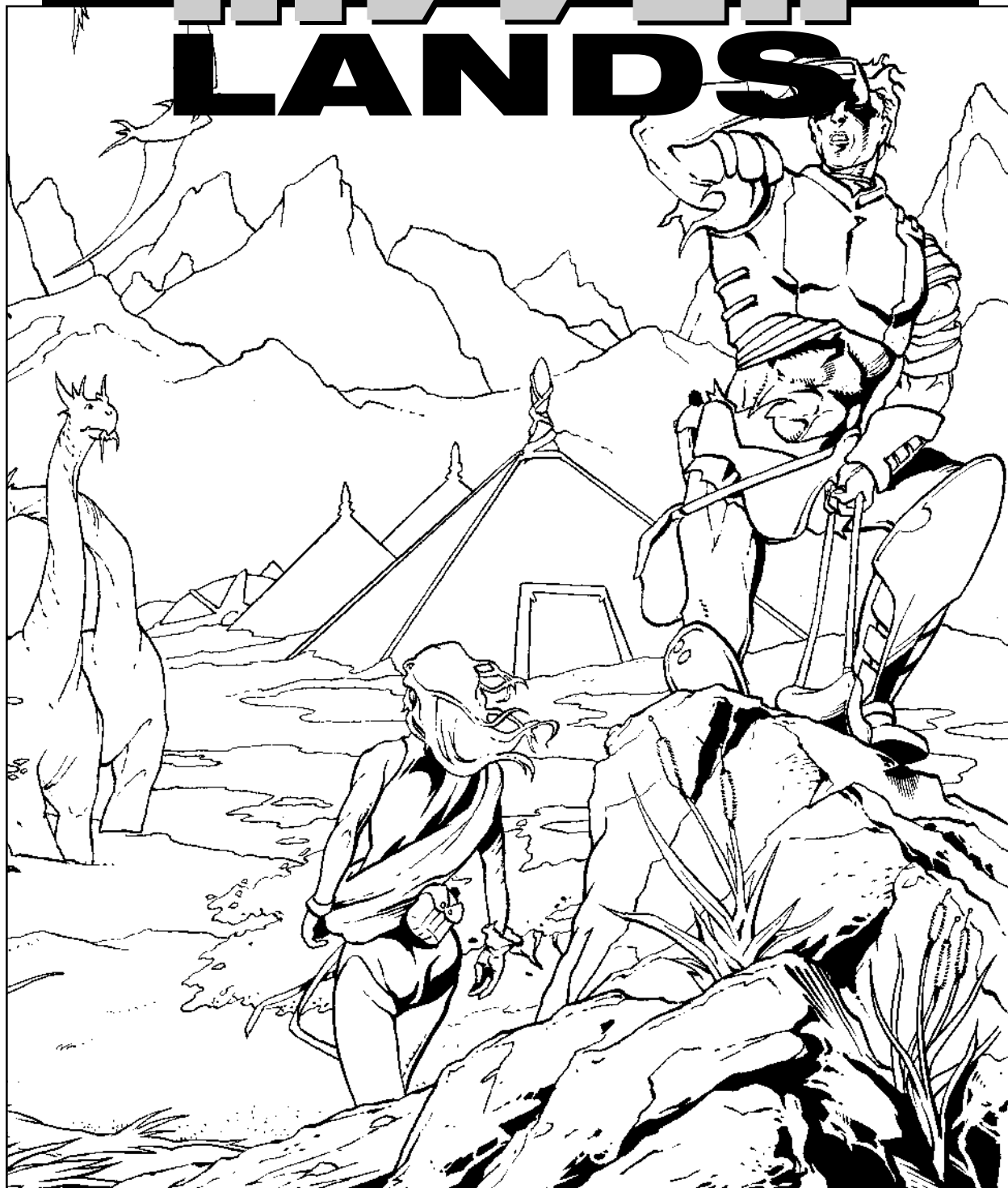


HIDDEN LANDS



Allen Thomas & Darren Watts

HIDDEN LANDS

A Sourcebook for *Champions*

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INTRODUCTION



One of the most enjoyable features of comic books are the lost and hidden civilizations that superheroes encounter: warm valleys in the Antarctic that mankind doesn't know about where wondrous beings live; strange undersea kingdoms who sometimes threaten the surface world; societies of ancient peoples who've maintained their traditions in isolation from the world; places where "weird" things happen with unusual regularity. Locations like these are instant tickets to adventure — they're rife with plots, conspiracies, culture clashes, powerful beings, fanatics, and character creation ideas.

Hidden Lands is your guide to places like that in the Champions Universe. Whether you're a player looking for a powerful group of unusual allies to help your character stave off a threat to the world (or a cool background for a new character), or you're a GM looking for a new source for plots and villains, it's got just what you need.

Chapter One, *Atlantis: The Kingdom Beneath The Waves*, details the ancient realm of Atlantis. With their roots lying tens of thousands of years ago in a wondrous pre-Cataclysm empire, the Atlanteans mostly just want to live in peace under the sea... but some of them have evil intentions toward the surface world, and all of them know that increasing contact with "Landers" is going to have a profound effect on their society.

Chapter Two, *Arcadia: The City Of Gold*, presents the Emphyreans, a race of superpowerful immortals who were alive and aware before *Homo sapiens* even existed. Most of them long ago retreated to the hidden wonderland of Arcadia in Antarctica, but more than a few walk among their human cousins, observing, learning... and sometimes helping or threatening.

Chapter Three, *Other Hidden Lands*, covers several of the less important or less well-known hidden places: Shamballah and Agharti, fonts of mystical martial arts knowledge for good or ill;

the Well Of Worlds, where the Dreamtime of the Aborigines sometimes intrudes on the real world with terrifying results; Sunday Pond, Maine, home to the mysterious Witness; and Beast Mountain, where a village of animal-men try to live their lives outside the sight of humanity.

Chapter Four has information for the GM, including GMing advice, suggestions on how to work hidden lands into your campaign, and the like. *Hidden Lands* is written for both players and GMs, so Chapter Four also includes a GM's Vault, where the GM can find the true or correct information about subjects in Chapters One through Three. However, large parts of those chapters contain information that's not known to the world at large, or even widely among the Superhuman World. To keep from chopping up the narrative flow too much, to maintain a consistency of presentation, and because it's expected the PCs will (or already have) learned most of these secrets, those chapters do contain some non-public information. The GM's Vault only contains the *really* secret information that not even the PCs should know until the GM chooses to reveal it to them.

The final chapter of the book, *Lemuria: The Dying Kingdom*, is also for the GM's eyes only. Unlike Atlantis and Arcadia, it's unlikely the PCs know much about Lemuria until they encounter it in play, and there are few (if any) ways a hero could come from there. An ancient enemy of Atlantis, and like it now an undersea kingdom, Lemuria uses a strange mystico-mechanical technology to build war-vehicles and vast engines of destruction with which to destroy its enemies... but it has sunk so far in power over the millennia that many Lemurians no longer even care about the fate of their society.

So get ready to meet some strange new heroes, fight some eerie and powerful new villains, and explore secret places of wonder — it's time to visit the *Hidden Lands*!

chapter one:



KINGDOM BENEATH THE WAVE ATLANTIS

THE UNDERSEA KINGDOM



ADDITIONAL READING

For complete details on the secret (at least to ordinary people) “pre-history” of the Champions Universe, interested readers should consult *The Turakian Age*, *The Valdorian Age*, and other *Fantasy Hero* books from Hero Games.

There have been, and will be again, many destructions of mankind arising out of many causes; the greatest have been brought about by the agencies of fire and water, and other lesser ones by innumerable other causes....

For these histories tell of a mighty power which unprovoked made an expedition against the whole of Europe and Asia, and to which your city put an end. This power came forth out of the Atlantic Ocean, for in those days the Atlantic was navigable; and there was an island situated in front of the straits which are by you called the Pillars of Heracles; the island was larger than Libya and Asia put together, and was the way to other islands, and from these you might pass to the whole of the opposite continent which surrounded the true ocean; for this sea which is within the Straits of Heracles is only a harbor, having a narrow entrance, but that other is a real sea, and the surrounding land may be most truly called a boundless continent.

Now in this island of Atlantis there was a great and wonderful empire which had rule over the whole island and several others, and over parts of the continent, and, furthermore, the men of Atlantis had subjected the parts of Libya within the columns of Heracles as far as Egypt, and of Europe as far as Tyrrhenia. This vast power, gathered into one, endeavored to subdue at a blow our country and yours and the whole of the region within the straits; and then, Solon, your country shone forth, in the excellence of her virtue and strength, among all mankind. She was preeminent in courage and military skill, and was the leader of the Hellenes. And when the rest fell off from her, being compelled to stand alone, after having undergone the very extremity of danger, she defeated and triumphed over the invaders, and preserved from slavery those who were not yet subjugated, and generously liberated all the rest of us who dwell within the pillars.

But afterwards there occurred violent earthquakes and floods; and in a single day and night of misfortune all your warlike men in a body sank into the earth, and the island of Atlantis in like manner disappeared in the depths of the sea.

—Plato, *Timaeus*

Once, long ago, there was a mighty empire — a dominion that held sway over almost all of the world and ruled from a golden city on an island at the center of a sea that no longer exists. Called Atlantis, this empire ended in a cataclysm, an apocalyptic destruction that reshaped the continents and swept the Atlanteans into the realm of myth and legend, only half-remembered by even the oldest and wisest of men. In the cataclysm’s wake the world rebuilt itself, forgetting even that the ages before ever existed.

But traces and evidence of the world before ours still remain. The city of Atlantis now sits at the bottom of the ocean, a magical realm filled with wonders that’s taking its first fearful steps toward rejoining the surface world it ruled nearly four hundred centuries ago. For the first time in thousands of years, some of its inhabitants walk among their airbreathing brethren, and occasionally the bravest of humans visit the vast deep, a place both alien to and inextricably linked to the surface world.

BEFORE THE CATACLYSM

The rise of the original Dominion of Atlantis coincided with the last days of the Valdorian Empire approximately 37,000 years ago. The Valdorian Age had been a time of adventure and romance, as dwarves, elves, and other races that once also called Earth their home faded away and mankind achieved dominance. The realms that rose after the overthrow and destruction of Kal-Turak the Ravager, including the mighty empire founded by the great hero Valdor, held sway over the Earth for more than 15,000 years, but gradually their strength and influence began to fade. One reason for this gradual, nearly imperceptible decline over millennia was the increasing indifference of the gods to the affairs of men; by the Valdorian Empire’s later days, the divine no longer responded to the prayers of the faithful and miracles were in very short supply. At the same time, the power of magic seemed to fall also... or perhaps the sorcerers and wizards simply lacked the skills of their forebears. Whatever the cause, powerful sorcery became the stuff of legend.

A terrible war between two of the most powerful kingdoms of the time — the Valdorian Empire, and her rival Abyzinia, a kingdom ruled by a long line of Sorcerer-Kings and Witch-Queens — marked the end of the Valdorian Age. The conflict lasted for centuries and gradually sapped the strength of both nations. The Valdorians could be called victors, since they accomplished their goals

of freeing the Abyzinian slaves and overthrowing the sorcerous rulers of Abyzinia, but their triumph was short-lived at best. By the year 33,000 BC, both powers had collapsed into countless small “empires” fighting over ever-shifting borders and petty squabbles. The field was ripe for the rise of new powers... and on a distant island, one such power was born.

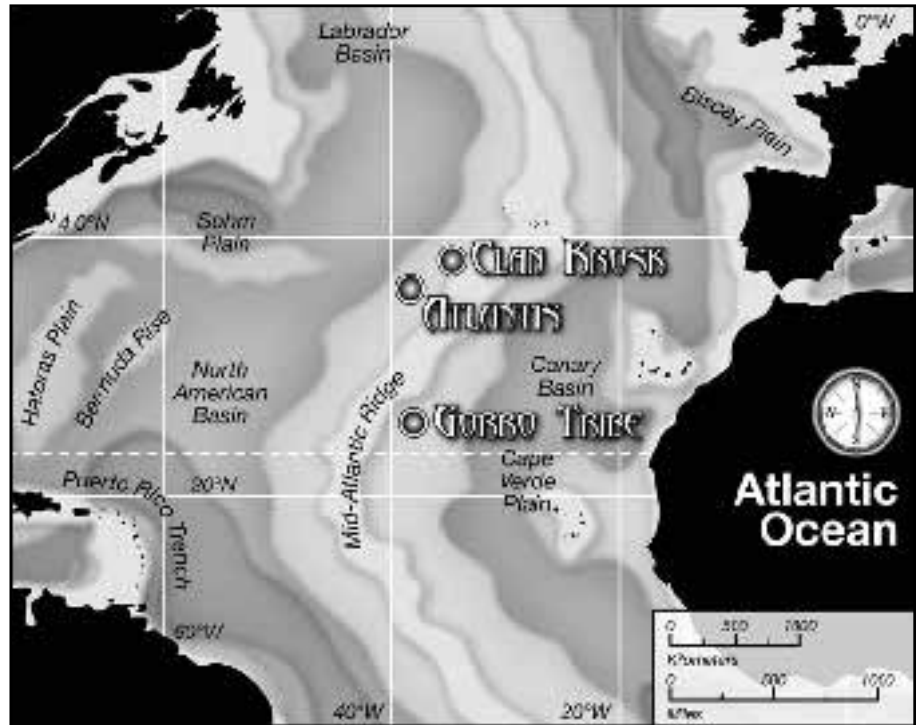
35,000 BC:

THE CREATION OF ATLANTIS

The true tale of how Atlantis became an empire is lost in legend. Modern Atlanteans know the story this way: thirty-seven thousand years ago, the great god Poseidon, the Wave-Roarer and Earth-Shaker, God of the Sea under a dozen different names, brought a mortal couple to the great island. Some say they were children of his; others claim they were simply devoted followers. Their names were Evenor and Leucippe, and when they saw the lush, fertile land Poseidon had given them, their gratitude knew no bounds. They discovered rich farmlands, extensive networks of rivers and streams, and veins of a strange, red metal they called *oricalchum*. Oricalchum was easy to mine, and soft — yet easily alloyed with other metals, then forged and hammered into metalworks that were extremely hard and held edges well. Most remarkably, objects forged of oricalchum were easy to enchant, serving as “batteries” that could store mystical power.

Evenor and Leucippe built a home on the southernmost part of the island, where they began farming and raising a family. They had a daughter whom they named Cleito. Cleito was exceedingly lovely and kind, but unfortunately for her, both her parents died soon after she reached adulthood, leaving her the sole inhabitant of the vast island. Saddened, she called upon Poseidon to help her, and when he came, the god was instantly smitten with the lovely but sad young woman. He proposed to her, and she accepted. Poseidon built a home for them both on a small hill some miles from the shore, surrounded by alternating rings of lakes and earth to guarantee them privacy from anyone who might visit their land. He caused two freshwater springs to emerge from the ground — one spring flowing with warm water, the other with water icy cold — made abundant crops grow from the fertile soil without effort.

Over the next few years, Poseidon and Cleito had five pairs of twin sons; each of the ten was a strong warrior and capable leader. The oldest brother of the first pair was named Vondarien, and Poseidon made him King over all the others, though each received a tenth of the island as his birthright. Their word for this “first among equals” kingship was *Atlan*, and so the land became known as Atlantis, which meant “the land ruled by the Atlan.” The other sons were Vondarien’s twin Gadrius, the second pair Ampheres and Euaemon, the third Mneseus and Autocthon, the fourth Elaspippus and Mestor, and the youngest twins Azaes and Diaprepes.



Each of Poseidon’s sons had in him some small measure of the god’s power and vitality, though Vondarien was clearly the most powerful of the demigods. They were each immortal and unaging, and could wield powerful magics. They mastered the use of oricalchum, and using the mysterious metal built weapons and devices powered by their own divine energies. Once they had each reached manhood and established their own sub-kingdoms on the vast island, the nine younger brothers each set out in great ships to explore and conquer the rest of the world. As they traveled, performing amazing feats and freeing the common folk from their bondage to the weak and petty minor lords who ruled the remnants of the Valdorian lands, warriors flocked to their banners. Some traveled with them on further journeys, while others moved their families and belongings to the island of Atlantis to work in the rich fields and build cities in the shadows of the capital’s spires. Others remained at home but pledged their fealty to the Atlantean wizard-kings. Each of the brothers took several wives, and their children became lords and ladies of an empire that soon spanned the strange continents and oceans of that time.

THE AGE OF ATLANTIS

For thousands of years Atlantis ruled an empire that spanned most of the world. Only the lands of Arcadia and Lemuria, each populated with their own superhumanly powerful beings, remained free of Atlantean rule. (The Emphyreans negotiated peace with Mestor, who penetrated the invisibility fields generated by their devices, rather than risk a war that might endanger the entire world; the Lemurians, who already had fled underground after their own continent was destroyed by the *Mandragalore*, satisfied themselves with occasional raids and sorties that did little damage to lands held by the Atlanteans.) For the rest of the

WHERE WAS ATLANTIS?

The continents were not the same during pre-Cataclysmic times as they are on modern Earth. There was a sea where the Atlantic Ocean is now, but it was less wide, and only reached slightly below the equator to the south. The island of Atlantis sat in the middle of that sea, and was approximately 400 miles across at its widest point north-south and 700 miles at its widest extent east-west, totaling approximately 260,000 square miles (a little larger than present-day Alaska).

world it was a Golden Age, faint whispers of which have come down in the myths and tales of many civilizations since, recast as the accomplishments of their own ancestors. The combination of magic and technology, powered by the wondrous coppery metal, allowed the wizard-kings and their followers to build vast cities, sail the oceans in enchanted ships, fly from place to place in air-cars, cultivate plentiful crops and fantastic animals, and even control the weather.

It was all, of course, too good to last. Slowly, the people began to forget the old gods who had made all of these wonders possible, and instead turned their worship to the wizard-kings themselves. Dissension arose between some of the brothers as they completed their fantastic journeys and found their respective realms in competition with each other. Adulation and worship went to some of the brothers' heads, despite the efforts of Vondarien to broker peace and promote familial bonds between the unimaginably-powerful siblings.

After over fourteen centuries of rule, matters finally came to a head. A rival to Vondarien rose on the island of Atlantis — Cormar the Mighty, a powerful warrior, well-versed in battle-magics, who counted both Mneseus and Azaes among his direct ancestors. Cormar challenged Vondarien's rule, and the two battled for days before Vondarien slew Cormar and scattered his rebellious army. Vondarien sent out his armies to track down the rebels, many of whom hid in the mountain ranges to the north, but a small group led by Cormar's son Dalsith, now called the Orphan, found refuge in a series of caves.

30,600 BC: THE COMING OF THE DESTROYER

Driven by a deep desire for revenge, Dalsith drew upon his own arcane skills as well as the

inherent magic of the island to cast a terrible ritual. He sacrificed his soul (and those of his followers, several of whom were also mages of no mean talent) to the darkest of the Presences Beyond in exchange for power, and the power transformed him. Dalsith was no more; in his place stood Sharna-Gorak the Destroyer.

