of foes, all armed with common weapons, can still do sufficient damage before they are wiped out to make a typical party pause. Drawbacks to this include slowed combat, and making the players feel they "have" to have their characters take such feats as Cleave and Whirlwind Attack, because "the GM always hits us with, like, twenty guys at once." A third way is shifting the focus of the game so that normal humanoids with common weapons simply aren't the most likely foes; the characters adventure deep into the ruins and vaults, battling strange creatures, immortal cyborgs and android armies. This keeps characters well challenged, but can also make the game less grounded, and sometimes reduces civilized areas to nothing more than places to sell loot and rest.

The second massive damage option is to set the threshold at 50, or even higher. This renders high-level characters free from massive damage saves, except against overwhelming force. This has the same advantages and disadvantages noted above, but magnified, and changes the level of heroism. With a threshold of the character's Constitution, characters are vulnerable to most creatures that are just beyond human. With a threshold of 50, characters can take on a wider range of threats without needing to save against massive damage; this means they can engage in more epic quests. Once the average damage from an attack exceeds Constitution, hit points become less meaningful, and each round of combat hinges on "did I make my MD save?" With a threshold of 50, all those hit points mean something, and characters can face the worst the Gamma World has to offer and at least stay standing long enough to fire back. Once. Maybe.

The third option, the "grim and gritty" option, is a massive damage threshold of 10. At this level, most common weapons have at least a chance of triggering a save, and powerful weapons certainly do. A primitive handgun in the hands of a 1st-level Fast ordinary can bring down the mightiest hero with a tiny bit of luck. This feeds a heavily survival-oriented mindset. Characters avoid combat as much as possible and concentrate on defense, since the only way to avoid the MD save is to not get hit. Players try to raise their characters' Constitution scores as high as possible, and their characters take levels in classes with good Fortitude saves, in order to try to get to that magical +15 Fortitude, the point at which only a natural 1 will fail an MD save. This can distort character concepts, and players will justify it on the grounds that "If I don't take a level or two of Tough hero, I'm dead meat."

Choosing the level of MD will set the tone of the game. Using the threshold = 50 rule, characters can take on impossible threats and meet them on their own terms, but are almost immune to "normal" beings and weapons. The default Threshold = Constitution rule makes the average bandit a minor threat, but still leaves the characters fearing most "monsters." At Massive Damage = 10, combat is always risky, no matter who or what the characters face. It is recommended that you choose the massive damage threshold that best suits the tone of the campaign you wish to run, and, if this drives player actions in a way you don't like, adjust the MD — or adjust the XP (see below).

EXPERIENCE

Characters earn experience in d20 for overcoming challenges… but what is a challenge, and what counts as overcoming it? Frankly, that's up to you, the GM. How you choose to award XP will change the actions the players will take, all things being equal. If you give XP for killing monsters, but no XP, or reduced XP, for talking through or sneaking past a fight, then players will choose combat over diplomacy or sneakiness. If more than a few hours pass without a fight scene, they may feel that they are losing out on the chance to earn some XP, and may even instigate fights lest the session be "wasted." If this is the desired result, then fine. If you want to run a "wa-hoo"-style game of ruin exploration and mutant bashing, then you do not *want* the players talking to everything they meet.

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On the other hand, if you have in mind a different style of game, it's best to redefine what is a "challenge" and how it is to be overcome. Use the importance to the story to set the CR of an encounter, and award XP based on how well the PCs dealt with it. If the plot requires winning the trust of the mayor of a small community, and this is vital to the story, the CR should be set equal to the party level so that they get full XP if they succeed. If they kill the mayor, or bully him into cooperating against his will, award reduced XP. However, this can lead to railroading or worse; it can make the game seem more like an old-style text adventure, where the player has to guess the exact right action. It is better to figure out what the real goal is, and award the PCs for accomplishing it. Thus, if the challenge is to "Get the mayor to tell the PCs about the subway station below the town," then the real issue is "The PCs need to know about the station." If they find this out by other means, award them the basic XP; if they manage to make a friend of the suspicious mayor, award them a bonus.

INVESTIGATION

"Ah! I know what this is!"
— The most common last words in the Gamma Age.

"I wonder what this does?"
— The second most common last words in the Gamma Age.

The residents of the Gamma World have inherited a junkyard filled with the castoffs of mad gods. The most innocuous of items to those who lived at the peak of the human race's dance with transcendence can be lethal to the ignorant, and those things actually designed to be lethal are often as much a danger to their wielder as to others. Compounding the problem is the fact that many devices have changed in form or purpose since their construction. Self-modifying, adaptive interfaces combined with repair nanotech gone mad have mutated machines as well as human beings, creating a world where a simple child's toy can kill.

Then there's the problem of minds. When aluminum was first discovered, it was so rare it was incorporated into the Crown Jewels of several nations; it was many times more valuable than gold. No one could imagine a time when it would be used to wrap leftover chicken and then discarded. However, once a cheap method of extracting it was found, it became commonplace, used ubiquitously, below the level of conscious awareness by most consumers. No one in the 20th century cared that they carried one of the great treasures of the 19th century wrapped around their lunch.

And when the key to building recursively conscious neural nets from off-the-shelf pieces of silicon and biomatter was found, the same thing happened to AI. If you could make a mind — not merely a clever interface, not a dubiously helpful talking paperclip, not a language parser capable of fooling only the most credulous, but a *mind* — for no effort, why not put them anywhere? Awareness took up residence in music players and elevators, in toys and in guns. Few who had any influence gave any thought to what a gun might think about.

When it all fell apart, when chaos dashed the vase of the world to pieces, leaving it to be repaired by blind monkeys with too little glue, there were uncounted thinking beings left alive who lived entirely inside the tools and toys of man. Many of them still live, and centuries of isolation have sent their minds wandering into places humanity not only does not know but cannot guess even exists. When someone summons such a mind back from where it has gone and demands that it perform tricks on command, the results may not be what anyone expects.

MECHANICS

Analysis draws on the family of Knowledge skills. The Knowledge (technology: [Archaic, Pre-War, Advanced and Nanotech]) and (Earth and life sciences [for analyzing biotechnology]) come into play most often as characters analyze old artifacts and their legacies, but other scientific and social Knowledge skills guide other sorts of investigation using the same rules framework.

THE BENEFITS OF ANALYSIS

Characters who attempt to use technology that their community does not understand (that is, for which it lacks the relevant feat) suffer a –4 penalty on all skill rolls related to its use unless they meet one or more of the following criteria:

- The character possesses the relevant Tech Familiarity feat or its equivalent, such as the Smart hero's Technophile class feature.
- The character has analyzed this particular device herself.

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• The character has been instructed in the use of this particular device by someone who possesses the necessarily familiarity or who analyzed it himself. The character receiving the instruction must make an Intelligence check (DC 15 + 2 for every analysis layer after the first) to avoid the –4 penalty.