30,598 BC: The Cataclysm

Even Atlantean legends are not clear about the war between Sharna-Gorak and Vondarien, but it was perhaps the most destructive conflict the world has ever seen. Sharna-Gorak attacked the city of Atlantis with devastating force again and again, and Vondarien withstood the onslaught only after drawing on every reserve of divine and arcane energy he had. The resulting battle shook the entire world, shattering mountains and raising seas, as the various civilizations of man were ravaged by flood and fire. They fought for months, back and forth across the island, with neither side able to gain an advantage. Eventually both sides fell back, Vondarien to the city walls of Atlantis and Sharna-Gorak to a redoubt in the northern mountains, to gather allies and prepare themselves for a final, devastating blow.

Vondarien sent emissaries to the kingdoms controlled by his nine brothers, calling on them to put aside their petty differences and unite once more in the name of their father. But envy and petty follies had consumed them, and they were slow to respond. Sharna-Gorak raised his own armies of mercenaries: the remnants of the various inhuman races who had long considered humanity their enemy, and even Lemurians who made common cause with him against the Atlantean Empire. After nearly two years of preparing for the gathering storm, Sharna-Gorak's forces swept down from the mountains and threw themselves against Vondarien's battlements.

At first, it seemed Sharna-Gorak was gaining ground, for Vondarien's forces were outnumbered; Vondarien's own spells had already been weakened by his battles with the Destroyer, and even two years was not enough to restore them to their former heights. But at the last, when fire and darkness were poised to sweep over the earth, Vondarien's nine brothers joined the battle and contributed their own life-forces alongside his to power the spells that were required to overcome the Edomic forces the Destroyer called upon. Although all ten were consumed by the fire, they carried the Destroyer's physical form with them into destruction.

The resulting release of energy reshaped the world itself. Continents shifted, seas emptied and refilled across the globe, and what few men survived soon forgot all about the elder days in a struggle for sheer survival. A mighty earthquake shook the island of Atlantis from root to crown, and it sank beneath the waves into the very depths of the sea at a place that men would one day call the middle of the North Atlantic Ocean.





AFTER THE CATACLYSM

Many thousands of Atlantis's inhabitants died in the terrible cataclysm, but there were a few survivors. A small group of Atlanteans had clung to the old ways, retaining their faith and continuing to worship Poseidon. They were led by Glaucus, a charismatic and well-respected philosopher and one of Vondarien's many children. As the ground began to shake and mountains crumble, they gathered in their temple in the center of the city and fervently prayed to Poseidon to protect and preserve them. And, as the waters rushed in on the island from all sides, their prayers were answered, though perhaps not in the way they might have hoped.

Poseidon was unable, or perhaps simply unwilling, to save Atlantis... but he was also loathe to lose the few faithful who remained. He used his divine magic to transform his worshippers into sea-dwellers. Thanks to his gift, they became able to breathe water instead of air, and hardy enough to live in the cold, dark, pressure-filled depths. But they found they could no longer breathe the air.

In the aftermath of the destruction, Glaucus and his fellows prayed to Poseidon for guidance and searched for survivors. Their numbers were small, and many were terrified by the changes in their bodies and the strange new world they found themselves in. Eventually the Atlanteans held a meeting, where they chose Glaucus to be their new Atlan, first of his line. A few Atlanteans opposed this choice; they believed Poseidon had abandoned them, or made them the objects of a cruel joke, and renounced his worship. Some of them simply left the group and were never seen again. Others chose not to accept Glaucus as leader, or did not want to rebuild the city. Many of

these made their homes elsewhere in the northern Atlantic, and from them several of the modern barbarian tribes trace their lineage.

Under Glaucus's sure hand, the Atlanteans began their new lives. Though many were still uncertain about their fate, they knew Poseidon had saved their lives, so they continued to worship him and removed from the city all of the shrines and temples built to Vondarien, his brothers, and the other false gods. Glaucus was a fairly powerful mage, as were several others among the survivors, and after exhausting initial efforts to reverse their transformation or return the city to the surface, they set about using their powers to rebuild the city. Keto, a skilled alchemist and one of Glaucus's most valued advisors, developed a mystical liquid that burned underwater. Soon known as Keto's Flame, it allowed the Atlanteans to have lamps and ovens underwater (though their use was strictly controlled, since the Flame was made with a difficult spell and required rare components). Another follower, the naturalist Bylgia, wrote a treatise on which plants and fish were safe and nutritious to eat; Atlanteans still read his book three hundred centuries later.

Gradually, normalcy and stability returned to the Atlanteans' lives. Glaucus took a wife named Palla. After nearly two years had passed, and she bore him several strong children who became the core of the city's "noble class." Drawing heavily on the traditions of their previous society, the Atlanteans carved out a new way of life beneath the seas.

THE NEW WORLD

The Atlanteans remained curious about what had happened to their fellows on the surface, and eventually Glaucus began sending search parties out to explore the strange new world left behind

after the Cataclysm. The first parties reported that, to their horror, they could find no bodies of land within hundreds of miles in all directions. (Before the Cataclysm, Atlantis was one of several islands in the Great Ocean, which was still considerably less wide than the North Atlantic.) For many years, the Atlanteans believed all of the surface world utterly destroyed in the Cataclysm... and for all they knew, they were the only humans left on the planet.

Eventually, of course, Atlantean explorers made it far enough east to bring back tales of Logres, Tuala Morn, and other lands — lands whose inhabitants, if they saw the Atlanteans at all, thought them fairy-folk or monsters. (The Atlanteans, who sometimes encountered true sea-fairies and often fought real sea-monsters, knew well how mistaken the land-dwellers were.)

Encounters between Atlanteans and “Landers,” as they now called the surface people, were rare and frequently contributed to local myths and tales that were distorted over time. Occasionally Atlanteans were born with the ability to breathe both underwater and in open air — a trait sufficiently common to Glaucus’s descendants that it was known as the Atlan’s Gift — and at first Glaucus and later kings encouraged these Atlanteans to seek out Landers, make peaceful contact with them, and bring back to Atlantis news of what transpired on the surface. But few meetings between the two worlds went well, and eventually Glaucus’s grandson Jun ordered his people to avoid Landers whenever possible. He established the Patrol, a military unit whose job it was to sweep the outer limits of what Atlantis considered her territory. The Patrol watched for activity by the most distant (and therefore most potentially dangerous, by Atlantean thinking) barbarian tribes, and also to kept an eye on activities on the surface.

And so the people of Atlantis, cut off from the world they had known, lived out their lives at the bottom of the sea for thousands of years with almost no awareness of the passing of ages. Their environment was largely unchanging, and so they changed little themselves. Their lifespans were somewhat longer than those of Landers, and their population grew from the original band of less than two hundred to nearly one hundred thousand, and then stopped growing as their reproduction rate stabilized. They mastered their environment, learning to grow crops of kelp and other useful plants.

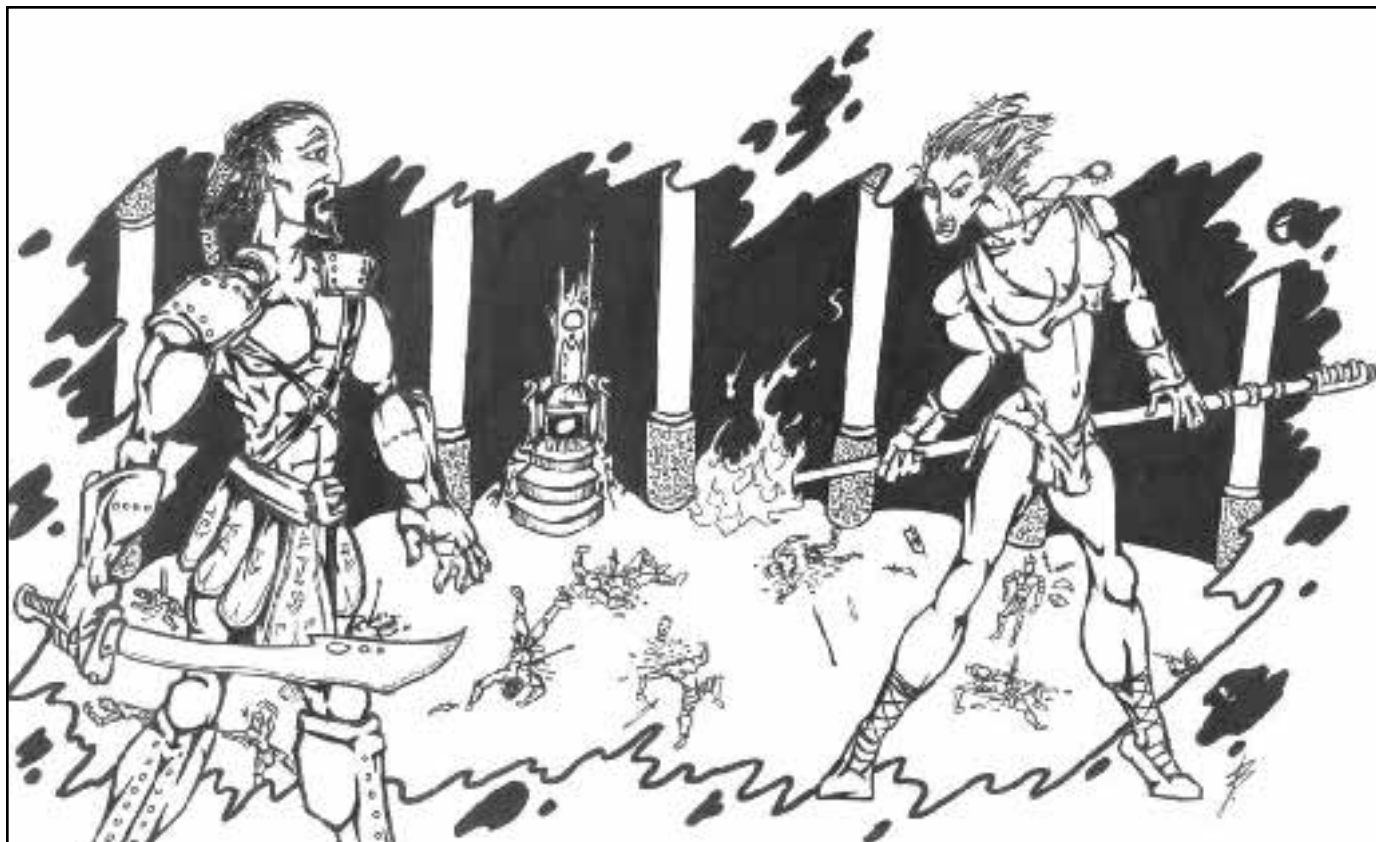
Over time, they forgot much of the Atlantean magic they had known, keeping only the spells and recipes that were useful to their new lives (like Keto’s Flame, which kept their city lit in the eternal darkness). The other magics, darker ones like those used by Dalsith, were forbidden. Only a small number of secret wizards kept that knowledge and passed it along to others in their shadowy cults.

THE REIGN OF OCEANUS

In the surface year 1867, Oceanus became the new king upon the death of his father, Pontus. In his mid-forties, Oceanus was blessed with Atlan’s Gift, so he could breathe out of the water for extended periods. He spent much of his youth exploring distant seas while serving with the Patrol. During his service, he frequently witnessed the passage of Lander ships traveling between Europe and North America, and recognized the advance of their technology. Soon, he realized, Landers would be able to build ships capable of traveling under the sea, and then Atlanteans would be unable to remain hidden from them. Contact was inevitable, and Oceanus felt bound to try to make that contact as peaceful as possible.

He realized the Atlantean people, cautious nearly to the point of xenophobia, would probably react badly to his ideas — he needed to bring them around to his point of view slowly and carefully. He began consulting his closest advisors about how best to broach the topic. Meanwhile, he fell in love with and eventually married his distant cousin, a lovely young woman named Orana, with whom he shared his ideas about the surface world.

One of the advisors Oceanus discussed the matter with was Gangar, a general in his army. The king’s plans horrified Gangar. While the general agreed that contact with the Landers was likely inevitable, Gangar insisted the meeting should be on the Atlantean terms, with the intended outcome Atlantean conquest. After all, Atlanteans were stronger and still had some access to magic (albeit very weak magic); better to strike now before technological advances made the Landers more dangerous. Unable to convince Oceanus, Gangar took his case to the military. He portrayed Oceanus’s peaceful plans as a sign of weakness, claiming Atlan’s Gift had made the king a Lander sympathizer, blind to the threat the surface-dwellers posed.



Civil War

Before long, the issue of how to deal with the Landers had split both the army and the citizens... and Gangar had sufficient support among the military to attempt a coup. The resulting civil war was the bloodiest in Atlantean history. The battle raged for days, but finally Oceanus slew Gangar and routed the rest of the rebels. Most of Gangar's followers gave themselves up and grudgingly rejoined the army after a direct appeal from the priests of Poseidon. Those who would not follow the king left to live among the barbarians.

While Atlantis recovered from the shock of the uprising, Oceanus himself experienced the highest and lowest points of his own life — the first being the birth of his daughter Mara in 1920, the second the death of his beloved Orana four years later. The entire city mourned, and the sorrow perhaps helped bring the Atlanteans closer together after the war. Though it was suggested several times that Oceanus find another queen, he refused, instead throwing himself into educating Mara and preparing her to be queen herself some day.

Mara was much like her mother — lovely, intelligent, full of energy — and Oceanus soon learned that she had inherited Atlan's Gift as well as a powerful physique like her father's. She shared her father's interest in distant lands and came to believe wholeheartedly in his plans to reconnect Atlantis with the surface world.

Dargon's Interregnum

But dark plans were afoot in the city. Gangar's son Dargon had come to manhood during the intervening years, and by the mid-1930s was the leader of a secret cabal dedicated to stopping Oceanus from making overtures to the Landers.

His own chief advisor was a man called Nereus, who belonged to one of the shadowy cults that had passed down some of the secrets of dark magic and demon-calling from the earliest days. Dargon and Nereus believed there were powerful secrets of Atlantean magic still to be found in the surface lands, and desired to see all Landers placed under the Atlantean yoke. Some among the Atlantean military remained loyal to Dargon's father's cause, and with their help Dargon wove a web of lies that turned the rest of the army against Oceanus. In the fall of 1937 he made his move.

Oceanus discovered the plot against him too late to do anything about it. He confronted Dargon in the army's map room and was slain there by surprise. Dargon declared himself king by conquest and sent his allies in the military out to seize control of the city, which they did with little difficulty. Most Atlanteans declared their loyalty to Dargon at knifepoint; the rebels slew those who would not.

Only a few loyalists escaped the city and went into hiding — among them Mara. Dargon wanted to legitimize his reign (and remove a potential rival) by forcing Mara to marry him, but she fled the city as soon as word of the revolt reached her. Dargon ordered Nereus to use his dark magic to capture Mara. Nereus summoned a terrifying sea serpent and sent it after her, but she avoided the creature and escaped. Rather than report his failure, Nereus told Dargon Mara had died in the jaws of the serpent. Dargon took one of Mara's cousins for a bride.

Once he was firmly in control of the city, Dargon began to move forward with his own plans. Dargon shared his father's desire to conquer the surface world, but feared Landers' technology and weapons. Unbeknownst to anyone but Nereus,

he had covertly made contact with a German U-Boat some months before, and informed them he was interested in an alliance with the Axis. Once Germany had successfully conquered and united most of the Lander world, Dargon reasoned, it would then be easier to control Germany and use the Nazis as puppets through which to secretly control the Landers and plunder both their amazing inventions and the long-lost Atlantean magic he was sure they possessed. He sent on his behalf another loyal soldier named Phorcys, who had also been born with Atlan's Gift as well as remarkable strength, to work with the Axis and keep him informed about their activities. Under the name of Steel Shark, Phorcys joined the *Ubersmenschen*, the Axis superteam.

THE SEA HAWK RISES

The terrified Mara made her way west, eventually arriving on the shores of Maine several days later. Unsure of what to do or who she could turn to, she found herself secretly observing a young Lander girl named Amy Reynolds, who lived in an orphanage on the shore. Eventually Mara revealed herself and the two became friends, with Amy teaching Mara about Lander society (and helping her with her English, a subject she had studied in Atlantis but done poorly in).

A few weeks after they met, Mara and Amy were relaxing together on the deserted beach when a sudden squall kicked up. The girls took shelter in one of the nearby caves. From their shelter they could see that a local Navy vessel had been caught offshore in the storm and slammed into one of the rocky shoals, tearing a hole in the side of the ship and capsizing it. Unwilling to let the Landers die, Mara swam out to the ship and rescued the crew, bringing them safely back to shore. Though she didn't stick around to be thanked or identified, stories spread of the mysterious green mermaid who had saved the crew. Soon the small town was full of reporters and mysterious men from the government looking for more information.

Though Mara continued to keep her distance from other Landers, she found she had enjoyed the act of heroism and spent the next few months traveling up and down the coast, secretly acting as a "guardian angel" of the Maine and Massachusetts shoreline while continuing to practice her English and learn about Lander society. By the fall of 1938, she had both mastered the language and developed a reputation as a mysterious heroine of the entire New England area. Since the first true superheroes — men like Captain Patriot — were just emerging, the press assumed she was another of their ilk. One enterprising reporter, noting that she could apparently both swim and fly, dubbed her "Sea Hawk."

THE DEFENDERS OF JUSTICE

In October 1938, the Sirians invaded Earth, using their giant tripods, deadly heat rays, and poisonous gas in New York and New Jersey. Mara, who had traveled that far south by chance, came to the aid of another superhero called Dr. Twilight, and together they defeated one of the metallic monstrosi-

ties. They later met several other heroes, and together they defeated the Sirians and forced them to call off their planned invasion. Afterward the various heroes agreed that they should continue to work together as a team, and formed the Defenders of Justice. They established their headquarters in an office in the Empire State Building owned by the hero Optimus in his secret identity as businessman Drake Wilson.

Mara, who still had no permanent residence on the surface, began spending a great deal of time in Manhattan with Drake and the other heroes. She participated in several of their early adventures as they battled villains like Sub Zero, Korrex the Conqueror, and the Liquidator. She became increasingly comfortable with her new friends and her life as a superheroine, and though she missed her old life in Atlantis, she thought that forever lost to her. After all, the Atlanteans had betrayed her father and turned on her; as far as she was concerned, she was now a Lander herself.

As the Defenders recruited other heroes to join them, she remained one of the core members of the team... and slowly but certainly, as the months and years passed, she began to fall in love with her teammate Optimus. He was hesitant at first, uncertain and shy, and Mara had no experience with the courtship rituals of Landers. But Drake was strong, brave, caring, and very handsome, and late in 1941 the two finally declared their love — much to the relief of their teammates, who were tired of all the tension.

WORLD WAR II

In December, 1941, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and at last the United States entered World War II. The Defenders had already encountered Axis superhumans and well understood the threat they posed, so they volunteered their services to the War Department and were divided into two teams. Mara joined the new Defenders, pledged to protecting the homefront, and Optimus led the Freedom Battalion, a unit of non-superhuman agents who could take the battle directly to Europe (where the protective spells of Axis magicians kept Allied superhumans away). Since they were separated so frequently, Mara and Optimus postponed their planned marriage until after the hoped-for victory in the war.

In 1943, Mara and the Defenders underwent a mission to protect ships in the North Atlantic from German U-boats. There she encountered for the first time the Atlantean Phorcys, whom the surface world knew as Steel Shark. The battle ended inconclusively; Phorcys returned to Atlantis to tell Dargon that Princess Mara still lived. The furious Dargon sent a team of Atlantean assassins to New York to kill her, but the Defenders handily thwarted the group of killers. At the same time, a rebel in Dargon's court overheard the news of Mara's continued existence, and he and his comrades decided that if Mara lived, she could be the leader they needed to rally support and overthrow their hated dictator. They sent a small party of rebels to New York in search of Mara. In the spring of 1943 they finally reached her, explaining that a strong underground resistance against the tyranny of Dargon had formed and only lacked

a firm leader to replace him. Mara was shocked to hear that Dargon was unpopular with many Atlanteans — she'd assumed he came to power as part of a popular uprising. Mara agreed to help them, and with several of her teammates returned to Atlantis for the first time in six years.

The Atlantean Rebellion

When they arrived at the outskirts of the city, the Defenders unfortunately discovered that a spy for Dargon had already informed him of Mara's impending arrival. Mara and Optimus were promptly captured, while the other Defenders were scattered across the city by an attack by Nereus's mind-controlled creatures. However, the heroes soon recovered. Bulletproof convinced a tribe of barbarians he encountered to aid the rebels and led them in a diversionary attack on Atlantis's outer defenses. Optimus and Mara took advantage of the distraction to escape, and in the ensuing melee Optimus tricked Nereus into falling prey to one of the horrible sea-monsters he had summoned. Mara and Dargon met in combat in the throne room, and Mara took revenge for her father's murder, killing Dargon with his own trident.

Though at first reluctant, Mara finally accepted the entreaties of the rebels (and the majority of Atlantean citizens, who were happy to be rid of Dargon and his tyranny and horrified when they learned of his connection to the Nazi Landers) and accepted the throne. At first, Optimus feared this would end their relationship, but instead Mara proposed to him, and he accepted. They resigned from the Defenders and set about rebuilding Atlantis, severing the undersea kingdom's ties with the Axis and turning over to the Allies what information they had about German activities.

Life was difficult from the beginning for the young Royal Couple. Mara ordered the creation of sealed rooms that were maintained with air, but still most of the time Drake had to either wear diving gear or undergo a complicated mystical ritual to survive underwater. And once the exhilaration of victory wore off, many Atlanteans were less than comfortable with a Lander prince, national hero or no. Also, Mara found herself thrust into the complicated process of reestablishing the more traditional "enlightened monarchy" style of government for the city, with countless nobles and guildmasters jockeying for power in the absence of Dargon's iron-fisted policies, and therefore had little time to spend with her new husband. Eventually, the pressure wore on them, and in 1948 they amicably divorced, with Drake returning to Manhattan. They remained friends, however, and still are today.

MODERN ATLANTIS

Queen Mara led her people while maintaining her contacts with the surface world. She also made overtures to some of the more "advanced" barbarian tribes living close to the city, signing formal treaties that delineated the lands they held and formalizing trade for their services in farming and fishing. During this period, she had the most success with the tribe known as the *Threneis*, or "Blue People," whose chieftain was a brave and thoughtful warrior named Andrin. Andrin's own son, a young and handsome warrior named Andros, acted as his representative during the negotiations, and impressed Mara and the Atlantean nobles greatly with his wit, perception, and good humor. After several months of



negotiations, treaties were signed that were favorable for both sides, but Mara found herself loathe to have Andros leave. Instead, they began to court, and in the summer of 1960 they were wed, making Andros the Crown Prince and his people citizens of Atlantis.

While marrying a barbarian was not quite so scandalous as marrying a Lander, for a certain reactionary portion of the population this evidence of Mara's madness was the final straw. Once again a faction within the military began to plot against Mara. They chose as their leader the disgraced soldier Phorcys, who had served both Dargon and Hitler as the Steel Shark. Since the Axis defeat he'd lived in exile, sometimes as a "supervillain" among the Landers, but he still had followers among the army. They captured the city and Prince Andros, and only narrowly missed capturing Mara as well. Mara again fled to New York, where she met with Drake and the Fabulous Five just before the Atlantean army attacked Manhattan to force her return. The combined force of heroes defeated the Atlanteans, and Steel Shark himself apparently died when he accidentally activated one of Amazing Man's experimental dimensional projectors. Mara was restored to the throne.

In New York and elsewhere, Atlantis was a topic of primary concern after the sight of Atlantean soldiers on the streets of Manhattan. Drake Wilson and several of his superhuman allies pressed Mara to make formal diplomatic contact with the United States and other countries to resolve their concerns. In 1970 she did so, sending ambassadors to both the White House and the United Nations. With the aid of UNTIL negotiators and the backing of the Fabulous Five, hard feelings were smoothed over and Atlantis was formally recognized by most of the Lander nations on Earth.

Marus And Thalassa

Around the same time, Mara and Andros welcomed their first child, Marus, to the family, and shortly thereafter his sister Thalassa. The Atlanteans celebrated, believing that after so much turbulence that times of peace and quiet were finally at hand. Unfortunately, it was not to be so. From the first, Thalassa was a difficult child, resentful of her brother's status and rude to her "inferiors." While Mara and Andros trained Marus for his role as the future King, Thalassa instead turned to the research of the dark magics of Atlantis's past, unearthing a secret trove of Nereus's books when she was just twelve years old.

In 1986, Prince Andros died in an accidental landslide while inspecting one of the city's oricalchum mines, and Atlantis went into several months of mourning for the rough barbarian who had won over even the most skeptical of the populace. Mara threw herself back into the training of Prince Marus, more mindful of her own mortality and the need to preserve continuity among the royalty. Thalassa felt even more isolated and resentful, and took to spending long periods of time alone in her rooms with Nereus's books. There the family's aged advisor Ikthos, who had helped raise and school both children, discovered the princess's profane studies of the dark arts. Horrified by her experiments, Ikthos tried to flee across the castle to summon Mara, and in a panic Thalassa lashed out with a charge of arcane electricity, slaying the old man. The stress of realizing she had killed her kindly old "uncle," combined with the strange changes her reading and practicing of dark magics had worked upon both her personality and her body, snapped her mind. She fled Atlantis, vowing her revenge on both Mara and Marus and her eventual intention to take the throne for herself. In time she became the supervillain Stingray (*Champions Universe*, page 90). Mara was brokenhearted over the loss of her young daughter for, despite what Thalassa felt, Mara truly loved her. She has never ceased searching for her, and on two occasions brought her back to the city for brief periods (though Thalassa escaped both times, wreaking havoc in the process).

Mara has continued to lead Atlantis slowly into the modern world. She sent her son Marus to school in America, including a brief stay at the Ravenswood Academy, and later assigned him a position as Atlantis's representative to the United Nations. (Though Atlantis isn't a member of that body, it maintains relations with the U.N. and has signed several treaties with Lander governments regarding shipping, fishing, and the marine dumping of toxic wastes.) Marus himself has followed in his mother's footsteps as both a representative of Atlantis to the Lander world and as a superhero; he's currently a member of the world-renowned New York-based hero team the Sentinels. In this regard he's become something of a celebrity, and is a highly sought-after guest at parties and on talk shows.

ATLANTEAN SOCIETY



Atlanteans are a hardy and long-lived race thanks to the divine magic that still flows through their bodies (and that since 1938 occasionally manifests itself as mystical “mutations” that grant individual members of the race remarkable powers). In general they retain human proportions, though as a population they’re more physically fit than Landers — both obesity and unusual thinness are extremely rare. Male average height is about 6’0”, with females typically 4-6 inches shorter.

Atlanteans typically have green skin, though the exact shading varies from a dark, mossy green through emerald to something closer to blue. Hair, which grows exclusively on the head and face, generally matches the skin but is several shades darker (hair so dark that it appears black is not uncommon). Atlanteans have a wide range of eye colors, including some shades (like bright orange) that are extremely rare among Landers, and tend to have stereotypically “Roman” features: long, aquiline noses, sharply-defined cheekbones, hair that curls if left to grow out.

The Atlantean style of dress has changed little over time — most Atlanteans wear simple, skintight tunics woven from particular types of kelp harvested by local craftsmen. Since they withstand cold easily and generally experience little change in their daily environment, Atlanteans really don’t have a nudity taboo, and frequently wear little to nothing at all. However, dressing is considered appropriate for meals and other social encounters, and definitely required for religious ceremonies and encounters with the nobility.

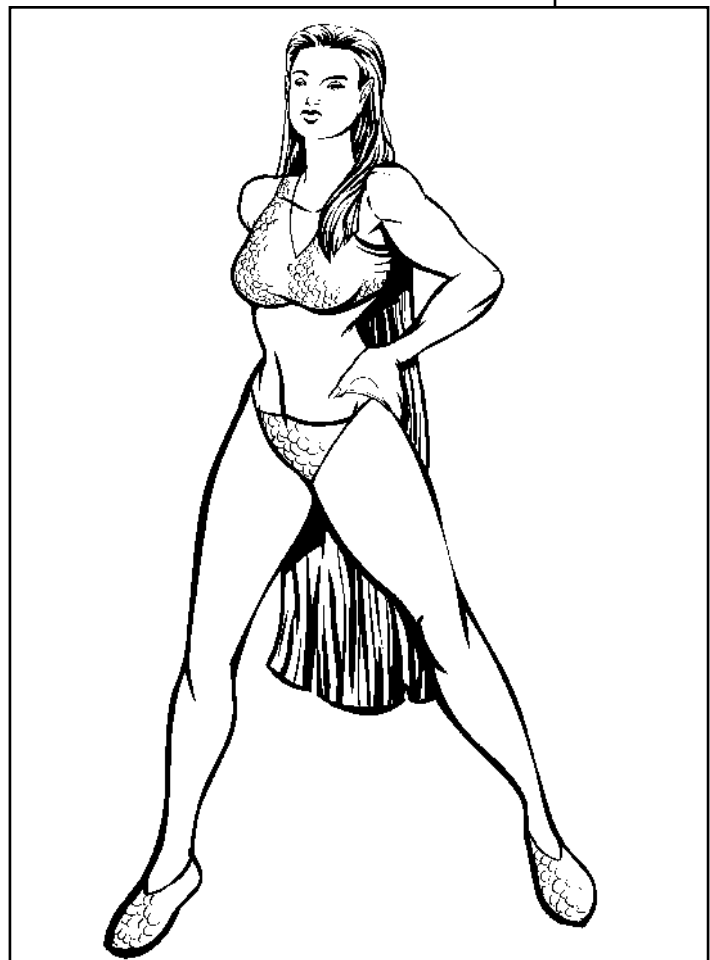
Atlanteans live longer than Landers. The average Atlantean lifespan is well over a hundred years, with those of royal or noble blood often living much longer. Mara is now in her mid-eighties and barely appears middle-aged to Lander eyes; her grandfather lived to be over two hundred years old himself. Atlanteans reach physical maturity in their late teens, but are still considered “youths” until they’re about forty.

The Atlantean Character

The Atlantean “national character” tends to be reserved, conservative almost to the point of rigidity, proud, and a bit haughty. Atlanteans are a martial people, but not particularly violent — though they believe in the precise application of force in appropriate situations, they also value peace and friendship, and prefer diplomacy to battle. In short, they tend to hold many of the same values a disciplined, well-trained military tries to instill in its soldiers.

Atlanteans prefer order and predictability. They eat at the same times every day, and frequently the same foods. They dress alike, talk alike, and socialize within their class (though they often appreciate it when an upper-class citizen shows a friendly and open manner by fraternizing with the common folk). They consider loyalty and reliability the highest of virtues, while casting a distrustful eye on anyone or anything not like themselves. The result is a society with fairly extensive social codes of conduct and unwritten rules for social interaction; the language and social strata (see below) are a part of this.

The Atlantean relationship with the various barbarian tribes is also instructive. There are periodic uprisings on the borders, usually when some tribal leader or another defeats a few of his rivals and builds a sizable force. Occasionally these have posed serious threats to the city, but more frequently the Atlanteans repulse the attacks with minimal effort. But the Atlantean military takes little to no proactive action to stop these upris-



ings from happening, nor does it expend much effort pursuing and punishing the rebels once it's thwarted an attack. Though no one would explicitly say so, the Atlanteans tend to regard these uprisings as minor inconveniences that help keep the military sharp and alert. They dismiss the barbarian "threat" as nothing more than the natural order of things. After all, they're barbarians; what else would one expect from them? It seems integral to the Atlantean character to accept the status quo as the natural way.

Given their rigid, reserved natures, it's not surprising that many Atlanteans have an ingrained xenophobia, particularly towards Landers — though they wouldn't refer to it as such, since they regard distrust and dislike of outlanders as a normal and sensible thing, not a psychological aberration. While Atlanteans consider the barbarians distant cousins, Atlantean culture portrays Landers as mysterious, dangerous enemies. Since most of the major crises in Atlantis during the twentieth century involved Landers in some way, it's not difficult to see how a culture that values stability so much would see them as unpredictable, and therefore hazardous.

The Atlantean Language

Modern Atlantean is a complicated language, descended from the ancient Atlantean tongue (which itself is one of the roots of ancient Greek) but heavily modified for speaking underwater. It still uses the ancient alphabet for the limited amount of writing that is done — primarily by die-stamping onto sheets of soft, thin metal — but speakers of the ancient tongue would find translation of modern usage extremely difficult. Since Atlanteans don't breathe air, they mostly vocalize by vibrating water in their throats with their modified

vocal cords, creating a speech that has bright, sharp tones punctuated with clicks and pops.

The Atlantean language has multiple modes of speech, each applicable in a different social situation. There are several degrees of formality, depending on whether one is speaking to family members, fellow workers, strangers, one's boss, or the like, plus a separate set of pronouns and verb cases reserved solely for the nobility. Misuse of these terms can be considered anything from humiliatingly ignorant, to amusingly blunt, to a mortal insult.

What makes Atlantean even more complicated to learn is the unique collection of hand-signals native speakers have developed over the centuries. These gestures shade meaning and carry layers of context difficult to transcribe, and in cases where speakers do not wish to be overheard, native speakers can convey a great deal of meaning with only a few basic sounds and extensive use of their hands. Atlantean speakers unable to use their hands remain fully able to communicate any basic ideas or concepts, just with a slight loss of shades of meaning.

ATLANTEAN GEOGRAPHY

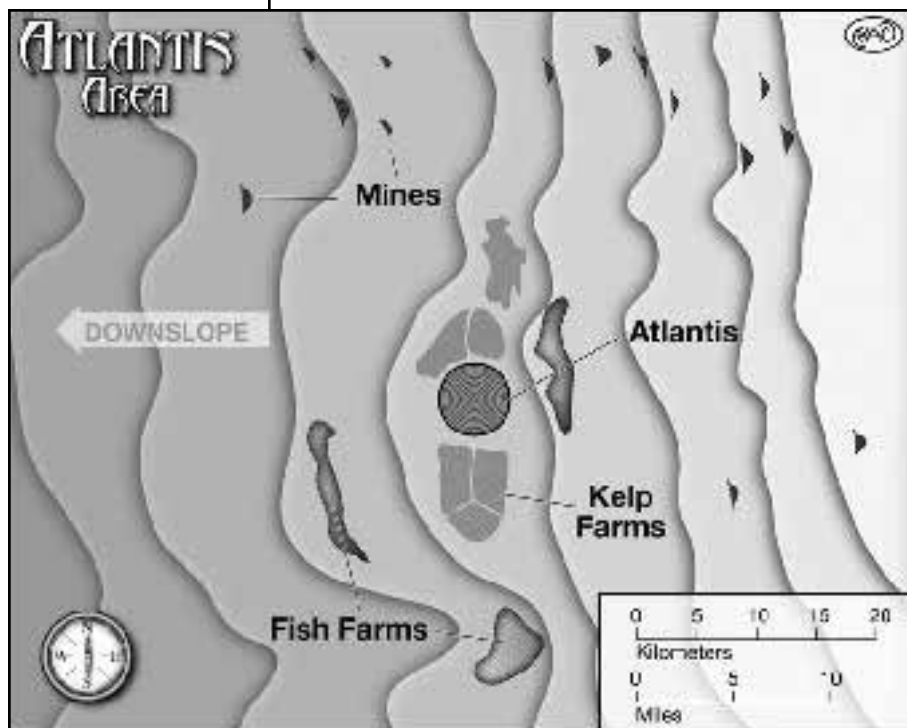
The city of Atlantis sits in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, about 1,200 kilometers (750 miles) west of the Cape Verde Plain, 530 kilometers (330 miles) east of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, and 160 kilometers (100 miles) north of the equator. It's approximately 250 meters (820 feet, or 125") beneath the surface, making it accessible by a wide variety of Lander submersible vehicles and robots.

OUTLYING AREAS

When someone approaches Atlantis, he must first pass over or through the regions surrounding the city, which the Atlanteans have made use of for years. Furthest away from the city, to the north, is a series of mines where the Atlanteans dig for oricalchum and baser metals (such as gold, silver, nickel, and copper). Every day Atlantean miners swim or ride out to the mines to earn their daily food. A few small communities of miners have sprung up much nearer the mines, but generally Queen Mara prefers for her people to live inside the city walls.

To the west and south of the city is a large area devoted to pisciculture — fish farming. With "fences" made of enormous nets strung together, the Atlanteans keep enormous schools of dozens of varieties of fish in one place for harvesting. The Atlantean "ranchers" also have extensive fish-breeding programs inside other net-confined areas to grow bigger, healthier fish specifically for consumption; "herding" alone doesn't suffice to feed Atlantis's population.

Nearest Atlantis (coming almost up to the city walls in places) are the kelp farms to the south. The Atlanteans cultivate vast fields of kelp — some varieties they eat, others they use to weave rope, make cloth, and so forth. They also harvest fish and other marine animals from their kelp beds.



THE CITY

The city of Atlantis is a perfect circle with a radius of nearly three miles. It consists of a series of concentric stone walls — the Outer Wall, tall, thick, and sturdy (3" tall, DEF 4, BODY 20), and the lesser inner walls (2" tall, DEF 4, BODY 14). The Outer Wall has metal gates to north and south (the gates are 10" wide, and have DEF 5, BODY 18); each of the inner walls has various gates along its circumference (typically 4" wide, DEF 5, BODY 10). Of course, anyone can swim over the walls rather than going through the gates; the walls exist mainly out of a sense of tradition, the gates to make it easier to move large, heavy objects.