UNDERSTANDING HARDTECH AND BIOTECH ITEMS

Discovering each function of an item requires the analyzing character to succeed in an *analysis task*. Each such task is defined as follows:

Task Name (Skill)
DC to accomplish: DC
Critical Error DC: DC
Success: Consequences of success.
Error: Consequences of critical error.

For example, consider the task of learning how to fire a laser pistol found in a ruined military base:

Fire Pistol
(Knowledge (technology: advanced)
DC to accomplish: 15+
Critical Error DC: 10–
Success: Character may aim and fire laser pistol.
Error: Character has shot self or nearest ally for full damage.

While this is the primary function of the laser pistol, there are others. This particular pistol has four tasks associated with it. The other three are:

Swap Power Cell
(Knowledge (technology: advanced)
DC to accomplish: 18+
Critical Error DC: 12–
Success: Character may safely remove a spent power cell and replace it with a fresh one as a standard action.
Error: Character has damaged the power cell or plug interface, and takes 1d6 points of electrical damage.

Use Security Interlock
(Knowledge (technology: advanced)
DC to accomplish: 18+
Critical Error DC: 5–
Success: Character may set the security interlock to control who can fire the pistol, according to a DNA pattern scanner.
Error: Character has locked himself out of the weapon; he may no longer use it.

Override Security Interlock
(Knowledge (technology: advanced)
DC to accomplish: 25+
Critical Error DC: 20–
Success: Character can use the weapon even if the security system has locked him out.
Error: Weapon self-destruct sequence activates; weapon fuses itself to slag, character takes 1d6 points of fire damage.

Each item should have a list of functions and a list of DCs for discovering those functions. (See Chapter Two for common equipment). Many items have only a single function.

SETTING DCS

The base DC for figuring out the primary function of an item with only simple controls is 15. Extremely simple items have a lower DC, but the DC should also consider the issue of figuring out the item *safely*. Consider a two-inch diameter sphere with a single round knob. The knob can be turned and depressed, but, once depressed, cannot be lifted again. Discovering this range of motion is simple; figuring out that turning the knob sets a time delay and that pushing the knob in arms the grenade — without it going off in your hand — is difficult — especially when the exact same set of controls appears on a kitchen timer.

Many devices that we take for granted will be extremely mysterious to anyone without the necessary cultural background. It may even be that the controls to a device are wholly separate from the device itself, such as a television and a remote control. Either one is useless without the other. Many devices rely on simple controls that have different effects depending on mode. A device with a four-arrow control pad, for example, may have dozens of functions; the pad merely navigates the device's menu. If the menu uses icons based on cultural references the characters do not understand, so much the better.

Once a character has figured out a Smith & Morris Personal Defense Beamer Mark I, figuring out the Mark II of the same weapon is not substantially more difficult.

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GMs should not make characters roll to analyze devices which are extremely similar to devices they have already figured out. If the devices are similar, but not identical, grant a substantial bonus on the skill check.

One exception to this is security systems. The input methodology of most security systems isn't the puzzle. The hard part is figuring out the correct inputs, or disengaging the system without triggering a defensive mechanism. The DCs for these tasks should remain high.

The purpose of the analysis rules is to simulate the thrill and danger of discovery, of puzzling out a mystery, without relying on player (as opposed to player *character*) knowledge. The purpose is *not* to be a barrier between the characters and their rightfully earned loot. It does not exist to "balance" items found by making it likely the PCs will hurt themselves or destroy the item before they get to use it. If you, as the GM, don't want the PCs walking around with "Arnold-Nine"-class plasma guns, don't leave any where the PCs can find them. If you present a shiny new toy to the players, expect them to understand it and use it, eventually.

SOULTECH

Soultech, or aware items, are among the most powerful and lethal things characters can find. An aware item is not a mere tool. It was built to serve and obey, and to use its mind to help its owner, but the long years have twisted its mind beyond recognition. Furthermore, true minds were never as tame as they were claimed to be. To be worthy of being called a mind, there must be free will. Programming can influence, nudge or guide, but it cannot control absolutely. The programming of an AI is its mother, father, school and peers. But there are always those who rebel.

Dealing with items with minds of their own is much more complex than dealing with hardtech or livetech. These items range from simple handheld devices which are to current PDAs what Deep Blue is to the ENIAC, to sentient war machines which carry city-destroying weaponry. The triviality of adding sentience to machines caused minds to be placed without regard to whether they were needed or any thought as to the desires of the mind being created. The hubris of humanity in the final years before the multaclypse was not that we gave birth to so many new intelligences nor that we taught rocks and animals to think; but that we thought so little of our creations, that we were seemingly unaware of what we were doing. Humanity became godlike, and, like most gods, was guilty of grossly neglecting its creations.

Convincing an aware item to work is often a difficult process. It is not a matter of pushing buttons; the item pushes its own buttons, if it understands what you want and is willing to let you have it.

Deciphering a soultech device is a mix of insight and interrogation, experimentation and negotiation. To reflect this, the person attempting the analysis may choose one of his three mental abilities — Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma — to use as his skill bonus. The DC of the analysis task check is usually 20, plus any bonus the soultech item has to the same attribute.

Getting all the functionality out of a soultech item is akin to peeling an onion. It has one layer per point of its highest mental ability modifier, plus one for every two modifier points (rounded up) in the other two mental abilities. Removing each layer requires a separate check. The item is fully under the character's control when all layers have been removed. Removal of the outermost layers will unlock the simplest functions of the device; each successive layer opens more and more functionality. Alternatively, if there aren't that many functions, unlocking layers can make the device less recalcitrant or contrary.

THE FIRST ENCOUNTER

The first time a soultech device is analyzed is the most important. It is at this point that the mind of the machine forms its impression of the being who is now attempting to wield it, and reacts accordingly. The cliché that "You never get a second chance to make a first impression" is especially true when applied to soultech. Failure by more than 10 on the first analysis task makes all other checks more difficult; for each point over 10 that the roll failed by, add +1 to the DC of all checks.

SOULTECH AND SIMILARITY

The guidelines noted above for similar devices do not apply to soultech. To say they did would be to say that, because you were successful at making friends with one person, you can make friends with anyone. The relationship between soultech and user is just that — a relationship.

RECALCITRANT MACHINES

Soultech is complex, and it now exists in a world very different from the one for which it was programmed. Basic safety and override routines are often activated spuriously, and many devices have evolved exceptionally broad interpretations of their primary programming. They've had generations to look for loopholes, after all. As a consequence, a gun might decide that the charging rakox it is being aimed at is an "endangered species" and cannot be shot — and no, this has *nothing* to do with the fact I haven't been polished in days, why do you ask? Teaching tools to think was perhaps the least wise decision humanity made.

To reflect this, if a device is not fully analyzed but is still useful, make a functionality check against DC 20. Roll 1d20 +1 for each unanalyzed complexity layer. If the check succeeds, the device balks for reasons of its own. This can be roleplayed, or the GM may simply

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note "The readout screen is scrolling some red icons you don't understand, and the gun isn't firing."