1. The Royal Palace

The most prominent building in Atlantis is the Queen's palace, which occupies a hill at the very center of the city. Built almost six thousand years ago after an undersea earthquake destroyed the original palace, the Royal Palace has been renovated or expanded several times by various rulers. Today it virtually fills the innermost wall, leaving room only for some fortifications, a few outbuildings, and some small garden areas.

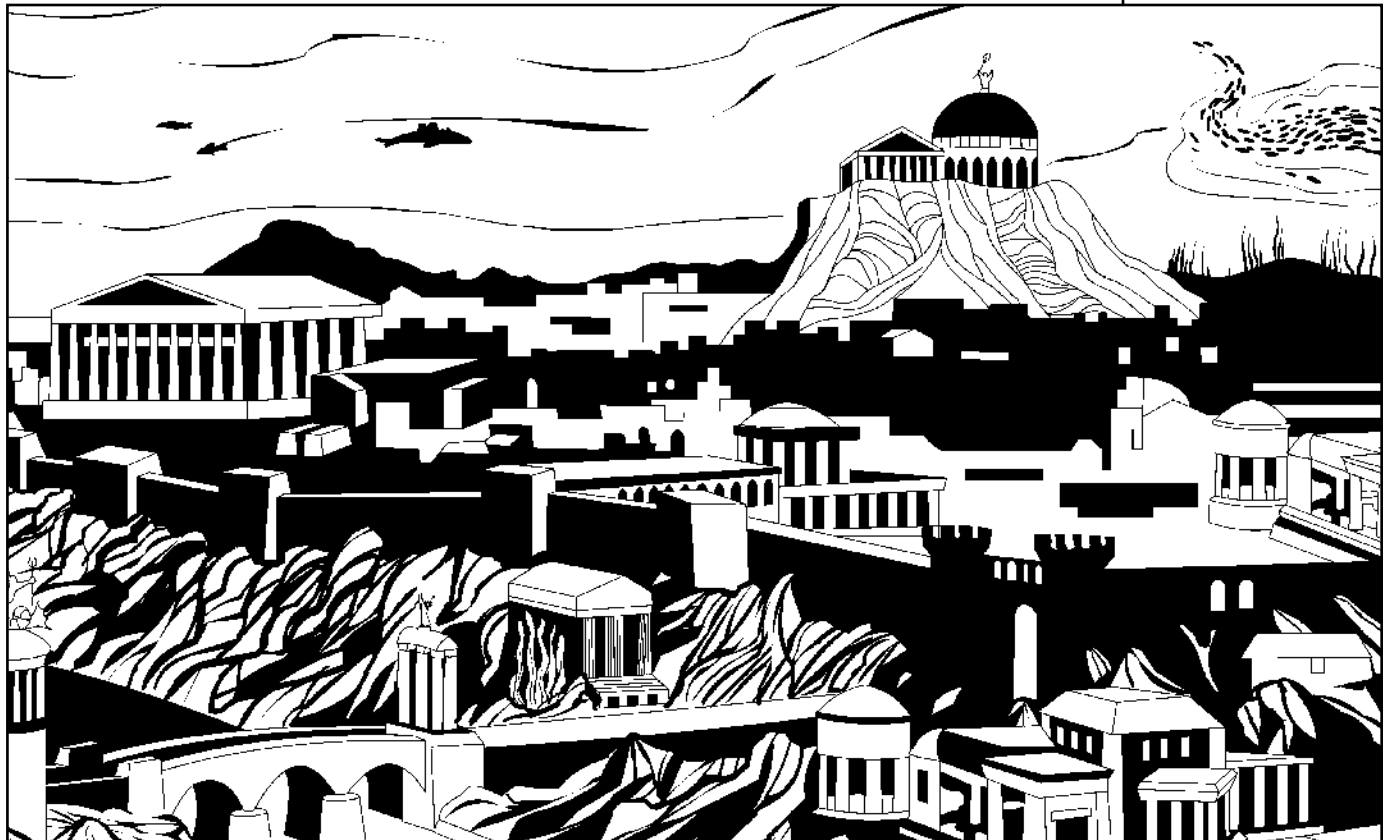
The main part of the Royal Palace is the Queen's Hall (or King's Hall, when a man rules), a large, rectangular structure at the very center of the overall building. Visitors who enter the Palace enter the Hall through two large stone doors inlaid with beautiful coral and shell mosaics. After passing through a reception chamber they enter the Throne Room, where the Queen holds court every day, discusses matters of public import with her advisors, and hears petitions from her subjects. The rest

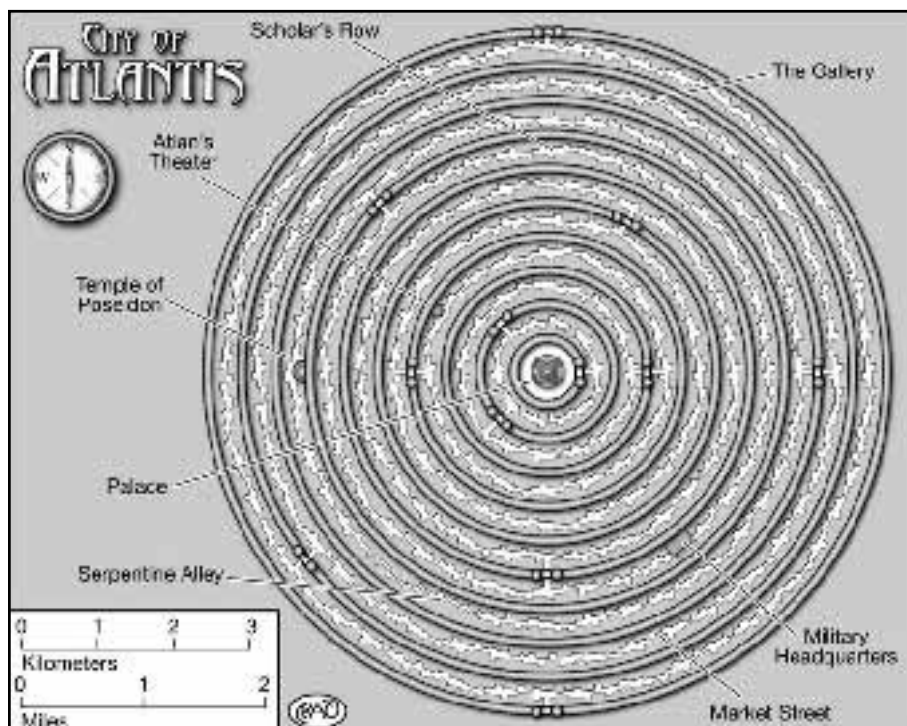
of the Queen's Hall consists primarily of meeting rooms, display rooms, the enormous Feasting Hall, and the kitchens.

Spreading out from the Queen's Hall, and often dwarfing it in size thanks to extra floors added over the years and the many towers built by one ruler or another, are several wings, including: the Queen's Wing (where the royal family lives and the most distinguished and honored visitors to the Palace stay); Glaucus's Hall (an expansion of the display rooms in Queen's Hall, and thus largely an extensive royal museum); the Hall of Honor (where most visitors stay); and the Wing of Five Towers (where many government offices conduct their business; it includes the War Room and other private meeting chambers accessible only by the Queen and her most trusted advisors).

2. The Temple Of Poseidon

After the Royal Palace, the most beautiful building in Atlantis is the Temple of Poseidon, located almost exactly due west from the Palace in the third circle. Here the priests (see *The Priesthood*, below) conduct religious services, perform other duties, and lead the people in worship of the gods. Most Atlanteans rarely see more of the Temple than the large, open-water worship plaza in the center, where they gather around the Great Altar on holy days to offer their prayers to Poseidon and his kin. The rest of the Temple includes the library and archives where the priests store their metal foil books (and a scriptorium where they create them), living quarters for the priests and other religious functionaries, and offices that keep the Temple running at peak efficiency.





3. Market Street

The main commercial district of Atlantis, known to the Atlanteans as “Market Street,” occupies more than a quarter of the second circle on the southeast side of the city. From one end to the other it’s lined with shops and stalls that sell everything an Atlantean could want: food, decorative items, jewelry, weapons, pets, cloth, and much, much more. The shops tend to be permanent structures owned by whoever operates a business in them; the stalls are temporary structures erected each day by hopeful street merchants. Although it’s a busy, bustling place from the opening of business until the end of the day, it’s usually orderly and calm, with only an occasional shouting match between customers trying to buy the same object or fights between merchants who claim the same space for setting up their stalls.

4. The Atlan’s Theater

When the Queen, her court, her nobles, or her subjects want to see the latest entertainments, they travel to the Atlan’s Theater in the seventh circle. An enormous domed auditorium capable of seating thousands, the Theater puts on Atlantean dramas, concerts, symphonies, and pageants. The royal family has a special private box with an excellent view, and many noble families have private boxes as well (though none are as luxuriant as the Queen’s); other Atlanteans sit in the seats on the floor level. Notable visitors to the city (including the PCs, in most cases) are likely to receive invitations from the Queen and/or various noble families to attend the Theater as her/their guests nearly every night they stay in Atlantis.

5. Scholar’s Row

Most Atlanteans think of Scholar’s Row as sort of the opposite of Market Street, and in many ways they’re right. This is where Atlantis’s schools and colleges congregate, and where most of her scholars

live and work. Most Atlantean spellcasters frequent this area as well. The architecture is distinctive, and many of the buildings here are among the oldest in the city. Heroes who come to Atlantis to learn its proud and ancient history or study its magic will find themselves spending a lot of time on Scholar’s Row.

6. Serpentine Alley

If Atlantis has a “bad side” of town, it’s Serpentine Alley. Here the paths tend to twist and turn more than elsewhere, forcing the Atlanteans to swim above them if they want to move quickly. The shops tend to be a bit lower-class, and beggars and petty thieves make life difficult for “outsiders” who come in from other parts of town.

7. Military Headquarters

Located in the southeastern quadrant of the fourth circle, the headquarters of the Atlantean army is the most fortified, best-protected building in the city. It’s not easy to build a defensible structure in an environment where attackers can approach from nearly any direction, but this boxy structure

accomplishes just that — though no one would consider it beautiful. Its long, solid, almost windowless walls and overhanging roof virtually block traffic through that part of the city, forcing grumbling subjects and merchants to find other ways to get where they’re going.

8. The Gallery

The Gallery gets its name from all the artists who congregate there. Many parts of it are essentially large outdoor sculpture-gardens where artisans place their work so people can see it (and, hopefully, buy it). The streets and walls often have beautiful mosaics. Other parts of the neighborhood are favored by musicians who play on the streets for money, or to attract patrons who hire them to perform at parties and galas.

ATLANTEAN CLASSES

Atlantean society is divided into three distinct social strata: the nobility, the priests, and the common citizenry, each described below. Atlantean society is highly classist, but the system is stable and seems to generate little resentment among the lower classes (another testament to the inherent Atlantean desire for stability and order). Individual Atlanteans may strive to improve themselves by becoming skilled and respected craftsmen, educated priests, or honored military heroes, but there’s little or no pressure to change the lot of the entire lower class. In the Atlantean viewpoint, a healthy, respectful, and respected lower class is one of the bases of a well-ordered society. And after all, even the lower-class citizens have the barbarians and other outsiders to look down on.

THE NOBILITY

The noble class largely consists of families who can directly trace their lineage back to Glaucus, the first Atlan. Except for the Atlan and his immediate relatives, noblefolk enjoy little actual additional material benefit. But Atlanteans keep detailed records of their family histories and inter-relationships, and those descended even indirectly from a former Atlan can expect a certain amount of respect and deference from those whose families are less noteworthy. The children of nobles receive their education not from their parents, but from tutors selected from among the priests and scholars. Nobles make up the bulk of the officers of the military and other secondary positions in the government as ministers and advisors.

THE PRIESTHOOD

The priests keep Atlantis's historical records and lead daily and weekly religious services that honor the sea god who protected them from the Cataclysm. They call him by many names, but tend to use "Poseidon" most commonly. See *Atlantean Religion*, below, for further details.

Since it's so difficult to create and maintain written records underwater, the priests stamp only the most important decrees and records into metal foil — most Atlantean history comes from traditional songs and lays that are memorized and passed down from generation to generation (with, of course, the usual possibility of error or omission). These songs, which usually sound both florid and repetitive to Lander ears, can take more than an hour to sing and cover extensive details of historical figures and events.

THE COMMONERS

The common class makes up the bulk of Atlantis's citizenry, though of course the Atlanteans themselves consider a citizen of Atlantis to be of higher status than just about any non-Atlantean. Most work in family trades as craftsmen, farmers, hunters, or soldiers; the majority of Atlanteans practice the same trades as their own parents. There's no particular division between the sexes in most jobs, though the military is primarily male and the majority of child care for the very young is done by women.

The Royal Family

Queen Mara has ruled Atlantis since 1943, with a brief interruption in 1968. She's been married twice, both times to outsiders, but has been single since 1986. (There's no shortage of potential suitors for her among the noble class even though she's now "middle-aged," but she hasn't seriously considered any of them.) Her subjects consider her a worthy queen and generally respect her, though her adventurous past and occasional "liberal" ideas about contact with the surface world alarm the more conservative among them. See page 25 for more information.

Prince Marus, who's well-known on the surface world due to his role as a U.N. ambassador and his membership in the Sentinels, is relatively young by Atlantean standards. But he's proven more than once that the decades of training he's received in the manifold arts of rulership have made him fit for the responsibilities he holds. See page 27 for more information.

Marus's sister, the Princess Thalassa, is better known as the supervillainess Stingray. No one in Atlantis speaks of her openly.

Other Notable Atlanteans

Apart from her children Marus and Thalassa, Queen Mara has no other direct descendants or immediate relatives; she was an only child herself, as was her father Oceanus. But her grandfather Thaumus had several younger siblings, and their descendants are among the nobles who serve as advisors and counselors to the Queen. Mara's second cousin, also called Thaumus, would be next in line after Marus for the throne if he should die without heir (and without Thalassa somehow re-establishing herself as a candidate.) 120 years old in 2005, Thaumus currently serves Queen Mara as her primary counselor regarding Atlantean law and the justice system, such as issues of legal policy, property rights, and punishment for Atlantean criminals. Thaumus's knowledge of the laws and history of Atlantis is without equal.

If both Mara and Marus died, however, it's likely the reserved and scholarly Thaumus would step aside in favor of his own son, Nicor. Only about sixty years old, Nicor is the top aide to General Glaucus and field leader of the Queen's Borders, a specialized unit of the city's military in charge of patrolling the outlying districts and protecting the fields and mines around the city. Popular with





the military, Nicor would no doubt enjoy its complete support. He's on good terms with his cousin Marus and would be horrified at the suggestion that he should challenge the Prince for the throne.

General Glaucus himself, also a noble who can trace his lineage directly to the first Atlan, has been in charge of Atlantis's defense since Steel Shark killed his predecessor in 1968. 136 years old, he was one of the rebels who remained faithful to Oceanus and supported Mara during World War II. Though he remains staunchly loyal to the Queen, he disagrees strongly with most of her efforts to expand contact with the surface world, arguing that humans are dangerous, violent, and unpredictable. He would prefer that Atlantis remain isolated (though unlike some of his more extreme supporters, he holds no illusions that Atlantis could ever succeed in conquering the surface world).

Ndana, the Queen's Librarian since the unfortunate murder of Ikthos, is the primary record keeper for the royal family. She's also in charge of the various mystical texts recovered from Stingray, which she keeps under the strictest guard. Trained as a priestess of Poseidon, she rarely performs traditional services anymore, preferring to serve as one of Mara's closest advisors. She provides both historical perspective and her own limited knowledge of ancient occultism. (In game terms, she knows a few spells with about 30-40 Active Points each; most are for information-gathering and other "practical" uses rather than combat, though she knows a battle-spell or two should the need arise.)

The Barbarians

Thousands of descendants of the original Atlanteans still live in small villages and tribes scattered throughout the various oceans and seas of the world. Those close to Atlantis maintain some sort of diplomatic relations with the city. The largest tribe, the Gorro, mostly live about four hundred miles south of Atlantis, though their range extends as close as fifty miles from the city walls. Prince Andros ruled the Gorro. Even after his death, they still respect Queen Mara, and though they don't recognize her as their leader (Andros's cousin, a warrior named Badhos, is their current chieftain), they remain staunch allies of Atlantis. The other large tribal group is the Krosk, who are ruled by the great warrior-chieftain Gundhar (page 83).

There are over a dozen smaller tribes scattered across the Atlantic, mostly distant relations of either the Gorro or the Krosk. They frequently engage in squabbles and small battles over hunting territory. Periodically a chieftain rises up out of one of the tribes and temporarily gains some control over the other tribes, but this rarely lasts for more than a few months before the alliance crumbles under the weight of petty disputes or the Atlantean military deals with the problem... one way or another.

Even smaller and more disparate are the tribes in other oceans. Small groups, usually numbering no more than a hundred and frequently even smaller, live in the Pacific and Indian Oceans, and a small band of hunters thrives under the ever-shifting ice caps of the North Pole. A tribe living near Japan was apparently killed by the supervillain Kazan in the early Eighties; the lone survivor, a female called Ningyo, joined one of Tokyo's superhero teams and still serves there today.

ATLANTEAN RELIGION

Most Atlanteans hold to their original faith, worshipping Poseidon as their creator and preserver. Their religion has changed little over the millennia, providing their culture with a stabilizing force and another means for maintaining social order. The Atlan is the nominal head of the church, but his role is largely ceremonial; there's a large class of priests who oversee the services, provide spiritual counseling, and keep records both physical (in the form of stamped sheets of metal) and oral (in the form of long songs that detail the history of the city and people). Like most professions in Atlantis, being a priest frequently runs through specific families, but it's not required; members of the lower nobility or even commoners can become priests.

The Atlantean religion (simply known as "Worship," a simple phrase in Atlantean usually accompanied by a host of hand movements to shade the meaning) is conservative, community-oriented, and a bit militaristic. Followers must respect their fellow citizens, observe social proprieties (obey your superiors, be kind and responsible to your inferiors), and promote the "Atlantean way of life." In return, Poseidon will protect the city forever, and virtuous followers pass on to a vaguely-described afterlife of cool, trouble-free waters. The spirits of the insufficiently virtuous remain trapped on Earth, where they occasionally haunt and bedevil the city and their descendants, either as invisible ghosts or in the forms of various natural disasters. Fervent prayer and the good works of those who loved them, with the aid of the priests, can redeem these restless spirits.

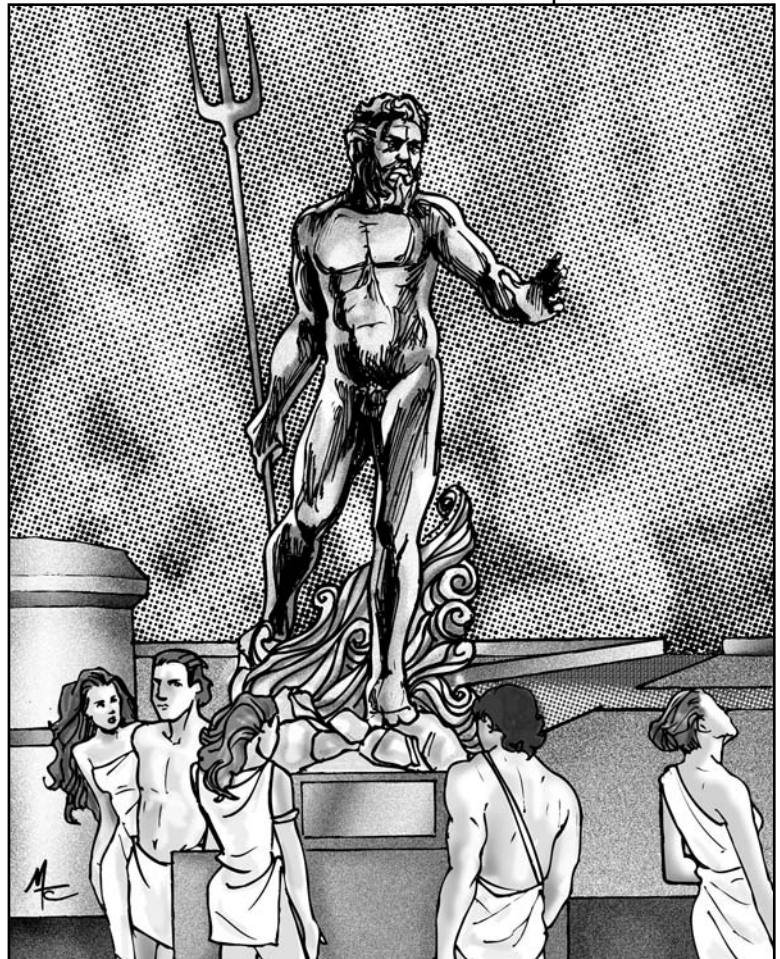
Poseidon himself remains the center of worship. Though the Atlanteans understand he's part of a pantheon, they don't consider his brothers, sisters, and other fellow gods particularly important; many they regard as strange, even inimical. Poseidon embodies morality and goodness, but often imposes dangerous tests and misfortunes on his people, which the Atlanteans interpret as the actions of a strict father charged with keeping his children strong and battle-ready. In earlier times the Atlanteans believed Poseidon demanded regular blood sacrifices, but most modern Atlanteans regard this as symbolic, instead offering sacrifices of dangerous animals their warriors have captured on particular holidays.

A few Atlanteans believe that if they're sufficiently virtuous or otherwise satisfy Poseidon in some way, he'll reverse the change he made in them thousands of years ago and allow them to return to the surface (the more militaristic members of this faction add, as conquerors). Most Atlanteans dismiss this movement as crackpot heresy held by those with low self-esteem — after all, what value does the surface hold compared to the splendors of the deep? Those who feel this way keep their beliefs secret, with only occasional clandestine meetings to maintain their own sense of community.

THE ATLANTEAN ECONOMY

The Atlanteans have a simple, stable economy. The king (or queen) stamps coins with set values and strictly controls the number of them in circulation; the bulk of commerce within Atlantean society depends on barter, but the coins help deal with inefficiencies. Artisans and craftsmen work for commissions, frequently on behalf of the nobles. Food is plentiful for the gathering, but delicacies and certain staples are farmed and harvested in large fields near the city. Many of the common folk work as farmers or hunters.

Atlantean miners work in the caverns throughout the northern mountain range, searching for oricalchum (the rarest, and thus most valuable, of Atlantean resources), nickel, copper, gold, and silver. The last two are well-regarded for their beauty (and usefulness, in the case of gold, which is frequently rolled and beaten into thin scrolls and die-stamped for written records) but not considered nearly as valuable as they are on the surface. Queen Mara knows how valuable the products of her mines would be to the surface world, and has carefully hidden the extent of her reserves (as well as the diamonds, pearls, and other similar wealth) from all but the most trustworthy of her visitors.





ATLANTEAN MAGIC

There are two types of magic at work in the world of Atlantis. First is the divine magic that Poseidon used on his faithful during the time of the Cataclysm to transform them into sea-dwellers. This magic remains inherent in Atlanteans and occasionally manifests itself in additional “mutations,” particularly in certain bloodlines like the direct descendants of Glaucus. The most common such mutations are enhanced strength and *Atlan’s Gift* (the ability to breathe air and survive out of the water for extended periods of time), but others (such as the Queen’s sonic blast or Marus’s superhuman strength) exist. No one knows why or how these additional abilities appear, but they tend to be powers that are particularly useful for living underwater, such as sonar or the ability to mentally control sea creatures, as opposed to (for example) pyrokinesis.

Atlanteans also have a trove of knowledge about forms of practiced magic that draw on ambient forces or call on the favor of extradi-

mensional beings. The bulk of these spells are rituals (usually involving extensive time to set up and an array of materials, symbols, and recitations) or alchemical recipes that create potions or transmute elements (such as the most famous and commonly-used spell in the city, the creation of Keto’s Flame from water, various plants, and pure oricalchum dust.) Most of these spells date back to the Atlantean Age and have survived due to their simplicity and utility; Atlantis has few mages who wield power comparable to the true masters of the surface world (who themselves are quite rare).

Spells more powerful still remain hidden in the secret libraries of those who worship darker gods than Poseidon; Nereus, Dargon the Usurper’s advisor, had a secret cache of golden scrolls, most of which were stolen by Stingray before she fled the city (see *Champions Universe*), but other copies may still exist. Persistent rumors abound that deep beneath the city lie catacombs and tombs untouched since the Cataclysm, which may hide the secrets of the great wizard-kings of old.

ATLANTEAN CHARACTERS



Many Champions Universe campaigns feature characters of Atlantean origin, whether they're aquatic superheroes, diplomats in the service of Queen Mara, or even Atlantean merchants who carry on limited trade with the surface world.

ATLANTEAN PACKAGE DEAL

The accompanying Package Deal represents the typical abilities possessed by an Atlantean (in the generic sense of "underwater dweller," not the more specific subgroup of people who live in Atlantis). Not only do Atlanteans breathe water instead of air, but the need to survive the rigors of undersea life makes them much stronger and tougher than normal humans — not to mention better swimmers.

ATLANTEAN PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
5	+5 STR
10	+5 CON
6	<i>Swift Swimming</i> : Swimming +6" (8" total)
2	<i>Tough Body</i> : Damage Resistance (2 PD/2 ED)
4	<i>Atlantean Physiology</i> : Life Support (Safe Environments: High Pressure, Intense Cold; Longevity: age at half normal rate)
5	<i>Atlantean Eyes</i> : Nightvision
5	<i>Nictitating Membrane</i> : Sight Group Flash Defense (5 points)
3	<i>Aquatic Movement</i> : Environmental Movement (no penalties while in water)
0	<i>Breathing Underwater</i> : Atlanteans breathe water as their default environment. They cannot breathe air, and thus can only remain out of water as long as they can hold their breath (or longer, with the use of SCUBA-like water tanks)

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 40

Disadvantages

Value Disadvantage

15	Dependence: must drowse or immerse self in water once per Hour or suffer 3d6 damage (Very Common)
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Total Value of Package Disadvantages: 15

ATLANTEAN HALF-BREED PACKAGE DEAL

Despite the transformation worked upon them by the sea god, Atlanteans are humans. As such, they can interbreed with surface-dwelling, air-breathing humans. While this has almost never happened to date, as contact between Atlanteans and Landers increases, it's only a matter of time before half-Atlantean children are born. The accompanying Package Deal represents the typical abilities such a half-breed would possess.

ATLANTEAN HALF-BREED PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
3	+3 STR
6	+3 CON
2	<i>Strong Swimmer</i> : Swimming +2" (4" total)
1	<i>Tough Body</i> : Damage Resistance (1 PD/1 ED)
5	<i>Breathing Underwater</i> : Life Support (Expanded Breathing: breathe underwater; air is default environment)
3	<i>Half-Atlantean Physiology</i> : Life Support (Safe Environments: High Pressure, Intense Cold)
5	<i>Half-Atlantean Eyes</i> : Nightvision

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 25

Disadvantages

Value Disadvantage

0	Dependence: must drowse or immerse self in water once per Day or suffer 1d6 damage (Very Common)
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Total Value of Package Disadvantages: 0



TYPICAL MYSTICAL MUTATIONS

As noted in the text, some Atlanteans manifest “mystic mutations” that grant them abilities beyond those of normal Atlanteans. Examples include Prince Marus’s immense strength or Queen Mara’s sonic scream. Here are a few examples of some of the more common mystical mutations:

Cost Power

- 5 *Atlan’s Gift*: Life Support (Expanded Breathing: breathe in the air) (typically, a character with Atlan’s Gift also has a lesser Dependence, as shown on Mara’s and Marus’s character sheets)
- 10 *Atlantean Strength*: +10 STR (total, including Package Deal: +15)
- 20 *Greater Atlantean Strength*: +20 STR (total, including Package Deal: +25)
- 2 *Stronger Swimmer*: Swimming +2” (total, including Package Deal: +8”)
- 4 *Stronger Swimmer*: Swimming +4” (total, including Package Deal: +10”)
- 15 *Aquatic Senses*: Active Sonar (Hearing Group)
- 3 *Aquatic Senses*: Ultrasonic Perception (Hearing Group)
- 12 *Empathic Bond With Sea Creatures*: Animal Handler (Aquatic Animals) (PRE +5)
- var *Aquatic Friend*: Follower (one sea creature; see *The HERO System Bestiary* for many examples) plus Mind Link (Psychic Bond with Follower)
- 15 *Speak With Sea Creatures*: Telepathy 6d6 (Animal class of minds) (30 Active Points); Concentration (½ DCV throughout use; -½), Aquatic Animals Only (-½)
- 33 *Control Sea Creatures*: Mind Control 8d6, Telepathic (+¼) (Animal class of minds) (50 Active Points); Aquatic Animals Only (-½)
- 31 *Telepathically Summon Sea Creatures*: Summon one sea creature built on up to 250 points, Expanded Class (aquatic animals; +¼) (62 Active Points); Arrives Under Own Power (-½), Summoned Being Must Inhabit Locale (-½)

QUEEN MARA The Sea Hawk				
Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
35	STR	25	16-	Lift 3,200 kg; 7d6 [3]
19	DEX	27	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
25	CON	30	14-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
15	INT	5	12-	PER Roll 12-
21	EGO	22	13-	ECV: 7
23	PRE	13	14-	PRE Attack: 4½d6
18	COM	4	13-	
15	PD	8		Total: 23 PD (16 rPD)
14	ED	9		Total: 22 ED (16 rED)
4	SPD	11		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
12	REC	0		
50	END	0		
46	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 164

Movement:	Running:	6"/12"
	Leaping:	7"/14"
	Swimming:	14"/56"
	Flight:	20"/40"

Cost	Powers	END
67	<i>Cry Of The Sea Hawk:</i> Energy Blast 8d6, Area Of Effect (13" Cone; +1), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼), Personal Immunity (+¼); No Range (-½)	4
8	<i>Tough Atlantean Body:</i> Damage Resistance (8 PD/8 ED)	0
15	<i>Tough Atlantean Body:</i> Physical Damage Reduction, Resistant, 25%	0
11	<i>Royal Battle Armor:</i> Armor (8 PD/8 ED); OIF (-½), Activation Roll 12- (-¾)	0
10	<i>Nictitating Membrane:</i> Sight Group Flash Defense (10 points)	0
4	<i>Atlantean Physiology:</i> Life Support (Safe Environments: High Pressure, Intense Cold; Longevity: ages at half normal rate)	0
5	<i>Atlan's Gift:</i> Life Support (Expanded Breathing: breathe in the air)	0
17	<i>Swift Swimming:</i> Swimming +12" (14" total), x4 Noncombat	2
40	<i>Mystic Flight:</i> Flight 20"	4
5	<i>Atlantean Eyes:</i> Nightvision	0

Perks

10	Fringe Benefit: Head of State
3	Reputation: Queen of the legendary land of Atlantis (among Landers) 8-, +3/+3d6
15	Money: Filthy Rich

Talents

3	<i>Aquatic Movement:</i> Environmental Movement (no penalties while in water)
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Skills

24	+3 with All Combat
8	+4 with Oratory, Persuasion, and High Society; Only In Atlantean Society (-½)
3	Acting 14-
2	Animal Handler (Aquatic Animals) 14-
3	Breakfall 13-
3	Bureaucratics 14-
3	Conversation 14-
3	High Society 14-

8	AK: Atlantis 17-
3	AK: Oceans Of The World 12-
5	CuK: Atlanteans 14-
3	CuK: Atlantean Barbarian Tribes 12-
5	KS: Atlantean History 14-
2	KS: Modern History 11-
3	Language: English (completely fluent; Atlantean is Native)
1	Language: Gorro (basic conversation)
3	Navigation (Air, Marine) 12-
3	Oratory 14-
3	Paramedics 12-
6	PS: Monarch Of Atlantis 15-
3	Stealth 13-
2	Survival (Marine) 12-
3	Tactics 12-
3	WF: Common Melee Weapons, Nets

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 318**Total Cost: 482****200+ Disadvantages**

0	Dependence: must douse herself with water once every 6 Hours or suffers Weakness (Very Common)
20	Hunted: Stingray 11- (As Pow, PC has a Public ID or is otherwise very easy to find, Harshly Punish)
15	Hunted: various enemies of Atlantis 8- (As Pow, PC has a Public ID or is otherwise very easy to find, Harshly Punish)
20	Psychological Limitation: Devoted To Her People And Kingdom (Very Common, Strong)
15	Psychological Limitation: Wants To Modernize And Gradually Bring Atlantis Into World Community (Common, Strong)
15	Psychological Limitation: Honorable (Common, Strong)
20	Social Limitation: Public Identity (Frequently, Severe)
177	Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 482

Background/History: Queen Mara, daughter of King Oceanus and his wife Queen Orana, is the reigning monarch of Atlantis. Earlier sections of this chapter describe her history.

Mara has many close friends on the surface. These include Patty "Siren" Renton, Diamond (and the other members of the Sentinels), and Dr. Silverback, and she happily provides any assistance she can when their own concerns bring them into her realm. She also remains on good terms with her ex-husband, Drake Wilson. He's now in his mid-eighties and happily retired to his farm in upstate New York, where she visits him every year or so.

Personality/Motivation: Mara has grown into the job of ruling Atlantis quite well over the last few decades. She feels her responsibilities for her people acutely, and their welfare is always her first priority. Like her father before her, she believes Atlantis cannot remain isolated from the surface world, and she's determined to create healthy political relationships and even alliances with Lander nations. But

she's come to understand it will take a long time for her people to get over their xenophobia, and she's developed the patience and willingness to take the task in small, incremental steps. She's trying to instill that patience in her son as part of his preparation for the throne, and accepts that the job may not be fully completed in either of their lifetimes.

As queen, Mara rules Atlantis with a firm but fair hand. Many of the barbarian tribes respect her, either because of her own skills in combat or their loyalty to Andros's memory. Those that don't consider her a dangerous enemy, but one whose word they can trust. She's popular with the common citizenry, who recognize her kindness and concern for their welfare; other nobles and the military may still have their doubts, but usually admit she's done a reasonable job under pressure.

Quote: "As long as blood and breath are left to us, Atlantis shall not fall!"

Powers/Tactics: Though middle-aged (by Atlantean standards), and somewhat diminished by a too-sedentary lifestyle on the Oricalthum Throne, Mara remains a remarkably powerful Atlantean woman. She possesses the usual resilience and other abilities of an Atlantean, but has several others — including some superpowers deriving from "mystic mutations" that became apparent only in mid-1938 after the level of ambient magic in the world began to arise. She's stronger, tougher, and faster than even most trained Atlantean warriors. She can emit a

piercing sonic blast from her mouth, and can fly even though she has no wings or other visible means of propulsion. The combination of her swift swimming, flight, and sonic cry earned her the name "Sea Hawk" back in her adventuring days.

Additionally, and perhaps most importantly during her career as a Golden Age crimefighter, Mara can breathe air. As long as she doesn't let her skin dry out too much (stepping into a shower or being doused with a bucket of water keeps her comfortable for hours), she's as comfortable on land as below the sea.

As the current ruler of Atlantis, Mara doesn't get into many physical confrontations any more — after all, she has an army and a coterie of powerful bodyguards. Nevertheless, if circumstances warrant, she's a fairly capable combatant with extensive experience and a solid sense of tactics.

Campaign Use: Apart from her obvious role as the reigning monarch of Atlantis (and therefore someone who has an interest in pretty much any unusual situations occurring in the Atlantic Ocean), the GM can also bring Mara into a story through her past as a Golden Age heroine. Heroes who were either around then themselves, or who have a legacy-style connection to the period, may know her personally. Surviving WWII-era villains with a grudge against Mara personally or the Defenders of Justice in general could show up any time.

You generally shouldn't make Mara any more powerful, even in games where the PCs are built on far more points; she's not intended as a combatant or physical challenge. At most, consider giving her far more extensive contacts in the surface world, and perhaps a better-known Reputation among Landers. To weaken her, get rid of her superAtlantean abilities (sonic blast, flight, less restrictive Dependence, and so on).

Mara generally doesn't Hunt anyone; she has many other, more important, things to do. But if someone represented a definite threat to Atlantis, and she felt it was necessary to deal with the matter personally, she wouldn't hesitate. She'd start by sending squads of soldiers, only taking a hand herself if she had to.

Appearance: Queen Mara is a lovely Atlantean woman with green skin and darker green hair that she keeps fashionably short. Her eyes are light blue and particularly piercing. Though over eighty years old, she appears to Lander eyes to only be in her late thirties. She wears elegant robes, usually in the royal colors of maroon and gold, accessorized with several ornate bracelets and necklaces. In formal situations, she wears her crown, a jewel-encrusted tiara that sits high on her forehead.