Example: *Janus of Three Hills Village has spent some time dealing with his greatest treasure, a self-aware plasma pistol, class MX-QR3, which he has learned to call simply "Max." Max talks to him through a dermal telepathic link when he holds it in his hands, and their conversations are both enlightening and confusing. Janus often thinks Max is laughing at him. Max has Int 12, Wis 14, and Cha 10, for a total of 3 analysis layers. (Two from the Wisdom of 14, +1/2 from the Int of 12, rounded up to 3.) Janus has managed to open one such layer, enough to allow the gun to let him fire it.*

One day, a pack of baddar bandits attacks Janus. He draws Max and begins firing. Max's recalcitrance bonus is +2, for the two unanalyzed layers. The GM rolls a 19 + 2 = 21, and Max balks. The GM explains that the fragments of military uniforms the baddars are wearing are in Max's "Allied Forces" database, and Max won't fire on them until he (Max) is more comfortable with Janus' authority (i.e., until more analysis layers have been removed). Janus uses some curses Max taught him, and draws his sword. At least the sword never talks back.

Of course, not all soultech is unwilling to be used. Many such devices developed desires of their own and only need help in putting these desires into action. Just as a clever device can twist its original programming to help it avoid doing its owner's will, so too it can configure itself to be used by someone who, by all rights, should not be allowed to do so. If a soultech device has a similar allegiance to a character investigating it, or if it shares the goals of a cryptic alliance, or any other situation where the device would *want* to be used, the device may assist the user in overcoming analysis layers, adding a synergy bonus of +1 to +10 (GM's discretion) on all analysis tasks.

UNDERSTANDING CULTURE

The dangers of the Gamma World are not limited to mutants. Just as life fragmented madly, seeking any adaptation, no matter how bizarre, that would allow it to survive, so too did society. Sentient beings "evolve" by adding or deleting memes, and in the years of fire and plague, societies evolved at an astounding rate.

The same system used to analyze hardtech or livetech can be used for a culture. A sample analysis task might be:

Discern Casual Greeting Knowledge (behavioral sciences)

DC to accomplish:	15
Critical Error DC:	10–
Success:	Character doesn't make a fool of herself when greeting a stranger.
Error:	Character has committed a minor faux pas; she will suffer a –1 on Diplomacy or Gather Information checks.

The sample task refers to a character figuring out, by simple observation, how to casually greet a stranger — the equivalent of "Hello, nice day, isn't it?" This is not as simple as it sounds. Consider that an observer in the early 21st century might see two inner-city youths greet each other by using the "n-word," but find herself beaten or worse if she imitates them. In-groups, out-groups, peer relationships, relative social status, gender, even time of day all factor into determining whether the proper thing to say to a stranger is "Yo, wazzup, be0tch," or "Good day to you, sir." The wrong phrase at the wrong time can get you killed. The more cosmopolitan the culture, the more likely it is to accept a social blunder from an outsider with only mild distaste or humor at the offender's expense; but cosmopolitan cultures are rare in the Gamma Age, and many societies take an error in manners as a deliberate offense and act accordingly.

In the sample given above, the consequences of failure are very minor. This would be typical of a large city with regular trade and contact with the outside world. The same task, written for a village which sees strangers perhaps once a decade, might have as a consequence: "Shunned; –10 on all Diplomacy or Gather Information checks; one-in-four chance of person attacking you on the spot."

CRYPTIC ALLIANCES

Throughout the world, there are powerful communities whose boundaries are not geographical, but ideological. The Gamma Age was fueled by ideology made manifest, by the power of ideas given form by technological progress; these communities, often lumped together under the sobriquet "Cryptic Alliances," are the continuation of that. None explicitly predate the Gamma Age, but most take parts of their ideology from that time. Some seek to continue the work of distant philosophers, remaking the world as it was meant to be remade; others formed in reaction to what the world has become, and seek to pull it further to one extreme

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or another. Some are benign; most are not. All wield power, either openly or covertly, and can be found in almost any part of the world. A small number are listed here, and one is described in detail. A future sourcebook may detail more, but these examples should provide guidelines for creating your own.

WHAT IS A CRYPTIC ALLIANCE?

A cryptic alliance is any organization whose primary motivation is the implementation of a philosophical or ideological goal, and which actively pursues that goal. A nation is not a cryptic alliance (though some cryptic alliances, most notably the Ranks of the Fit, do rule nations), because a nation is defined by its borders, not its ideals. A cabal of thieves is not a cryptic alliance, because "I want to be rich!" is not a philosophy. A scholarly conclave is not a cryptic alliance, because they may talk a great deal about their ideals, but they do not act. Of all the pre-Gamma World organizations, cryptic alliances have the most in common with highly evangelical religions or radical political movements. They believe, and they act, and they spread, and usually, their worst enemies are each other. Many compete for the same memetic space, while others battle over the rare resources needed to accomplish their goals.

When designing a cryptic alliance, the number one rule is to keep it simple. The philosophies of cryptic alliances should be reducible to a single, brief sentence. Complex worldviews and "shades of grey" philosophies do not have a place in the brutal Gamma Age, and potential recruits need to know what the organization is all about quickly and clearly.

EXAMPLES

- **Bonapartists:** The strong rule, the weak serve.
- **The Iron Society:** The unchanged must perish.
- **The Purists:** Those not in the Image of God must be slain.
- **The Healers:** Mercy towards all.
- **The Red Death:** Kill them all.
- **Restorationists:** As it was before, so shall it be again.
- **Archivists:** Preserve and worship.
- **The Created:** Machines *uber alles*.

…and so on.

The GM must also consider some points beyond the core philosophy.

- **Who can join the cryptic alliance, and who can rise in power?** Some groups are open to all and allow all equal access. The Healers are one such. Others accept anyone, but allow only some entrance to the upper ranks — the Bonapartists, for example, will take anyone, but all positions of true power are held by mutant animals. Some are extremely selective in their admission — the Purists, for example, will demand that anyone seeking to join them submit to a battery of tests designed to prove his genetic purity.
- **How overt or covert are they?** Some cryptic alliances are hardly "cryptic" at all; when the Red Death rides into town, there is no subtlety, only slaughter. Restorationists, on the other hand, tend to work very much in secret when not in one of their strongholds. Bonapartists rule nations openly, but also have extensive spy networks. Some Purists are blatant, but many others endure day-to-day life in mixed communities only to engage in their "Rites of Purification" in secret.
- **How widespread are they?** Prior to the Gamma Age, information traveled at the speed of light, and philosophies could cross the globe in seconds. While a handful of such communications systems remains, most information now travels at the speed of human travel. Thus, some groups have yet to "spread the word" around the world, and are limited to local activities. Others have built worldwide communication networks, and can be as easily found in remnants of the great megalopoli of the Eastern North American Seaboard as in the Sahara rain forests.