PRINCE MARUS				
Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
60	STR	50	21-	Lift 100 tons; 12d6 [6]
28	DEX	54	15-	OCV: 9/DCV: 9
33	CON	46	16-	
18	BODY	16	13-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll 13-
18	EGO	16	13-	ECV: 6
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
20	COM	5	13-	
23	PD	11		Total: 31 PD (31 rPD)
23	ED	16		Total: 31 ED (31 rED)
5	SPD	12		Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
20	REC	2		
70	END	2		
75	STUN	10		Total Characteristic Cost: 258

Movement:	Running:	6"/12"
	Flight:	15"/30"
	Leaping:	12"/24"
	Swimming:	16"/64"

Cost	Powers	END
23	<i>Tough Atlantean Body:</i> Damage Resistance (23 PD/23 ED)	0
15	<i>Tough Atlantean Body:</i> Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 25%	0
15	<i>Tough Atlantean Body:</i> Physical Damage Reduction, Resistant, 25%	0
10	<i>Armored Costume:</i> Armor (8 PD/8 ED); OIF (-½), Activation Roll 11- (-1)	0
10	<i>Nictitating Membrane:</i> Sight Group Flash Defense (10 points)	0
30	<i>Mystic Flight:</i> Flight 15" (15" total)	3
19	<i>Swift Swimmer:</i> Swimming +14" (16" total), x4 Noncombat	2
4	<i>Atlantean Physiology:</i> Life Support (Safe Environments: High Pressure, Intense Cold; Longevity: ages at half normal rate)	0
5	<i>Atlan's Gift:</i> Life Support (Expanded Breathing: breathe in the air)	0
5	<i>Atlantean Eyes:</i> Nightvision	0
15	<i>Aquatic Senses:</i> Active Sonar (Hearing Group)	0
3	<i>Aquatic Senses:</i> Ultrasonic Perception (Hearing Group)	0

Perks

2	Reputation: Crown prince of the legendary land of Atlantis (among Landers) 8-, +2/+2d6
3	Fringe Benefit: Membership: Sentinels
5	Fringe Benefit: Diplomatic Immunity
15	Money: Filthy Rich

Talents

3	<i>Aquatic Movement:</i> Environmental Movement (no penalties while in water)
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Skills

25	+5 HTH
10	+3 with all Interaction Skills; Only When Dealing With Atlantean Society (-½)
2	Animal Handler (Aquatic Animals) 13-
3	Conversation 13-
3	High Society 13-

4	AK: Atlantis 14-
4	AK: Oceans Of The World 14-
3	CK: New York City 13-
2	CuK: Atlantis 11-
1	CuK: Atlantean Barbarian Tribes 8-
3	KS: International Laws Of The Ocean 13-
3	KS: World History 13-
3	Language: English (completely fluent; Atlantean is Native)
2	Navigation (Marine) 13-
3	Oratory 13-
3	Persuasion 13-
3	PS: Crown Prince Of Atlantis 13-
3	PS: UN Diplomat 13-
3	Tactics 13-
3	WF: Common Melee Weapons, Nets

Total Powers & Skill Cost: 268**Total Cost: 526****200+ Disadvantages**

0	Dependence: Must submerge in water every 6 Hours or suffer Weakness (Very Common)
15	Hunted: Stingray 8- (As Pow, PC has a Public ID or is otherwise very easy to find, Harshly Punish)
15	Hunted: Captain Claw 8- (As Pow, PC has a Public ID or is otherwise very easy to find, Harshly Punish)
20	Psychological Limitation: Strong Sense Of Duty Toward Atlantis And Its People (Common, Total)
10	Psychological Limitation: Worries About His Public Perception, Both Among Atlanteans And Landers (Common, Moderate)
20	Psychological Limitation: Honorable (Common, Total)
15	Social Limitation: Public Identity (Frequently, Major)
231	Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 526

Background/History: Prince Marus was born to Queen Mara and her husband, Prince Andros, in 1972 — their first child and heir to the throne of Atlantis. The people considered Marus's birth a favorable omen and celebrated throughout the city.

As soon as the boy could swim, his parents began training him for his future role as king. He studied the arts of statecraft and war with his family's advisors, history and the arts with tutors. He was a rambunctious and energetic child, headstrong and bright, and though he was a chore to discipline, his teachers saw in him the seeds of a great leader. He spent a lot of time at his parents' sides as they went about the daily business of running the kingdom. Though his younger sister Thalassa was also frequently there, Marus of necessity received more attention, which fostered the bitter feelings she nursed against her family. For his part, Marus held no particular malice against Thalassa, when he thought about her at all.

His mother Mara felt that her exposure to the people and cultures of the surface world during her period of exile were vitally helpful to her as queen. Since she believed Atlantis's contacts with



the surface world would inevitably increase, she felt he should also spend time there. At first she simply took him along on her periodic visits to the United Nations and her friends in the Fabulous Five. But after the death of Prince Andros, she had to spend more time on her royal duties, with resultingly less to devote to motherly concerns. After discussing the matter with the superhero Diamond, Mara enrolled Marus in the newly-created “superhero school” at Ravenswood Academy (*Champions Universe*, page 114).

Marus, whose enormous strength was only beginning to manifest itself, was one of the first and oldest students enrolled at Ravenswood. During his two years there became one of the school’s leaders, making strong contacts and friendships with several adult superheroes as well as his classmates (such as the future costumed heroes Diadem and Sequoia). While he was at school, his sister Thalassa had her breakdown, killed Ikthos, and fled Atlantis. Marus returned to Atlantis briefly to comfort his mother and participate in the search for his sister, but eventually returned to Ravenswood.

After being in the first Ravenswood “superhero graduating class” in 1991, Marus returned to Atlantis to complete his studies in politics and strategy, then began to take on various responsibilities as his mother’s representative. He visited various barbarian tribes that still owed her fealty as Andros’s wife, and traveled to the surface world frequently to represent Atlantis’s interests

to the United Nations. While in New York he renewed his friendship with the Sentinels, especially Diamond and Amazing Man II, and eventually became a part-time member of that team in 1997. He still performs these duties today, traveling easily between the surface and undersea worlds while preparing himself for the day when the mantle of leadership and responsibility rests on his own shoulders.

Personality/Motivation: Marus is still a young man by Atlantean standards, and he’s filled with the vigor of youth. While he takes his responsibilities (both in the palace and the floor of the General Assembly) seriously, he also lives life with tremendous energy and enthusiasm. He considers his current activities, both as a diplomat and a superhero, as part of his training for his future role as king, especially since he has every intention of carrying on his mother’s and grandfather’s plans to integrate Atlantis peacefully into the outside world while protecting its unique culture and heritage.

Spending time with the Ravenswood kids and the Sentinels has taught Marus a great deal about Landers (a term he tries to remember not to use, even though most people on the surface don’t consider it insulting), though admittedly some of those Landers are rather unusual. He likes surface folk a great deal and has easily adjusted to their impatient and boisterous ways, and has even adopted a few of their manner-

isms of speech. His fondest desire is to promote understanding and goodwill between his home and the surface world, largely by helping his people get over their fears and recognize all of the possible benefits of normalized relations.

Over the last decade Marus has become something of a celebrity in New York, thanks to his quick wit and good looks (which are only accented by his green skin). He has had several brief romantic affairs (including one with Diadem that ended fairly amicably a couple of years ago, and one with starlet Romana Ravelle that crashed and burned in a rather spectacular fashion), and shows no sign of settling down anytime soon.

Quote: “Well, we tried being reasonable. Now we’re moving on to busting some heads. Maybe we can come back to reasonable later.”

Powers/Tactics: Marus is a brick, physically tough and equally at home above or below the surface. Even by Atlantean standards he’s tremendously strong and durable, and a fast swimmer. The mystical energy that runs so strongly in his bloodline has also manifested in several other ways. He inherited not only Atlan’s Gift from his mother, but also her power of unaided flight. Though he cannot utter a sonic cry like she can, he can generate ultrasonic sound that he processes internally as a form of sonar.

Marus is a skilled warrior, trained since a young age by the weaponmasters and tacticians of the Atlantean military. But he’s had little experience commanding troops above the squad level — mostly he’s led small units patrolling the borders and dealing with barbarian raiders. He fights intelligently and thoughtfully, even though his powers primarily lend themselves to straightforward “fly/swim up close and punch” tactics. He’s perfectly willing to accept the advice of others in battle, and does a good job of processing everybody’s input before making a final decision.

Unlike his sister, he has no particular aptitude for magic, nor much interest in learning.

Campaign Use: Marus is the most prominent Atlantean celebrity in the surface world (as both a member of the Sentinels and a delegate to the United Nations), and for most humans he’s the public face of his entire race. Apart from likely being a part of any story that involves the city of Atlantis or a plot of Stingray’s, Marus is easy to insert into the background whenever the United Nations or UNTIL confronts a world-threatening crisis, as a recognizable face at a diplomatic soiree, or being interviewed on television. Marus also keeps an eye on goings-on at the Ravenswood Academy, since he remains friends with Rowan.

To make Marus more powerful, give him more abilities like his mother’s sonic cry, or even some marine creature-based powers like those of his sister Stingray. To weaken him, play down his brick-ness: reduce his STR to 40-50 (and his defenses proportionately), his CON to 20-25, and his DEX to 20.

Marus won’t Hunt anyone unless ordered to by his mother as part of some Atlantean matter. In that case he’ll follow her instructions, generally as the commander of squads of Atlantean soldiers.

Appearance: Marus is a handsome and well-built young Atlantean male, standing 6’2” and weighing 210 pounds. His skin is light green, and his short, wavy hair a darker shade. His costume is a tight black and dark blue bodystocking cut to show off his impressive physique, with black “boots” and highlights on the lower torso and upper legs. He wears a belt and wristcuffs of silver and oricalchum, and a necklace with an oricalchum chain and the Royal Seal of Atlantis.

UNDERWATER ADVENTURES



Adventures in modern Atlantis will involve underwater action. Here are some expanded rules for underwater activity in the *HERO System*.

THE UNDERWATER ENVIRONMENT

The underwater environment is very different than the surface environment in ways both obvious and subtle. Characters may find that the biggest danger they face on some underwater missions is not the enemies they fight, but the very water around them.

For reference purposes, Atlantis is about 820 feet (about 250 meters, or 125") below the surface of the Atlantic Ocean.

LIGHT

Sunlight only penetrates the ocean to certain depths. The deepest parts of the ocean are as black as a starless night, with the only light coming from the bioluminescence of creatures adapted to the environment. Additionally, the murkiness of the water inhibits sight. See *Perception And Communication*, below, for rules about making PER Rolls underwater.

PRESSURE

The mass of all the water above a swimmer exerts a crushing pressure. This alone can kill characters even if they can breathe normally underwater.

Earth's average atmospheric pressure at sea level (one atmosphere, or approximately 1000 millibars) is the default for game purposes. At 1 atmosphere or below, a character's normal PD is enough to resist the effects of pressure.

Heavier pressure, such as from diving deep into the sea, can cause injury and death. As of 2004, the free-diving record for humans is to 171 meters, where the pressure is about 17 atmospheres — but without special protection, they can only remain at such pressures for short periods.

Calculating Pressure

As a guideline, on Earth, 10 meters (5") of depth in the ocean equals 1 atmosphere, and every +10 meters (+5") (or fraction thereof) thereafter equals +1 atmosphere. Thus, a character swimming 43 meters below the surface experiences 5 atmospheres of pressure.

For game purposes, 10 atmospheres of pressure is the most an unprotected humans can withstand for extended periods without suffering any negative effects. For each +1 atmosphere (or fraction thereof) thereafter, a character suffers 1d6

Normal Damage, NND Does BODY, per Turn (the damage accrues on Segment 1). For example, at 15.5 atmospheres, a character suffers 6d6 damage per Turn. The defense to the damage is Life Support (Safe Environment: High Pressure).

In games emphasizing greater "realism," Safe Environment (High Pressure) only constitutes a total defense to pressure damage up to 30 atmospheres. Above that, Safe Environment (High Pressure) alone is not enough. At that point, for each +1 atmosphere (or fraction thereof) above 30, a person suffers the damage indicated above (beginning at 1d6, not 21d6) unless he has the proper defense: Safe Environment (High Pressure) *and* a minimum of 1 Resistant PD for every 3 atmospheres of pressure. (Normally the defense to an NND shouldn't vary this way, but in this case it's a realistic and valid way to represent the increasing effects of pressure.) This defense can come from armor, personal force fields, or any other source. Thus, at 31 atmospheres, a character with Safe Environment (High Pressure) and 10 rPD is fine; at 32 atmospheres, he starts taking damage, because his rPD is no longer enough to protect him.

The Bends

Even when the pressure isn't high enough to cause harm, being in a high-pressure environment has other dangers. Nitrogen and other gases dissolve in the bloodstream under pressure. The affliction known as *the bends* (or, more formally, decompression sickness) occurs when divers try to ascend from underwater depths too rapidly — when the pressure is reduced quickly, the dissolved gases form bubbles and expand, which can cause debilitating pain and tissue damage. (For a graphic demonstration of this, shake up a bottle of carbonated soda and open the top — then imagine that happening in human blood veins.)

The effects of the bends are highly variable. Some deep-sea divers have survived dozens of dives with no permanent effects, but others died or were left paralyzed. The only way to avoid the bends is to depressurize slowly, either by gradually ascending through the water or spending time in an artificial pressure-control chamber. Divers descending as far as Atlantis (approximately 820 feet/250 meters/125") require specialized equipment (including using alternative gas mixes in their breathing apparatus, since highly-pressurized nitrogen is also a powerful narcotic) and at least ten hours of pressure stabilization.

In game terms, for any decrease in pressure of greater than 1 atmosphere per minute, a character must make a CON Roll, with a penalty of -1 for each additional atmosphere of pressure. If he suc-

ceeds, he doesn't suffer from the bends. If he fails, he suffers RKA 1d6 NND Does BODY damage (the defense is Life Support [Safe Environment: High Pressure]). If he fails the roll badly (by 4 or more), the GM might want to increase the damage to 2d6 (or perhaps by +1 point per point the character missed the roll by). He suffers an additional 1 BODY damage per hour until decompressed or returned to the higher pressure.

At the GM's discretion, a character suffering from the bends (*i.e.*, who fail the roll and are subjected to the NND Killing Damage) is physically incapacitated. To take any physical action, he must make an EGO Roll at -4 to withstand the pain (the *Resistance* Talent adds to this roll). If he fails, he cannot take the action. Each additional action requires a similar roll. At the same time, they will suffer a loss of 1 BODY per Hour until decompressed or returned to the higher pressure.

Nitrogen Narcosis

Sometimes called "rapture of the deep," *nitrogen narcosis* occurs when a diver breathes compressed air at depths greater than 100 feet (15"). The nitrogen in the compressed air can have an adverse effect. For every Turn spent below 15", a character breathing compressed air must make a CON Roll. If the roll succeeds, he experiences no ill effects. But if he fails the roll, he starts acting as if he were drunk and suffers the effects of intoxication as described on page 379 of the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised* rulebook. In most cases he cannot exercise good judgment (at best, he has to succeed with an EGO Roll to do the "sensible" or "right" thing) — instead, he behaves in a wildly erratic manner, possibly becoming reckless or silly. For example, he might become overconfident in battle, or simply wander away from the fighting.

To "cure" the effects of nitrogen narcosis, a character must go to (or be taken to) a lesser depth. Once the hero reaches a depth of 15" or less and takes a Post-Segment 12 Recovery (he lacks the judgment to take a Recovery voluntarily), the effects of nitrogen narcosis disappear.

The bends only presents a problem for divers who use regular compressed air. Special alternate gas mixes are available that eliminate the problem entirely. On the other hand, divers who use pure oxygen in their SCUBA gear suffer similar effects to nitrogen narcosis regardless of depth. Furthermore, breathing more than 1.6 atmospheres of pure oxygen affects the central nervous system. This causes the character to suffer convulsions... which means that if someone's not there to put his regulator back in his mouth, he'll drown before he can recover.

Handling nitrogen narcosis in the game is difficult — it's not just an excuse to act silly, it's something to be roleplayed properly — so some GMs may prefer not to use these rules at all if they don't think it's appropriate for their players. One quick and easy way to handle it for some characters is to exaggerate their Psychological Limitations (and any other Disadvantages that represent a character's mental state, such as some Enrageds and Rivalries). This might not work well for Psychological Limita-

tions like *Code Versus Killing* or *Vengeful*, but can be a lot of roleplaying fun when a character has a phobia, is in love with another PC, or the like.

TEMPERATURE

Water conducts heat away from the body much more efficiently than air, meaning that divers find themselves feeling the effects of cold underwater more rapidly. The waters surrounding Atlantis are extremely cold (Temperature Level -1 or -2, typically) and quickly sap the strength and energy of anyone unused to them. Characters without Life Support (Safe Environment: Intense Cold), whether innate or provided by equipment, lose REC and Long-Term END pursuant to the Temperature Level rules (see pages 441-42 of the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised* rulebook, but ignore any losses for being in Temperature Level 1). Special insulated diving suits exist that can counteract the cold (add +1 Temperature Level for a 3mm insulated suit, +2 Levels for a 6mm insulated suit, and +3 Levels for a drysuit).

BREATHING

The main consideration most characters will have when they contemplate a visit to Atlantis is how they'll breathe underwater. Some characters may already have the innate ability to breathe underwater, but others will have to rely on outside resources.

First and foremost, characters can use SCUBA gear or other underwater breathing equipment (see *Divers And Diving*, below). In a "realistic" game, the amount of oxygen they can carry in a single tank severely hampers their ability to use this method for long adventures. But in a setting that features comic book technology, such as the Champions Universe, it's possible to have SCUBA-like gear that allows for an unlimited amount of breathing time... but of course, using gear, no matter how sophisticated, leaves characters vulnerable to losing that gear, having it break or malfunction, and so forth.

Alternately, characters may be able to use magic to breathe underwater. Atlantean mages know several spells allowing Landers to breathe underwater, though getting to the mages to have them cast those spells may prove difficult. In game terms, the GM has two options. The first, and easiest, is to consider the "Breathe Water" spell a plot device — since it's necessary to let the PCs adventure underwater, just give it to them somehow and don't worry about the game specifics. Second, the GM can create the spell in *HERO System* terms so that he'll know its exact game effects (see the accompanying sidebar for some examples).

Characters who find themselves unable to breathe underwater begin to drown (see page 424 of the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised* rulebook for rules about drowning).

ATLANTEAN WATER-BREATHING SPELLS

Grant Breath: With each use of this spell, a caster can grant one other being the ability to breathe underwater for one day (up to a total of 8 beings). However, this spell does not remove any of the other environmental penalties for underwater activity.

Life Support (Expanded Breathing: Breathe Underwater), Usable Simultaneously (up to 8 people, cast one at a time; +¾), 1 Continuing Charge Lasting 1 Day (+0) (9 Active Points); Extra Time (1 Turn to cast; -¾). Total cost: 5 points.

Poseidon's Blessing: This more-advanced version of Grant Breath allows a single being to become fully adapted for underwater activity for one day.

*Life Support (Expanded Breathing: Breathe Underwater), Usable Simultaneously (up to 8 people, cast one at a time; +¾), 1 Continuing Charge Lasting 1 Day (+0) (9 Active Points); Extra Time (1 Turn to cast; -¾) (total cost: 5 points) **plus** Environmental Movement: Aquatic Movement (no penalties underwater), Usable Simultaneously (up to 8 people, cast one at a time; +¾), 1 Continuing Charge Lasting 1 Day (+0) (5 Active Points); Extra Time (1 Turn to cast; -¾) (total cost: 3 points). Total cost: 8 points.*

PERCEPTION AND COMMUNICATION

Characters may have difficulty perceiving while underwater, or communicating with each other.

SIGHT

Water blocks out sunlight. For photosynthesis purposes, sunlight reaches to as much as 77-92 meters (250-300 feet, or 39-46"), but it starts to lose reds and yellows at about 9 meters (30 feet, or 5"). At 18 meters (60 feet, or 9") and below, all the light is blue-green. Below the photosynthesis level, all living beings are animals or organisms that subsist on something other than sunlight. Besides the loss of light, the other factor affecting visibility underwater is murkiness — materials in the water (particulate matter, small organisms, algae, and the like).