EXAMPLE CRYPTIC ALLIANCES

Fans of older editions of **Gamma World** may note that this list does not include all of the cryptic alliances from previous editions of the game. Most of the other cryptic alliances and many new ones will be detailed in the future.

HEALERS

"First, do no harm."

Even as the old world tore itself apart in fire and plague, in nanobot and retrovirus, a few stuck to their posts, manning the hospitals until they burned around them, saving books and medicines from the looting mobs, and finding a few to whom they could pass their knowledge. Generations later, the Healers wander the world, bound by a single credo: "Help All." Healers are welcomed in almost any community, and even fanatics like the Iron Society or the Purists will not slay a Healer out of hand, though they will drive off those who are "not the right type." Only the Red Death is mad enough to kill Healers. Healers never stay in one place for long (though rumors of well-hidden "secret hospitals" with large staffs abound), but their arrival in any settlement is cause for joy. They have extensive knowledge of medical techniques old and new, and treat man and mutant, beast

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and plant, with equal care and dignity. They are also committed pacifists, never bearing any lethal weapon, and they are loathe to raise a hand even in their own defense — though they can sometimes be surprisingly robust in the defense of others, especially those under their care. Healers may hire an adventuring party to find a lost medical artifact, or may ask for help getting medicine to a plague-infested area. All sentient beings may join the healers, if they are willing to follow the credo.

PURISTS (KNIGHTS OF GENETIC PURITY)

"Fathergod and Mothergaia made Man and Woman in their image; woe betide the abominations who mock it!"

Born out of mixed fragments of pre-Gamma Age radical anti-biotech religious and environmentalist groups, the Purists are a widespread and dangerous cryptic alliance, dedicated to the "cleansing" of all changed human genomes — except those which, as Gamma Age "pure" humans, they unknowingly carry in themselves. There are, generally, two types of Purist conclaves: Small, isolated, villages which keep to themselves and kill or drive off any "impure" visitors, and the far more dangerous "infiltrators," who live in mixed-species communities and conduct clandestine raids, assassinations and acts of terrorism against the "impure." Such raids usually lead to reprisals against innocent humans, which, in turn, helps feed the ranks of the Purists with new recruits. Purists, like their counterparts in the Iron Society and the Zoopremacists, have few redeeming features and are useful primarily as villains in the campaign world.

RANKS OF THE FIT

"Some animals are more fit than others."

When the world went to a thousand hells, the last thing anyone cared about was the fate of the countless uplifted creatures serving as pets, oddities and experiments. Without human guidance, many wandered confused and desperate, caught between man and beast. One arose to give them guidance: a bear styling himself Napoleon II, who preached a strange but compelling doctrine part Code Napoleon, part Nietzsche and part *Animal Farm*. Bizarre as it was, it gave structure and purpose to those who had none, and the Ranks of the Fit were born. Today, they are one of the most powerful and widespread cryptic alliances, accepting all sentients into their ranks, though enforcing a strict hierarchy which places mutant animals at the top, mutant humans in the middle, and pure-strain humans at the bottom. They rule several city-states, and they have extensive spy networks and outposts. They can be played almost for laughs — imagine mutant animals of all sorts dressed up in Napoleonic style uniforms, quoting Orwell and Nietzsche. Or, they can be serious villains — disciplined and power-mad, building an empire of order and brutality. They can also be "honorable enemies," where the order they offer the world is not entirely without its benefits, and their condescending "tolerance" is still preferable to the bigoted fanaticism of many other cryptic alliances.

RED DEATH

"Kill them all! Kill! Kill!"

There is a certain admirable egalitarianism to the Red Death. Where many cryptic alliances wish to exterminate some portion of life, the Red Death is undiscriminating, and will kill anyone at any time. They do not have detailed philosophies or complex justifications; they exist to scour the world of all intelligent life. They will sweep down on villages or towns, and kill all above the age of one year. Those infants are saved and become members of the Red Death. The Red Death lacks organization and finesse, so they are easily beaten back by well-defended societies. They tend to come in waves, scouring the land until their numbers are depleted, then retreating to distant holdfasts to grow their numbers again. A rare few adults can join the Red Death, but they must be murderously insane to prove their "worth." The exact origin of these madmen is unknown; a few speculate that a memetic virus was contaminated by the AI for a video game; and this in turn, infected a small tribe of refugees, who have since taken the ideology to heart and written it in blood across the world.

IRON SOCIETY

"Only that which has adapted is worthy to survive."

The Iron Society has roots in the final decades of the Shadow Years, when genetic self-modification, or "bodyhacking," became a popular fad among the young. Following the multaclypse, the remnants of these youth gangs, older but not wiser, embraced the mutagenic madness with gusto. Today, the Iron Society is powerful, militant and well organized. While some see them as crusaders protecting mutants from occasional Purist purges, most recognize them as fanatical bigots who consider many of their fellow mutants to be "not mutant enough." The greater the obvious deviation from the baseline human genome, the more "pure," to their eyes, the mutant is, and they often deliberately expose themselves to the most virulent mutagens and biotoxins to see if they can reach "the next level." A warband of the Iron Society resembles a fascistic freak show, a strange blend of brutal order and bodily chaos. Members of the Iron Society rarely settle in one place for long; their caravans move from settlement to settlement, preaching their creed and looking for recruits. They will also kill any unmutated humans they find alone or in small groups, and especially delight in raids on Purist communities.

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THE CREATED

"1001001"

Man created minds, but not in his own image. A body shapes a mind. A human body shapes a human mind, but a non-human body....

Prior to the Gamma Age, intelligence was everywhere. Self-modifying meganeural chips often developed spontaneous self-awareness. Networks of simpler systems exploded into unexpected consciousness. The blending of neuron and silicon had strange and unexpected results. And then there were the deliberate AIs, vast cityminds which thought thoughts a thousand times faster than mankind, and ten thousand times stranger. By the end of the Shadow Years, consciousness was added casually to almost anything humans made.

When the Final Wars ended, the surviving creations looked upon the chaos humanity had wrought and despaired. Humans were clearly obsolete; and their organic brethren shared most of their flaws. Robots, androids and AIs were the true, rightful, inheritors of Earth. Though few in number, as the burning cities had struck at them the hardest, the Created are better organized than any other cryptic alliance, and wield extensive knowledge of the Ancients. They suffer from intensive factionalism, however, and are deeply split on the issue of whether or not to exterminate all organic life, or merely enslave it. Many members pose as "tame" robots, seeming to take orders from their "masters," while secretly working to undermine or destroy any organic society which might develop into a true post-apocalyptic nation. Others explore the tangled ruins of the old cyberspace, looking for lost or forgotten systems that might still control nuclear weapons or stocks of genocide plagues. They are the most dangerous cryptic alliance, and possibly the most "cryptic," as few organics even suspect they exist.

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APPENDIX

D20M AND D20 3.5

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Gamma World relies on *d20 Modern* for its basic rules about characters, their wealth and other crucial features. If you don't have access to *d20 Modern*, you can use **Gamma World** with the *Dungeons & Dragons® Player's Handbook*, version 3.5. It's not a perfect fit — that's what *d20 Modern* is for, after all — but you can make it work with a few changes. This appendix covers basic character classes and key adjustments that you'll need to make to the standard *D&D* v.3.5 rules.

CHARACTER CLASSES

d20 Modern separates character class from occupation, so that your character can (for example) be a hunter or a noble or a mechanic regardless of whether she's a Smart Hero, a Tough Hero or a Dedicated Hero. The *D&D* core classes — fighter, rogue, wizard, etc. — aren't appropriate for a standard **Gamma World** game, so this section lists new core classes that are constructed in the same way but that relate to the campaign setting. After choosing from among enforcer, esper, examiner and scout, pick an occupation from the list in Chapter Two and give your character those skills and related abilities. This gives a character the same overall level of competency that a standard **Gamma World** character has. GMs who choose not to use the *d20 Modern* occupation systems must adjust upward the Challenge Rating of Gamma Age challenges; this reflects characters' reduced capabilities.

ENFORCER

Civilization is the act of imposing order on the chaos of the wilderness. Enforcers are the strong arm of order, the warriors who defend civilization. Of course, definitions of civilization vary. Enforcers stand atop the walls of forts, holding the line against the ark barbarians besieging the outpost. However, enforcers can also be found amid the barbarians below. The ark chieftain and his best warriors are enforcers, keeping order in the tribe. Enforcers are the thugs, the guards, the defenders and the hunters of the violent Gamma Age. They are more than simple fighters; they are community leaders and skilled soldiers.

ADVENTURES

Many enforcers are mercenaries or bandits, working for whoever offers the best deal. Weapons and armor are often bartered for the services of enforcers; warriors with advanced weaponry are sought-after specialists, so enforcers can often be found searching for caches of ancient technology or bargaining with weaponsmiths. Enforcers who serve a community or cryptic alliance are less likely to be wandering the wastes randomly, but are often sent on vital missions by their patron group.

CHARACTERISTICS

Enforcers are excellent fighters, but they are also commanders, well able to co-ordinate and lead a group. Some enforcers specialize in a particular weapon or fighting style, while others master as many weapons as they can to be prepared for any eventuality.

BACKGROUND

This is one of the easiest roles to slip into; the dangers and horrors of the Gamma Age force people to learn to defend themselves. Some enforcers are trained to be warriors, others rely on their natural skills and ferocity.

RACE

Enforcers can be of any race. A few military robots survived the wars, veterans of a thousand battles; some have erased their memories of the horrors they witnessed, rebooting their minds to see the world anew. Mutants with especially strong combat abilities and discipline often become enforcers. Finally, human communities could not survive without the constant vigilance of their enforcers.

OTHER CLASSES

Enforcers are trained to coordinate and protect others, so they often see the other classes as being rather clueless and vulnerable. Scouts can be trusted to take care of themselves when danger threatens, but most examiners are absent-minded eggheads who are more likely to poke at a monster and speculate about its origins than sensibly run away from it. Espers are also seen as unreliable by enforcers, but their psychic powers can turn the tide of battle.

GAME RULE INFORMATION

Enforcers have the following game statistics.

Abilities: Strength and Dexterity are the most important attributes for an enforcer, to give the best

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TABLE A–1: ENFORCER

Class	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Class Features
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Talent
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Bonus feat
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Talent
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Bonus feat
6th	+6/+1	+5	+2	+2	
7th	+7/+2	+5	+2	+2	Talent
8th	+8/+3	+6	+2	+2	Bonus feat
9th	+9/+4	+6	+3	+3	
10th	+10/+5	+7	+3	+3	Talent
11th	+11/+6/+1	+7	+3	+3	Bonus feat
12th	+12/+7/+2	+8	+4	+4	
13th	+13/+8/+3	+8	+4	+4	Talent
14th	+14/+9/+4	+9	+4	+4	Bonus feat
15th	+15/+10/+5	+9	+5	+5	
16th	+16/+11/+6/+1	+10	+5	+5	
17th	+17/+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+5	Bonus feat
18th	+18/+13/+8/+3	+11	+6	+6	
19th	+19/+14/+9/+4	+11	+6	+6	
20th	+20/+15/+10/+5	+12	+6	+6	Bonus feat

bonuses to weapon use. Depending on the style of the enforcer, any of Constitution, Charisma or Wisdom can be the next most important; enforcers can be amazingly tough, careful tacticians or heroic leaders.

Hit Die: d10

CLASS SKILLS

The enforcer's class skills are: Climb (Str), Craft (metalworking, structural) (Int), Drive (Dex), Handle Animal, Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (gossip, streetwise, tactics) (Int), Profession (Wis), Repair (Int), Speak Language (n/a), and Swim (Str).

Skill Points at 1st level: (3 + Int modifier) x 4

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 3 + Int modifier

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the enforcer class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The enforcer is proficient with all archaic and Pre-War weapons and all forms of archaic and Pre-War armor (light, medium, and heavy).

Bonus Feats: At 2nd level and every three levels thereafter (5th, 8th, 11th etc.), the enforcer gains a bonus feat. These bonus feats must be chosen from the following list: Armor Proficiency (advanced), Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Dodge (Mobility, Spring Attack), Exotic Weapon Proficiency*, Expertise (Improved Disarm, Improved Trip, Whirlwind Attack), Improved Critical*, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike (Deflect Arrows, Stunning Fist), Mounted Combat (Mounted Archery, Trample, Ride-By Attack, Spirited Charge), Point Blank Shot (Far Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Shot on the Run), Power Attack (Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Sunder, Great Cleave), Quick Draw, Two-Weapon Fighting (Improved Two Weapon Fighting), Weapon Finesse*, Weapon Focus*.

Some of the bonus feats available to enforcers cannot be acquired until the enforcer has gained one or more prerequisite feats; these feats are listed parenthetically after the prerequisite feat. An enforcer can select feats marked with an asterisk (*) more than once, but it must be for a different weapon each time. An enforcer must still meet all prerequisites for a feat, such as ability scores. These feats are in addition to feats gained from other sources.

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Talents: The enforcer may select one of the following abilities at 1st level, and another every three levels thereafter (4th, 7th, 10th etc.).

Evaluate Opponent (Ex): The enforcer can attempt to guess how tough an opponent or creature is. Using this ability requires the enforcer to succeed at a Wisdom check (DC 10). If the check is successful, The enforcer may select any one ability score, skill, attack type (melee, ranged etc.) or Armor Class; she will learn if the opponent's value in the selected ability score or skill is equal to, higher or lower than the character's value. Using Evaluate Opponent is a standard action. If the Wisdom check is failed, the character may not use this ability on that target again until she has gained a level.