In game terms, the GM should require characters involved in combat underwater to make PER Rolls when they change targets or need to notice events at a distance. The accompanying table provides a basic modifier based on depth (and thus on darkness), with an additional modifier for murkiness. Atlantis is deep enough to impose the -4 penalty for depth; the waters around it are usually Average murkiness.

Infrared And Ultraviolet Perception; Nightvision

Heat dissipates quickly in water, so Infrared Perception (usually bought as a form of Sight) is limited. Characters using Infrared Perception suffer an additional -2 per range doubling for using it at a distance (this is cumulative with standard Range Modifiers).

Nightvision and Ultraviolet Perception are not affected underwater, though Ultraviolet Perception becomes useless below the point where sunlight can penetrate.

HEARING

Sound travels more easily underwater, but frequency dropouts (and surface characters' unfamiliarity with how water affects sound) can make understanding speech, pinpointing the origin/direction of a sound, and the like more difficult. All Hearing PER Rolls are at -3; this increases to -4 if what the character wants to do is locate the origin or source of a sound, but improve to +1 if all the character needs to do is hear a sound (rather than identify or locate it). Additionally, the GM may require characters to make unmodified Hearing PER Rolls to understand speech in languages not designed for underwater use, even though normally characters don't make Hearing PER Rolls just to talk.

If a character fails a Hearing PER Roll underwater, it doesn't necessarily mean he didn't hear the sound (particularly if it's speech). Instead, it may mean that he heard it, but can't understand or identify it at all.

Sonar

Underwater Hearing PER Roll rules do not apply to sonar. It works better underwater; not only does it not suffer the standard penalties, it actually gets a +2 PER Roll bonus. However, sonar used underwater cannot perceive objects above the surface of the water — the surface bounces the sonar signal back to the character, effectively "blinding" him as to all things beyond it. And



don't forget that sonar isn't foolproof — for example, thermal layers in the water can create PER Roll penalties, and sonar may read a group of small objects that are close together (such as a school of fish) as one big object.

RADIO

Water tends to obstruct radio signals. All Radio Perception and Radio Perception/Transmission both suffer a -5 penalty to PER Rolls. HRRP, which covers more bands, suffers only a -3 penalty. Radar does not work at all underwater.

SMELL/TASTE

Characters who can breathe underwater can make PER Rolls for Smell/Taste without penalty; those who can't are limited to smelling or tasting whatever's in the air they're breathing. In either case, shifting water currents make Tracking by scent quite difficult. Unless the water's still, Tracking Smell/Taste PER Rolls are made at a -2 penalty.

COMMUNICATION

Closely related to perceiving things is the ability to communicate with other people. Being underwater often makes communication difficult. In addition to the perception problems described above, characters may have trouble speaking because they've got SCUBA mouthpieces in their mouths (though special full-face masks with built-in radios that allow communication are available), have trouble seeing hand signals or gestures because of silt or murk, and have difficulty sending and receiving radio signals (see above). The GM should keep the environment in mind and require characters to make PER Rolls or INT Rolls to understand one another, if appropriate.

MOVING UNDERWATER

In the water, Swimming becomes the default form of movement in place of Running. Thus, for most characters, that means they won't be able to move more than 2" per Phase (4" Noncombat). Characters who've bought the *Usable [As Second Mode Of Movement]* Advantage for Running, Flight, or the like so they can use that Movement Power as if it were Swimming (see page 124 of the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised* rulebook) can use that power underwater without restriction.

RUNNING

Characters can only have Running 1" underwater (2" Noncombat, ½" Half Move). This assumes they're on the ocean floor or some other surface they can actually run on; if they're in mid-water, they can't run at all. Even then, the surface may be so slippery that the GM requires a character to make DEX Rolls or Breakfall rolls every Phase to keep his feet.

At the GM's option, characters with significantly more than the standard Running 6" (such as some speedsters) can Run underwater at one-sixth their normal Combat Movement rate.

UNDERWATER VISIBILITY

Depth	Sight PER Roll Modifier
1-4"	-0
5-8"	-1
9-16"	-2
17-32"	-3
33" or deeper	-4
Conditions	Additional Sight PER Roll Modifier
Very murky (muddy river or lake)	-3
Murky (quarry lake, heavy particulates)	-2
Average (typical ocean)	-1
Clear (clear ocean)	-0
Very clear (some Caribbean waters)	-0
Characters with Nightvision suffer no penalty due to depth, but do suffer murkiness penalties.	
The Range Modifier for PER Rolls underwater increase to -3 per range doubling instead of the ordinary -2.	

LEAPING

Characters can only Leap underwater if they have a solid surface to push off of (such as bedrock on the ocean floor, the side of a submarine, the top of an Atlantean building, or the like).

A character's Leaping speed is halved while he's underwater. The GM may wish to reduce this even further if he has poor footing, if the shape of his body would increase drag through the water, or the like.

For long leaps, due to the problems of perceiving underwater (see *Perception And Communication*, above), characters may have a much harder time perceiving the target hex.

FLIGHT

Unless Flight is bought *Usable As Swimming* (a.k.a. Usable Underwater), it doesn't work at full effect underwater — it depends on the power's special effects. At best, Flight works at half speed in the water; this would apply to graviton manipulation, telekinetic levitation, and other forms of Flight that don't involve any physical motion or effort on the character's part. For Flight involving wings or the like, the GM may restrict a character to one-quarter speed. Flight based on projecting flame or energy behind the character for a "rocket effect" probably won't work at all. The final decision is up to the GM.

GLIDING

Gliding doesn't work at all underwater unless it's bought *Usable As Swimming*.

SWINGING

Swinging usually doesn't work at all underwater unless it's bought *Usable As Swimming*. However, the GM might allow a character to Swing 1" in appropriate circumstances, and characters still may be able to use their swinglines to pull themselves up the side of underwater buildings or cliffs, across underwater chasms, and so on.



TELEPORTATION

Teleportation with the *Must Pass Through Intervening Space* Limitation suffers the same restrictions as Running when used underwater. Other forms of Teleportation typically work at full effect underwater, but characters and GMs must keep two things in mind. First, due to the problems of perceiving underwater (see *Perception And Communication*, above), characters may have a much harder time perceiving the target hex.

Second, and more importantly, Teleporting into an area filled with water constitutes “Teleporting into a solid object,” requiring the character to roll on the Teleportation Damage Table as described on pages 367-68 of the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised* rulebook. This may effectively make Teleportation useless underwater for many characters. (If the GM finds this too restrictive, he can either consider Teleporting into water to be the same as Teleporting into air, or only invoke the Teleporting into solid objects rules occasionally [say, on an 11- roll each time the character Teleports].)

TUNNELING

Characters cannot Tunnel through the water. However, they can Tunnel normally through the ocean floor, the walls of an Atlantean building, or similar underwater structures/objects.

Divers And Diving

Characters without Life Support powers or some other way to breathe underwater must rely on SCUBA gear. The current depth record for divers using SCUBA gear and exotic gas mixtures is a little over 1,000 feet (about 305 meters, or 152”), which is considerably deeper than Atlantis itself (820 feet/250 meters/125”). However, anything deeper than 40 meters (130 feet, or 20”) is “technical” diving (as opposed to recreational diving), and typically requires greater experience and skill, and/or better equipment.

SCUBA EQUIPMENT

Effect:	Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing)
Target/Area Affected:	Self
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
Charges:	1 Continuing Fuel Charge
Breakability:	2 DEF

Description: SCUBA (self-contained underwater breathing apparatus, or simply SCBA for models designed for out-of-water use) equipment allows a swimmer to remain underwater for long periods of time by breathing oxygen supplied by tanks worn on the back. When the user exhales, he creates a trail of bubbles.

If an oxygen tank is punctured, the remaining oxygen is released all at once, causing the tank to explode. This does RKA 1d6, Explosion damage per 10 minutes of air left in the tank.

Game Information: *Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing)* (10 Active Points); OAF (-1), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (oxygen tanks, Easy to obtain; 1 Hour; -0). Total cost: 5 points.

Options:

1) Rebreather: A rebreather is an improved form of SCUBA technology, usable by characters who have TF: SCUBA. Unlike SCUBA gear, it does not create a trail of bubbles to give away the swimmer's position. Instead of releasing the swimmer's exhaled air, a rebreather recirculates, purifies, and supplements it with fresh oxygen, thus allowing the user to breathe it again. This has the additional effect of extending the time the user can remain underwater, but also tends to limit him to dives of no more than about 30 feet (5", or up to 7" for no more than about five minutes). Change to: Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing), Invisible Power Effects (leaves no bubble trail; +¼) (12 Active Points); OAF (-1), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (oxygen tanks, Easy to obtain; 2 Hours; -0). Total cost: 6 points.

2) Super-SCUBA Equipment I: This Champions Universe version of SCUBA equipment is smaller, slimmer, lighter-weight, and can last for up to a month without needing additional air supply. Change to 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (oxygen tanks, Easy to obtain; 1 Month; -0). Total cost: 5 points.

3) Super-SCUBA Equipment II: This form of Super-SCUBA gear attaches to the character in such a way that it's much harder to remove. As Super-SCUBA Equipment I, but change OAF (-1) to OIF (-½). Total cost: 7 points.

SWIMFINS

Effect: Swimming +2"
Target/Area Affected: Self
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
END Cost: 1
Breakability: 1 DEF

Description: Swimfins are worn on the feet. They expand the "surface area" of the foot, allowing the character to propel himself through the water more quickly by moving his legs.

Game Information: *Swimming +2"* (2 Active Points); OAF (-1). Total cost: 1 points.

Options:

1) Attached Swimfins: Some superheroes have special swimfins that attach to their costumes in a way that makes them much harder to remove. For example, a powered armor hero might have special swimfins that fold out from his boots. Change OAF (-1) to OIF (-½). Total cost: 1 point.

UNDERWATER SCOOTER

Effect: Swimming 10"
Target/Area Affected: Self
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Charges: 1 Continuing Fuel Charge
Breakability: 1 DEF

Description: This handheld device is basically a small propeller in a casing. The character holds it and it pulls him through the water at high speed and without tiring him.

Game Information: *Swimming 10"* (10 Active Points); OAF (-1), *Does Not Add To Base Swimming 2"* (-0), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (battery, Easy to obtain; 1 Hour; -0). Total cost: 5 points.

GAME ELEMENTS

Some elements of the *HERO System* work differently, or don't work at all, underwater.

Skills

Unless noted otherwise below, characters can use Skills normally underwater. As always, the GM may impose modifiers to reflect existing circumstances.

Characters born and bred in underwater environments (such as Atlanteans) are assumed to have learned "underwater" versions of their Skills, and to use equipment appropriate for the underwater environment. If they try to use their Skills or equipment in the air, they may experience difficulties of their own.

EQUIPMENT-ORIENTED SKILLS

Skills that require equipment, or usually involve equipment, may not work well underwater if the equipment isn't adapted for underwater use. For example, lockpicks work just as well underwater as on the surface, but the makeup and prostheses used with Disguise melt away or fall off when the character submerses himself in water. Characters may have to obtain appropriate underwater equipment to use certain Skills (like Disguise) underwater. Conversely, Atlantean characters may need "surface versions" of their typical underwater gear if they venture onto land.

INTERACTION SKILLS

If characters cannot easily communicate underwater (see *Perception And Communication*, above), they may find it harder to use Interaction Skills. The GM should impose penalties of -2 to -5, as appropriate.

PERCEPTIVE SKILLS

Many Skills require the character to perceive something (e.g., Lipreading), or require the "target" of the Skill to be able to perceive the character (e.g., Acting, Disguise, or Mimicry). If appropriate, the GM may impose the standard underwater PER Roll penalties (see *Perception And Communication*, above) to such rolls.

ACROBATICS

Characters generally can't use Acrobatics underwater; the water impedes their motion too much. At the GM's option, a character can succeed with an Acrobatics maneuver if he makes his roll at -5. The GM may choose not to apply this penalty if the character has either (a) the *Aquatic Movement* form of Environmental Move-

YOUR VERY OWN SUBMARINE

"Luxury" and "tourist" submarines capable of traveling as deep as Atlantis, such as the Seattle 1000, do exist. But they cost about \$20 million dollars, so unless one of the PCs has a lot of Money, this method of reaching the Undersea Kingdom won't work.

ment (see below), or (b) has bought his Running with the *Usable As Swimming* Advantage.

Characters who are native-born underwater dwellers (such as Atlanteans) can perform Acrobatics underwater — *Aquabatics*, if you will — without penalty, as if they were in air. However, if they try to use their Acrobatics in air, they suffer the same penalties a surface-dweller does underwater, unless they buy the *Surface Movement* form of Environmental Movement (see below) or some other ability to negate this problem.

BREAKFALL

Breakfall is *easier* to use underwater, because water slows down movement. Characters can use the Skill normally and usually receive a +2 bonus to rolls.

On the other hand, Atlantean characters have trouble using Breakfall in the air because they're not used to the way they move in a non-liquid environment. They suffer a -2 penalty to all Breakfall rolls unless they buy the *Surface Movement* form of Environmental Movement (see below) or some other ability to negate this problem.

CRIMINOLOGY, FORENSIC MEDICINE

Water quickly washes away or alters trace evidence of a crime. Therefore these Skills may often prove useless... or at the very least, suffer -3 or greater penalties.

DEMOLITIONS

If an explosive requires fire or heat to ignite/detonate, it won't work underwater unless the character has some Keto's Flame or other underwater "fire." Water may also prevent electrically-detonated explosives from working.

FAST DRAW

It's tough to move really fast underwater. This Skill suffers a -2 penalty.

GAMBLING

Since the Atlanteans don't have paper, most of their gambling involves dice games (using dice carved of heavy stone and "rolled" by dropping them down a chute) or sports betting; card games are mostly restricted to the nobility, who use cards made of thin metal foil.

HIGH SOCIETY

Surface-dwellers who use High Society in Atlantis suffer a -2 penalty due to cultural and physical differences (the GM may reduce or eliminate this penalty after the character has time to adapt to Atlantean culture, and should remove it entirely for characters with appropriate KSs). Atlanteans suffer the same penalty in surface society.

LANGUAGE

The Atlanteans speak their own language, as described on page 16. Surface-dwellers who wish to learn this language must pay double the normal cost due to the difficulties of speaking underwater, learning how to use the hand-gestures, and so forth. (Atlantean is considered completely unrelated to any surface languages, and the various Atlantean

barbarian tongues have 4 points of similarity to it.) For example, fluent conversation in Atlantean costs 4 Character Points, rather than the usual 2 points.

MARTIAL ARTS

See *Underwater Combat*, below, for expanded rules on using Combat and Martial Maneuvers underwater.

MIMICRY

Mimicry depends on the ability to communicate and to perceive, both of which are difficult underwater. At a minimum, Mimicry rolls suffer the standard Hearing PER Roll penalty described above under *Perception And Communication*. However, if a character succeeds with his Mimicry roll, he may be able to take advantage of the fact that surface-dwellers can't always hear clearly and aren't aware of exactly how things should sound in the water. If appropriate, the GM may impose an additional penalty on the target's Hearing PER Roll to determine that the mimicked sound is false.

TRACKING

Characters cannot use Tracking to follow someone who's swimming through the water. Tracking only works underwater if the character can follow footprints or other marks on the ocean floor, Atlantean flagstones, or the like. Even then, the motion of the water may quickly obliterate or alter tracks; the GM can impose a -1 to -3 penalty, as appropriate.

VENTRILLOQUISM

Because sound travels through water more easily than it does through air, characters find this Skill easier to use. The distance penalty for Ventriloquism underwater is only -1 per 3" (instead of the usual -1 per 1").

Talents

Characters who spend a lot of time underwater often buy the Aquatic Movement form of the *Environmental Movement* Talent to eliminate the combat penalties associated with being underwater (see *Underwater Combat*, below). Atlantean characters all get this Talent as part of their Package Deal (in an all-Atlantis campaign, the GM should consider just giving it to them for free, since underwater is their default environment).

Aquatic Movement doesn't allow surface-dwelling characters to move at greater speed underwater — they're still limited to Running 1", as described above. However, it does eliminate the penalties for using some Skills, as described above.

Atlantean characters sometimes suffer penalties if they try to use some Skills in the air, since they're not used to that environment. If they want to act on the surface without those Skill penalties, they can buy a different form of Environmental Movement: *Surface Movement*. It costs 3 points, and does for undersea dwellers part of what Aquatic Movement does for landfolk — eliminates Skill Roll penalties associated with being out of the water.

Powers By Special Effect

Characters with powers based on certain special effects may, at the GM's option, find that their powers work differently underwater. Here are some recommended changes for certain categories of powers.

Many of the special effects described below become more or less effective in water. This is normally expressed as a percentage (such as "Pulson powers only have 50% effect underwater"). For ease of play, just add or subtract the appropriate number of dice, points of defense, or the like — don't bother recalculating Active/Real Points or anything like that.

If a power becomes more effective underwater, or gains an Advantage it wouldn't ordinarily have, this does not increase the END cost the character pays to use the power. He pays the standard END cost for it; the extra effect or Advantage is "free."

ACID

Most manifestations of acid-based powers are liquid in form and dissipate easily in water. Indeed, many acid attacks are neutralized entirely by contact with water, or may even have a single reaction immediately upon contact. This might be a dangerous surprise to the user, if the effect goes off directly in front of him, or involves acid on his skin!

As a general rule, it's easiest for the GM to assume that water neutralizes and dissipates dangerous acids. When characters use acid attacks underwater, reduce the attacks to half effect. Similarly, acid-based defenses usually provide only half as much protection as normal. See page 8 of *The UNTIL Superpowers Database* for more rules about acid powers generally.

AIR AND WIND

Depending on the exact special effect of an air or wind power, it may be completely useless underwater. Air or wind powers that involve manipulating existing air have little or nothing to work with, and so usually have no effect at all. Air or wind powers that involve creating air lose most of their effectiveness because they create bubbles that harmlessly dissipate and float to the surface — at most, such powers have half effect.

A hero who can control masses of air may be able to bring a large "bubble" of it underwater with him, allowing him to breathe (at least for a short time) and providing a potential area of safety from water-dwellers.

DENSITY ALTERATION

Characters whose powers have the special effect of making the character lighter or less dense may find that this affects their buoyancy underwater (though this won't be a problem if they become Desolidified, since then the water just passes right through them). The GM should assign a STR rating and speed (in inches per Segment) to the water currents in the character's location. Every Phase, the lighter than normal character has to win a STR Roll Versus STR Roll Contest to remain in place

— if he fails, he gets swept in the direction of the current for the current's inches of "movement" every Segment until he gets another Phase and can try to win another STR Roll Contest. (Of course, the GM can use this same method for characters of normal mass, if the current's strong enough!)