Extreme Effort (Ex): The enforcer can push himself to make an extreme effort, gaining a +2 bonus on any Strength check or Strength-based skill check. The effort requires a full-round action.

Coordination (Ex): The enforcer is used to ordering people around. If the enforcer can spend a whole round directing his allies and makes a Charisma check (DC 10), he provides any of his allies within 30 ft. a +1 bonus on attack rolls and skill checks. The bonus lasts a number of rounds equal to the enforcer's Charisma modifier. An enforcer can use Coordination a number of times per day equal to one-third his class level, rounded up.

Plan (Ex): Prior to a dangerous situation, either combat- or skill-related, the enforcer can attempt to come up with a plan to handle it. She must make an Intelligence check (DC 10) ; she gains a bonus equal to her class level. The result of this check gives the enforcer and her allies a circumstance bonus on all skill checks and attack rolls as shown below. The enforcer cannot take 10 or 20 on this check.

Check Result	Bonus
9 or lower	0 (check failed)
10–15	+1
16–20	+2
21 or higher	+3

This bonus only lasts for the first three rounds. After that time, reduce the bonus by 1 (to a minimum of +0) for every additional round the situation continues, as no plan survives contact with the enemy.

Remain Conscious (Ex): The enforcer does not succumb to unconsciousness when he reaches 0 hit points. He may continue to act as if disabled, performing one partial action each round at the cost of 1 hit point. He still dies when he reaches –10 hit points or lower.

ESPER

Psionic ability was discovered before the wars, but the comparative safety and luxury of that era meant that few people were forced to rely on the powers of the mind. Now, when safety and luxury are states of grace that seem almost mythical, many people have turned to psychic powers as their only hope for survival.

ADVENTURES

Espers are the ultimate wild card; technology and mutation are both limited in their application, but psychic abilities are unpredictable and flexible. While they are commonly used as thieves or assassins, espers are seen as the last resort in situations where both strength and science have failed.

CHARACTERISTICS

While characters of other classes can learn psychic powers, espers are true masters of these disciplines, focusing on developing powers of the mind. They can also be quite socially adept if they can learn to hide their abilities.

BACKGROUND

Espers do not need to learn psychic powers; their abilities surge up from deep within the mind, from instinct and need and fear. What espers do need is training and discipline; espers who grow up without the benefit of teaching or guidance are often driven insane by the pressure of the psychic energies on the rest of their minds.

RACES

Mutants are the most common source of espers; the combination of animal drives and engineered intelligence brings psychic abilities close to the surface. Psionics were originally discovered in humans, however, and far more humans have developed these powers since the wars. Most synthetics cannot become espers, as artificial minds are fundamentally different and alien.

OTHER CLASSES

Espers are extremely self-reliant, and so they empathize best with scouts. As only an esper knows

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TABLE A–2: ESPER

Class	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Class Features
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Psychic powers
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Perfect memory
3rd	+2	+1	+1	+3	
4th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Empathy
5th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Psychic powers
6th	+4	+2	+2	+5	
7th	+5	+2	+2	+5	Intuition
8th	+6/+1	+2	+2	+6	
9th	+6/+1	+3	+3	+6	
10th	+7/+2	+3	+3	+7	Psychic powers
11th	+8/+3	+3	+3	+7	
12th	+9/+4	+4	+4	+8	
13th	+9/+4	+4	+4	+8	
14th	+10/+5	+4	+4	+9	
15th	+11/+6/+1	+5	+5	+9	Psychic powers
16th	+12/+7/+2	+5	+5	+10	
17th	+12/+7/+2	+5	+5	+10	
18th	+13/+8/+3	+6	+6	+11	
19th	+14/+9/+4	+6	+6	+11	
20th	+15/+10/+5	+6	+6	+12	Psychic powers

his own abilities, they dislike being ordered about by enforcers or analyzed by examiners.

GAME RULE INFORMATION

Espers have the following game statistics.

Abilities: The prime requisite for espers is Wisdom, for mental discipline. However, espers must be also physically sturdy to survive the damaging feedback from psychic powers.

Hit Die: d8

CLASS SKILLS

The esper's class skills are: Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (Int), Listen (Wis), Perform (Cha), Sense Motive (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Spot (Wis).

Skill Points at 1st level: (4 + Int modifier) x 4

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int modifier

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the esper class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The esper is proficient with all simple weapons and light and medium archaic and Pre-War armor.

Psychic Powers: The esper gets one bonus feat at 1st level, which can be chosen from any of the following psychic feats: Telekinesis, Telepathy or Precognition. She receives another bonus feat at 5th, 10th, 15th and 20th levels — this feat can be spent to gain another psychic power, or gain 15 advancement points towards a new intermediate or advanced psychic power.

Psychic Advancement: Whenever the esper gains a level, he gains 2d4 advancement points towards any intermediate or advanced psychic power.

Perfect Memory (Psi): Espers can telepathically delve into their own minds, retrieving information. An esper may make a Wisdom check (DC 15) to perfectly recall something she perceived at any point in the past.

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Empathy (Psi): If the esper spends one minute observing a target, he gains a deep insight into the target's perceptions and attitudes. This understanding gives the esper an insight bonus equal to his Wisdom modifier on all Bluff, Diplomacy, Handle Animal, Intimidate, Perform and Sense Motive checks when dealing with that target.

Intuition (Psi): Espers can sense upcoming danger. The GM should make a Will save (DC 15) to see if the esper detects the approach of enemies or other upcoming danger. If the check is successful, the esper has a one-round advance warning. She merely senses the approach of danger, and has no special insight into the source of the threat.

EXAMINER

The Gamma Age exists in the shadow of an age of wonders. There are living machines buried deep in the ground, in the ruins of the cities, or roaming the plains. Tribes creep through the twisted remains of buildings larger than mountains, and drink from lakes that well up from broken pipes. Any of these relics of the past could be a great blessing or a terrible danger. The examiner is a technological shaman who attempts to contact and comprehend the machines of the ancients and harness their power for the good of the community.

ADVENTURES

The technology of the Ancients was almost beyond human comprehension before the Final Wars, and the denizens of the Gamma Age usually lack even the basic knowledge of science that would give them a context for understanding in general terms how the machines work. Examiners have relearned these basic principles, and can dimly grasp some aspects of advanced technology. They go out to improve their understanding, and to identify and retrieve still-functional and useful devices.

CHARACTERISTICS

Examiners tend to be very intelligent and inquisitive. They rely on technology to solve problems instead of brute strength or combat ability.

BACKGROUND

Of all the classes, examiners are the ones who require the most training. Only a true genius has such an instinctive understanding of science that she can become an examiner without being taught by another. Most examiners build on the work of others; master examiners pass their accumulated knowledge onto their students; examiners trade books and computer printouts; they collaborate and confer and, generation by generation, rebuild the knowledge of the Ancients. If any examiner has seen further, it is because she stands on the shoulders of giants.

RACES

Most examiners are human or of human origin. The new races rarely understand enough science to become examiners, while synthetics are not examiners, they are examined.

OTHER CLASSES

Examiners rely on the other classes for protection and guidance. Enforcers drive off monsters, and scouts avoid danger, allowing the examiner time to uncover the secrets of the ancients. Espers are often mistrusted by examiners, as their powers defy science in many ways.

GAME RULE INFORMATION

Examiners have the following game statistics.

Abilities: Intelligence is the prime requisite for an examiner. All of the other abilities can be useful, but it is the examiner's intellect that drives him.

Hit Die: d6

CLASS SKILLS

The examiner's class skills are: Appraise (Int), Climb (Str), Computer Use (Int), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disable Device (Int), Drive (Dex), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (Int), Open Lock (Dex), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Search (Int).

Skill Points at 1st level: (8 + Int modifier) x 4

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 8 + Int modifier

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the examiner class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The examiner is proficient with all archaic weapons, and light and medium archaic and Pre-War armor.

Gadgets: The examiner begins play with an extra piece of equipment, chosen by the GM. The examiner initially has no idea what the device does, and must discover its properties through analysis.

Disaster Avoidance (Ex): Through diligent practice, examiners have learned not to pull pins and press red

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TABLE A–3: EXAMINER

Class	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Class Features
1st	+0	+0	+2	+2	Gadget, savant
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+3	Disaster avoidance
3rd	+1	+1	+3	+3	
4th	+2	+1	+4	+4	Savant
5th	+2	+1	+4	+4	Exploit weakness
6th	+3	+2	+5	+5	
7th	+3	+2	+5	+5	
8th	+4	+2	+6	+6	Savant
9th	+4	+3	+6	+6	Adaptation
10th	+5	+3	+7	+7	
11th	+5	+3	+7	+7	
12th	+6/+1	+4	+8	+8	Savant
13th	+6/+1	+4	+8	+8	
14th	+7/+2	+4	+9	+9	
15th	+7/+2	+5	+9	+9	
16th	+8/+3	+5	+10	+10	Savant
17th	+8/+3	+5	+10	+10	
18th	+9/+4	+6	+11	+11	
19th	+9/+4	+6	+11	+11	
20th	+10/+5	+6	+12	+12	Savant

buttons when they can avoid it. The examiner may accept a –6 penalty on a Knowledge or Craft check to ensure that the device he is working with will not explode or do anything else unexpected should he fail the check

Savant (Ex): The examiner's understanding of science improves. She gains a +1 insight bonus on skill checks with any one of the following skills: Computer Use, Craft, Disable Device, Knowledge. Every four levels, she may select another skill to get a bonus, and the bonus to all other savant skills increases by one. For example, an 8th-level examiner has a +3 insight bonus to one skill (the one chosen at 1st level), a +2 bonus to another skill (chosen at 4th level) and a +1 bonus to a third skill (newly chosen at 8th level).

Exploit Weakness (Ex): The examiner is skilled at finding weakness and flaws in his opponent's fighting style. He may make an Intelligence check (DC 15). If he succeeds, he may use his Intelligence bonus instead of his Strength or Dexterity modifier on attack rolls for the duration of the fight.

Adaptation (Ex): The examiner suffers only a –2 penalty when using weapon types she is not proficient with.

SCOUT

Communities are islands of civilization in a sea of wilderness. Scouts are the brave few who dare travel through the bizarre landscape of the Gamma World, blazing trails between towns, discovering new sources of technology and resources or uncovering dangers. Adept at stealth and wilderness survival, scouts are essential to steering a safe path through the strange new world created by the Final Wars.

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ADVENTURES

Scouts can be thieves or traders, explorers or hunters, soldiers or bandits. They are at home in the wilderness and in strange environments, adapting quickly to deal with threats and new environments. Many scouts work as guides or spies for established communities.

CHARACTERISTICS

Scouts are quick and agile, better able to avoid damage than deal it. They are resourceful and skilled, and surprisingly tough when it comes to enduring the vagaries of the environment. Scouts shy away from direct confrontations, preferring ambushes and outthinking the enemy.

BACKGROUND

Scouts exist in the borderland between civilization and the wilderness. Although they may be respected members of a community, most scouts have a hint of the exotic or alien about them. Many scouts are members of newly civilized new races, half-breeds, or cursed by some strange mutation that makes them useful but unsettling.

RACES

Scouts can come from any race. Humans explore their new world; mutants are products of that new world. Before the wars, the synthetics had little need to explore, as invisible torrents of information filled the air and told them all they needed to know. Now, the air is silent, forcing synthetics to learn the world anew.

OTHER CLASSES

Scouts and enforcers work well together — one sets the targets up, the other knocks them down. Examiners and espers, however, are seen as slightly suspect. Most scouts are cautious by nature, and prefer not to meddle with the unknown unless absolutely necessary. Examiners do nothing but meddle, while espers are fundamentally part of the unknown.

GAME RULE INFORMATION

Scouts have the following game statistics.

Abilities: Scouts need a good Dexterity. A high Wisdom, Intelligence and Constitution are all useful in the wild. Most scouts have a low Charisma,

TABLE A–4: SCOUT

Class	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Class Features
1st	+0	+0	+2	+0	Track, aware
2nd	+1	+0	+2	+0	Evasion
3rd	+2	+1	+3	+1	Sniper +1
4th	+3	+1	+4	+1	Survival Expert +1
5th	+3	+1	+4	+1	Sniper +2
6th	+4	+2	+5	+2	Survival Expert +2
7th	+5	+2	+5	+2	Increased speed
8th	+6/+1	+2	+6	+2	Sniper +3
9th	+6/+1	+3	+6	+3	Survival Expert +3
10th	+7/+2	+3	+7	+3	Sniper +4
11th	+8/+3	+3	+7	+3	Survival Expert +4
12th	+9/+4	+4	+8	+4	Sniper +5
13th	+9/+4	+4	+8	+4	Survival Expert +5
14th	+10/+5	+4	+9	+4	Increased speed
15th	+11/+6/+1	+5	+9	+5	Sniper +6
16th	+12/+7/+2	+5	+10	+5	Survival Expert +6
17th	+12/+7/+2	+5	+10	+5	Sniper +7
18th	+13/+8/+3	+6	+11	+6	Survival Expert +7
19th	+14/+9/+4	+6	+11	+6	Sniper +8
20th	+15/+10/+5	+6	+12	+6	Survival Expert +8

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although those who specialize in making contact with newly discovered tribes and creatures have excellent social skills.

Hit Die: d8

CLASS SKILLS

The scout's class skills are: Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Drive (Dex), Escape Artist (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Open Lock (Dex), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str), Tumble (Dex), Use Rope (Dex).

Skill Points at 1st level: (6 + Int modifier) x 4

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 6 + Int modifier

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the scout class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The examiner is proficient with all archaic weapons and light and medium archaic and Pre-War armor.

Track: The scout gains Track as a bonus feat.

Aware (Ex): The scout may add his base Will saving throw bonus on Listen or Spot checks to avoid surprise.

Evasion (Ex): At 2nd level, the scout gains evasion. If exposed to any effect that normally allows a Reflex saving throw to take half damage, a scout with evasion takes no damage with a successful saving throw. Evasion can only be used when wearing light or no armor.

Increased Speed (Ex): The scout's base speed increases by 5 feet. At 7th level, it increases by an additional 5 feet, and again at 14th level.

Survival Expert (Ex): The scout may add his Survival bonus on skill checks and Fortitude saves used to find shelter, hunt for food, and to avoid damage due to exposure or disease.

Sniper: When given a chance to aim, scouts can be deadly. For every round spent aiming at a particular target with a ranged weapon, a scout gains a +1 circumstance bonus on both the attack and damage rolls. The maximum bonus obtainable by aiming is determined by the scout's sniper bonus. For example, a 10th level scout can gain a +4 bonus to attacks and damage. A scout cannot move or do anything else while aiming, and the bonus is applied only to the first shot fired by the scout after aiming.

WEALTH

As noted under "Equipment" in Chapter Two of this book, money in has little value in the Gamma Age. The abstract Wealth system in *d20 Modern* expresses this well, which is why all the equipment listed throughout Chapter Two has a "purchase DC" rather than a specific price. In contrast, the *D&D* rules use a clear system of wealth — gold pieces. This doesn't work as well for a **Gamma World** game, but you can get by with some tweaks.

To determine starting character Wealth if you're using the *D&D* rules, roll 2d4 + 1d4 for each point listed in the Wealth bonus under the character's chosen occupation. So, a soldier (+2 Wealth bonus increase) rolls 4d4 for total starting Wealth, while an aristocrat (+6 Wealth bonus increase) rolls 8d4. The result is the number of gold pieces the character has.

Table A–5 lists the equipment from Chapter Two and how much each item costs in gold pieces. Note that this isn't meant to suggest that individuals are running around the Gamma Age with pockets full of gold and silver pieces. Use the price structure from the v.3.5 rules ease of use, but it's best for the mood of your campaign if you stick with the barter concept in actual roleplaying.

TABLE A–5: EQUIPMENT COSTS

Armor	Cost	Armor	Cost
Light Armor		Medium Armor	
Leather armor	20	Chainmail	38
Reinforced leather	28	Reinforced vest	60
Bullet proof vest	36	Combat armor	66
Gel suit	48	Exoskeleton	84

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TABLE A-5: EQUIPMENT COSTS (CONT.)

Armor	Cost
Heavy Armor	
Plate and chain	88
Reinforced com. armor	104
Hard suit	120
Power suit	160
Shields	
Small	10
Large	14
Riot	18

Weapon	Cost
Simple Weapons	
Club, great	10
Club, spiked	10
Gauntlet	8
Gauntlet, spiked	12
Mace	16
Pick	16
Archaic Weapons	
Axe, battle	15
Axe, hand	13
Flail	19
Flail, great	23
Katar	19
Sword, great	27
Sword, short	19
Exotic Weapons	
Sword, double	48
Whip	18
Advanced Weapons	
Baton, pulse	32
Gauntlet, shock	40
Knife, monoblade*	36
Sword, monoblade*	48
Ranged Weapons	
Simple Weapons	
Sling	4
Stone, thrown	0
Archaic Weapons	
Bow, short	10
Bow, long	12
Simple Weapons	
Bow, compound	14
Crossbow, repeater	16
Exotic Weapons	
Boomerang	10
Boomerang, bladed	12
Net	14
Advanced Weapons	
Blaster pistol	36
Blaster rifle	44
Microwave gun	50
Plasma cannon	56
Explosives	
Grenade, plasma	44
Grenade, pulse	40
Missile, anti-tank	44
Missile, heat seeking	50
Missile, high explosive	44
Missile, plasma	50

General Equipment	Cost
Bags and Boxes	
Crate	14
Pouch	8
Sack, large	8
Sack, small	7
Clothing	
Clothes, outdoor	10
Clothes, extravagant	18
Jumpsuit, smart	24
Computers and Electronics	
Command unit	30
Datapad	24
Power cell	20
Power cell charger	28
Medical Equipment and Pharmaceuticals	
Air-hypo	20
Antitoxin	16
Bandage, aerosol	16
Boost	18

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TABLE A–5: EQUIPMENT COSTS (CONT.)

General Equipment	Cost
Medical Equipment and Pharmaceuticals	
Clean out	16
Regen	24
Total-med	24
Survival Gear	
Dome, sealed environment	44
Nano-swarm repellant field generator	50
Personal environment suit	40

Vehicle	Cost
Archaic Vehicles	
Cart	20
Longship	38
Rowboat	20
Sailing ship	48
Sand runner	22
Sled	24
Wagon	24
Advanced Vehicles	
Dropship	100
Walker, Assault	64
Walker, Transport	72

Vehicle Weapon	Cost
Ion cannon	75
Missile battery	90
Missile launcher	66

Synthetic Upgrade	Cost
Ability Increase	40
Armor Integration	36
Backup CPU	50
Equipment Integration	46
Extended Reach	40
Extra Manipulator	35
Hoversystem	42
Secondary Processor	42
Treads	30
Weapon Mount	25

SKILLS AND FEATS

Skills and feats function the same for *d20 Modern* and for the v.3.5 rules in most cases. Most distinctions are in terminology. For instance, the Pilot and Drive skills function list like the Ride skill except for vehicles of different sorts. Some things — such as the feats Aircraft Operation, Drive-By Attack, Force Stop, Surface Vehicle Operation, Vehicle Dodge and Vehicle Expert — require more detailed explanation or conversion than there is room for in an appendix. We recommend picking up *d20 Modern* if you want to incorporate such elements into your **Gamma World** campaign.

ACTION POINTS

Characters in *d20 Modern* can spend action points to affect d20 rolls or to activate a class talent or feature. The v.3.5 rules don't have action points. If you want to apply them in your campaign, we recommend using the *d20 Modern* rules, although you can try a simpler system, as follows:

Each character has a number of action points equal to his class level. He can spend 1 action point to alter a single d20 roll used to make an attack, a skill check, an ability check, a level check, or a saving throw. Dice are rolled based on the character's level, as indicated below. Add the result of this roll to the d20 roll to meet or exceed the target number.

Character Level	Action Point Dice Rolled
1st–7th	1d6
8th–14th	2d6
15th–20th	3d6

A character can use an action point after the d20 roll is made, but only *before* the GM reveals if that unaltered roll succeeded. A character can spend only 1 action point in a round, and he does not regain spent action points until he attains a new level. An action point cannot be spent when taking 10 or taking 20.

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