ELECTRICITY

Pure water makes a fine insulator — but characters aren't likely to encounter pure water outside of a laboratory setting. Impure water, such as lake or river water, is an excellent *conductor* of electricity, and salt water's even better. This has several effects in game terms.

First, electrical attacks become more powerful. In fresh water, they're 25% more effective; in salt water, they're 30% more effective.

Second, Ranged electrical attacks (such as Energy Blasts or RKAs defined as a "lightning bolt"), or any other attack which involves channeling or projecting electricity through the water (as opposed to just touching a target with it) acts as if it had the *Area Of Effect (Line)* Advantage. Alternately, it may act as if it has the *Explosion* Advantage; this is most appropriate for attacks that propel something (like a speargun) through the water which then emits electricity when it approaches or contacts the target.

Third, electrical defenses become more powerful, just like attacks: +25% better in fresh water; +30% in salt water. At the GM's option, a defense that surrounds a character with an electric field, like many electricity Force Fields, also becomes a Damage Shield (typically doing RKA 1d6 damage) when used underwater.

Fourth, characters using electricity powers without sufficient insulation (or Personal Immunity) may risk taking damage from their own attacks. At the GM's option, every Phase a character uses an electricity power, the GM rolls 3d6. If he rolls 11-, the character experiences no problems. If he rolls 12 or above, the character gets shocked by his own power — take 25% of the Active Points in the most expensive power and use it to "buy" an RKA, then apply the RKA's damage to the character with no defense (except defenses bought to apply only against electricity). If the character uses more than one electricity power in a Phase, reduce the roll by 1 for every additional power after the first.

Example: *Thunderbolt has electrical powers. In his Phase in Segment 12, he uses two: his Force Field (15 PD/25 ED) and his Energy Blast 12d6. If he were only using one, the GM would roll 11-, but since it's two, he rolls 10-. He rolls 13 and fails. Therefore Thunderbolt takes RKA damage equal to 25% of the most expensive electricity power in use — the EB, with 60 Active Points. Thus, he takes (60 x .25 =) 15 points' worth of RKA damage, or 1d6.*

FIRE AND HEAT

If a character's fire powers require oxygen for combustion (as almost all fire powers do), they cannot function underwater. Fire with other special

effects — such as mystic flames, or some chemical fires — work normally.

Even if fire powers don't work as intended, a manifestation of intense heat may convert the water in an area to steam. This might inflict burns (see page 248 of *The UNTIL Superpowers Database* for some suggested steam powers) before the steam dissipates into bubbles and rises to the surface.

Smoke-based powers usually work normally underwater.

HYPERSENSSES

See *Perception And Communication*, above, for rules about perceiving underwater. Characters with hypersenses may have a slightly easier time than most characters, but the water plays hob with their senses, too.

ICE AND COLD

Ice and cold powers can have some unusual effects underwater.

First, remember that ice, even large masses of it, is buoyant — in other words, it floats. When characters create ice for an attack (such as many types of Ice Blast or Ice Darts), a defense (such as an Ice Wall, or Ice Armor), or as a form of movement (like Ice Slides), the following rules apply:

- the Range Modifier for Ranged attacks is *doubled*, to represent the fact that the ice starts to bob and rise in the water as soon as it's created
- static structures or objects made of ice, such as Ice Walls, rise to the surface at the rate of 3" per Segment beginning in the Segment after they're created unless they're anchored to something solid (such as the ocean floor or an undersea cliffside)
- a character who protects himself with Ice Armor (*i.e.*, a "suit" of ice that protects him from attacks) will rise just like a static structure unless he has Density Increase or some other way to weigh himself down; the same applies to persons trapped in "block of ice" Entangles or the like
- characters using Ice Slides (a form of Running) are limited to only 25% of their normal inches of movement, since the slides start to rise and break up as soon as they're created, forcing the character to devote time and effort to keeping them solid enough for him to move on

Characters whose powers involve creating intense cold may find that activating such powers underwater causes the water to freeze around them. At the GM's option, every Phase a character uses an ice/cold power underwater, the GM rolls 3d6. If he rolls 11-, the character experiences no problems. If he rolls 12 or above, the character traps himself in an ice Entangle — take 25% of the Active Points in the most expensive power and use it to "buy" an Entangle, then apply the Entangle to the character. If the character uses more than one ice/cold power in a Phase, reduce the roll by 1 for every additional power after the first.

But all is not gloom and doom for ice projectors. At the GM's option, the vast amounts of water available for them to freeze underwater may increase the effects of their powers. An attack that involves creating ice often gains 1-2 additional Damage Classes — and perhaps more, depending on the nature of the attack (for example, a block of ice used to Entangle or ram someone gets much bigger and heavier than normal, and so might gain +3-4 DCs). An ice-based defense may gain +1-2 points of defense. An ice/cold-based Change Environment effect is often 25-50% larger than normal. As always, the GM should determine the exact effects based on the circumstances, common sense, dramatic sense, and game balance.

LIGHT

Water diffuses visible light, so it weakens most powers with a Light special effect. Light-based attacks, including laser beams and many Sight Group Flashes, automatically have the *Reduced By Range* Limitation when used underwater. If the power already has that Limitation, double the number of DCs subtracted at each Range increment. If the water's particularly murky or cloudy, the GM might want to increase the DCs subtracted per Range increment by 1.

Light-based defense powers, such as a Force Field, usually lose 25% of their effectiveness. The GM should make a final determination based on the nature of the power.

Powers involving non-visible light — ultraviolet and infrared — work differently. Ultraviolet light powers aren't affected by being underwater at all; they work just as well in the water as in the air. Infrared light attacks have a maximum range of 2", but can't affect targets beyond that at all; infrared light defenses lose 50% of their effectiveness.

At depths below 77-92 meters (250-300 feet, or 39-46"), there's usually insufficient light for powers that require ambient light to work, such as any power with Limitations like *Does Not Work In Darkness* or *Only Works In Sunlight*. See *Perception And Communication*, above, for more information.

MENTAL AND PSIONIC

Mental and psionic powers work normally underwater, but characters may have difficulty establishing Line Of Sight to the target. See *Perception And Communication*, above, for rules about perceiving underwater.

SONIC

Since sound travels more easily through water (about 4.5 times faster, in fact), Sonic powers become more effective beneath the waves.

Sonic non-Ranged attacks typically gain as much as 25% additional power. Sonic Ranged attacks usually automatically gain the Advantage *Area Of Effect (Cone)* (the attack retains its normal Range). If the character doesn't want that effect (*i.e.*, he wants to attack more precisely, so he hits only one target), he may make a Power Skill Roll at +2, or if the GM prefers an INT Roll, to control his power and keep it from "spreading." Alter-

nately or in addition, the GM might increase the Damage Classes of a Sonic Ranged attack by as much as 25%.

Sonic defense powers become 20% more effective. Other Sonic powers may gain as much as 10-20% effectiveness, at the GM's option.

TECHNOLOGY, GADGETS, AND DEVICES

Many technological devices aren't intended to work underwater. Unless noted otherwise, assume that any electronic or similar technological device does not work underwater. If the device provides Life Support (Expanded Breathing or Self-Contained Breathing), then it and any other devices that are part of it are considered "watertight" and thus able to function normally underwater. At the GM's option, a character can declare that his devices are watertight. The GM may want to charge 1 or more Character Points per device for this (as part of the device's Active Point cost) to keep characters from gratuitously making all their gear watertight.

Devices are subject to the crushing pressure of the depths (page 30) just like characters. Even if a device is waterproof, taking it too far down may damage or destroy it unless the character buys Life Support (Safe Environment: High Pressure) for it. Foci that provide that type of Life Support automatically have it themselves; at the GM's option, so do Inaccessible Foci carried by a character who has Safe Environment: High Pressure himself.

Aquadynamic Devices

Large devices that aren't specifically designed to be aquadynamic (*i.e.*, to move through the water as easily as possible) may interfere with a character's ability to swim. Examples include many suits of powered armor, the enormous weapons wielded by some gigantic characters, blaster cannons, and any Focus with the *Bulky* Limitation. The GM should multiply the device's weight for the purposes of determining Encumbrance's effect on movement to represent the "drag" it creates. If the device provides the character with STR, the GM may not want to count that STR for purposes of determining whether the character's Encumbered (and if so, how badly).

A device is automatically considered "aquadynamic" if it provides the character with any inches of Swimming. At the GM's option, a character can declare that his devices are aquadynamic. The GM may want to charge 1 or more Character Points per device for this (as part of the device's Active Point cost) to keep characters from gratuitously making all their gear aquadynamic.

WATER

At the very worst, Water powers have their normal effect when used underwater. At the GM's option, using Water powers underwater might make them more powerful — as much as 25% more effective. The GM may prefer to express this by adding an Advantage, such as *Area Of Effect (One Hex)*, *Double Knockback*, or *No Range Modifier* instead of just adding Damage Classes. Increasing the effectiveness of Water powers is particularly

appropriate for powers that draw on ambient water, as opposed to ones where the character somehow generates the water himself.

WEATHER

There's no weather to speak of underwater, so characters with weather manipulation abilities may not always have much effect beneath the surface — there's no way to generate a breeze or raise a fog. (In some cases, the character may still be able to affect the weather above the body of water he's in.) However, at the GM's option, there may be ways for a character to use a reasonable "substitute" ability. Instead of creating a fog to interfere with his enemies' vision, maybe he generates a field of bubbles or stirs up water currents.

Weather powers that have additional special effects — such as wind or lightning — follow the rules for those types of abilities, as described above.

Powers By Category And Type

Regardless of special effect, some powers work differently underwater than in the air.

CONSTANT POWERS

Don't forget that characters ordinarily have to maintain Line Of Sight to a Constant Power to keep it in effect. The underwater environment may make this difficult. If appropriate, the GM might require a character to make a PER Roll to determine if he can maintain LOS.

PERCEPTION POWERS

Some Powers require that a character be able to perceive the target before he can affect him. For example, a character can't Find Weakness on another character if he has no way to perceive him. Given that being underwater often interferes with perception (see *Perception And Communication*, above), the GM may want to require characters to succeed with a PER Roll with a Targeting Sense to use such powers. Making this roll takes no time.

CHANGE ENVIRONMENT

Due to the breadth and flexibility of Change Environment, it can suffer many different effects from being underwater — it all depends on what the CE is built to do, and its special effects. The GM should adjust how the power manifests to let the character make reasonable use of it whenever possible. For example, creating an intense magnetic field might work with no problem, increasing the temperature might take time (but decreasing it take less time than normal, or work over a greater area), and instead of creating an area of mist and smoke the character might create turbulence. On the other hand, some effects (such as altering the weather or creating wind currents) might not work at all.

CLINGING

Some special effects of Clinging (such as cling-grip devices) tend to require dry and/or smooth surfaces — neither of which are common underwater — to function properly. If appropriate, the GM

can reduce the STR of the Clinging, or forbid its use altogether.

INVISIBILITY

Invisibility to the Sight Group is much less effective underwater — the character is a human-shaped “hole” in the water that others can see. In game terms, Invisible to the Sight Group always has the Limitation *Bright Fringe* underwater if it doesn't have that Limitation already. Invisibility to other Sense Groups works normally, unless the GM rules otherwise.

MIND CONTROL

Unless the Mind Control has the *Telepathic* Advantage, communicating orders underwater may be difficult. See *Perception And Communication*, above, for more information.

Power Advantages

Most Advantages work normally underwater, but a few special cases exist.

NEW ADVANTAGE: POWER WORKS NORMALLY UNDERWATER (+¼)

In campaigns that involve frequent underwater adventuring, the GM might want to consider using this new Advantage. When a power has *Works Normally Underwater*, it works underwater just as well as it would if used in the air — it doesn't suffer any reduction in effect, automatically-imposed Limitations, or the like based upon either its special effect and/or the Power(s) and Power Modifier(s) used to create it. If the power functions better underwater, the character can choose to use the better effect... but if so, he must also accept any problems that the power normally suffers underwater.

Works Normally Underwater is most appropriate for Sensory Powers and the like, so that characters can freely communicate and perceive underwater. It's also appropriate for some Movement Powers. It's less appropriate for Attack and Defense Powers, but the GM may still wish to allow it. However, as with any other element of the *HERO System*, special effects are key: if a character can't provide a reasonable explanation for *why* his power works normally underwater, he shouldn't be allowed to buy the Advantage.

AREA OF EFFECT AND EXPLOSION

Actual physical explosions — grenades, bombs, sticks of dynamite, and so on — tend to be more effective underwater. For every 20 Active Points' worth of effect, add +1 DC to an explosion defined using Area Of Effect; for explosions defined using the *Explosion* Advantage, increase the drop-off rate by 1" for every 20 Active Points.

INVISIBLE POWER EFFECTS

Invisible Power Effects may be less effective — even useless — underwater when bought for Attack Powers to affect the Sight Group. Things that leave no visible trace in air still create turbulence or other effects in water. At worst, Invisible to Sight

Group becomes useless; at best, the GM allows onlookers a Sight PER Roll to see the power. The GM determines how effective IPE is for other types of powers.

Power Limitations

Most Limitations work normally underwater, but a few special cases exist.

FOCUS

See *Technology, Gadgets, And Devices* above for general rules about using Foci underwater. In a game that stresses “realism,” the GM may want to allow few devices to function properly beneath the surface; in a more “four-color” game, just about any super-device may work underwater.

GESTURES, INCANTATIONS, AND RESTRAINABLE

Water — particularly turbulent water — may interfere with a character's ability to make the proper Gestures or use a Restrained ability. If appropriate, the GM may require the character to succeed with a STR Roll or DEX Roll each Phase to use the power.

Similarly, speaking Incantations may prove difficult or impossible (especially if a character's got a SCUBA mouthpiece in his mouth!). The GM may require a successful INT Roll to allow a character not born to the underwater environment to speak properly. If the character has the Language *Atlantean*, he can Incant underwater with no problem, because learning that language entails learning how to speak in the water.

RANGE BASED ON STRENGTH

See *Thrown And Propelled Attacks*, below, for information on how being underwater affects throwing things.

UNDERWATER COMBAT

Some aspects of combat work differently when the fight takes place underwater.

BASIC UNDERWATER COMBAT RULES

Characters who fight underwater suffer from certain penalties unless they have the Talent *Environmental Movement: Aquatic Movement* (which all Atlanteans do, through their Package Deal):

- the character is at -2 DCV
- the character suffers a -2 DC penalty on all attacks. If the rules earlier in this section state a different rule for reducing or increasing the damage for a particular type of attack, that specific rule overrides this general rule.

At the GM's option, a character who has an appropriate Skill, like PS: Diver, can reduce these penalties to -1 each for a Phase if he succeeds with a roll (this takes no time). If a character has TF: SCUBA, he can ignore these penalties altogether for one Phase if he makes a DEX Roll.

Underwater OCV With Ranged Attacks

Characters normally suffer no OCV penalty just for being underwater. However, it's often difficult to perceive for long distances underwater, as discussed under *Perception And Communication*, above. In appropriate circumstances, the GM may require a character to succeed with a PER Roll to perceive the target he wants to attack (this takes no time). If the roll fails, the character suffers the standard non-perception penalty (see page 349 of the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised* rulebook). Alternately, the GM may simply impose a -1 OCV penalty per point by which the character missed his PER Roll.

Knockback

All Knockback Rolls made against targets who are underwater receive a +1d6 modifier to reflect the greater resistance of water.

THROWN AND PROPELLED ATTACKS

Many attacks involve throwing something, whether it's a weaponmaster throwing a boomerang, a martial artist flipping a foe to the ground, or a super-strong character throwing another character. Unfortunately, thrown attacks have very little effect underwater due to water resistance. All attacks involving throwing something (whether it's a weapon, a rock, the target of the attack, or what have you) automatically suffer from the *Reduced By Range* Limitation at double normal effect.

Furthermore, throwing works properly only when the character has a solid, stable surface to brace against, such as the ocean floor, an Atlantean road, or an underwater rock outcropping. If a character doesn't have something to "brace" against this way, then divide the distance of the throw between the character and whatever he throws — the thrown object/person goes half the distance forward, the character gets propelled half the distance backward.

Attacks propelled by some force other than a character's STR — such as an arrow shot from a bow, a spear fired from a speargun, or a bullet fired from a gun — fare a little better. They also automatically have the *Reduced By Range* Limitation, but only at regular effect. Nor is a solid, stable surface required to use them (though if a weapon has a particularly strong "recoil," the GM might rule that it spins the character around, requiring him to spend a Half Phase to right himself).

The standard rules about the aerodynamicity (or aquadynamicity, in this case) and balance of a thrown attack (*HERO System 5th Edition, Revised*, page 35) apply to underwater thrown attacks; the GM may increase the penalty for particularly non-aquodynamic objects. These penalties also apply to propelled objects, though most such objects are both balanced and aquadynamic.

COMBAT MANEUVERS

In general, Combat and Martial Maneuvers work the same underwater as they do in the air, unless noted otherwise below. The GM may restrict maneuvers characters can use due to water resistance (*i.e.*, the fact that characters

can't move as quickly as normal), lack of a stable surface to stand on in mid-water, and other factors. For example, kicks are often harder to perform, or impossible to use.

DIVE FOR COVER

Due to the difficulty of moving quickly through the water, the DEX Roll penalty for Diving For Cover is doubled, to -2 per 1" moved.

GRAB

Grab itself works normally, but the Throw that sometimes follows a Grab doesn't. If the character wants to "slam" a character to the ground in his hex or an adjacent hex, the Throw does its regular damage and has its other standard effects. If he wants to Throw the Grabbed victim further than that, the rules for Thrown attacks underwater apply (see above).

SWEEP

Due to water resistance and slowed movement underwater, Sweep may not be possible, particularly against multiple targets. If the GM allows it, he may want to increase the OCV penalty to -3 per attack after the first.

THROWS

Throws that have the special effect of tripping the target, dashing him to the ground, or the like (which is to say, most Martial Maneuvers with the *Throw* element) do only half damage. Throw maneuvers which knock the target down through impact or brute force do their full regular damage (though the GM may subtract a DC or two if he thinks that would be appropriate). If a character wants to Throw his target for distance (as described in *The Ultimate Martial Artist*), the rules for Thrown attacks underwater apply (see above).

WEAPONS

Many weapons work poorly (or not at all) underwater.

Melee Weapons

Moving most slashing, chopping, and smashing weapons (such as axes, maces, swords, flails, picks, and clubs) through the water is difficult — water resistance slows the attack down. In game terms:

- Small weapons like knives, daggers, and hatchets work normally, without an OCV penalty
- Other Short weapons (see the weapons tables in *Fantasy Hero*, *The Ultimate Martial Artist*, and similar books for weapon length rules) used to slash, chop, smash, or the like suffer a -1 OCV penalty
- Medium-length weapons used to slash, chop, smash, or the like suffer a -2 OCV penalty
- Long-length weapons used to slash, chop, smash, or the like suffer a -3 OCV penalty

The GM may increase or decrease any OCV penalty to better reflect the shape or nature of a particular weapon. He may also add a Damage

SPEARGUN

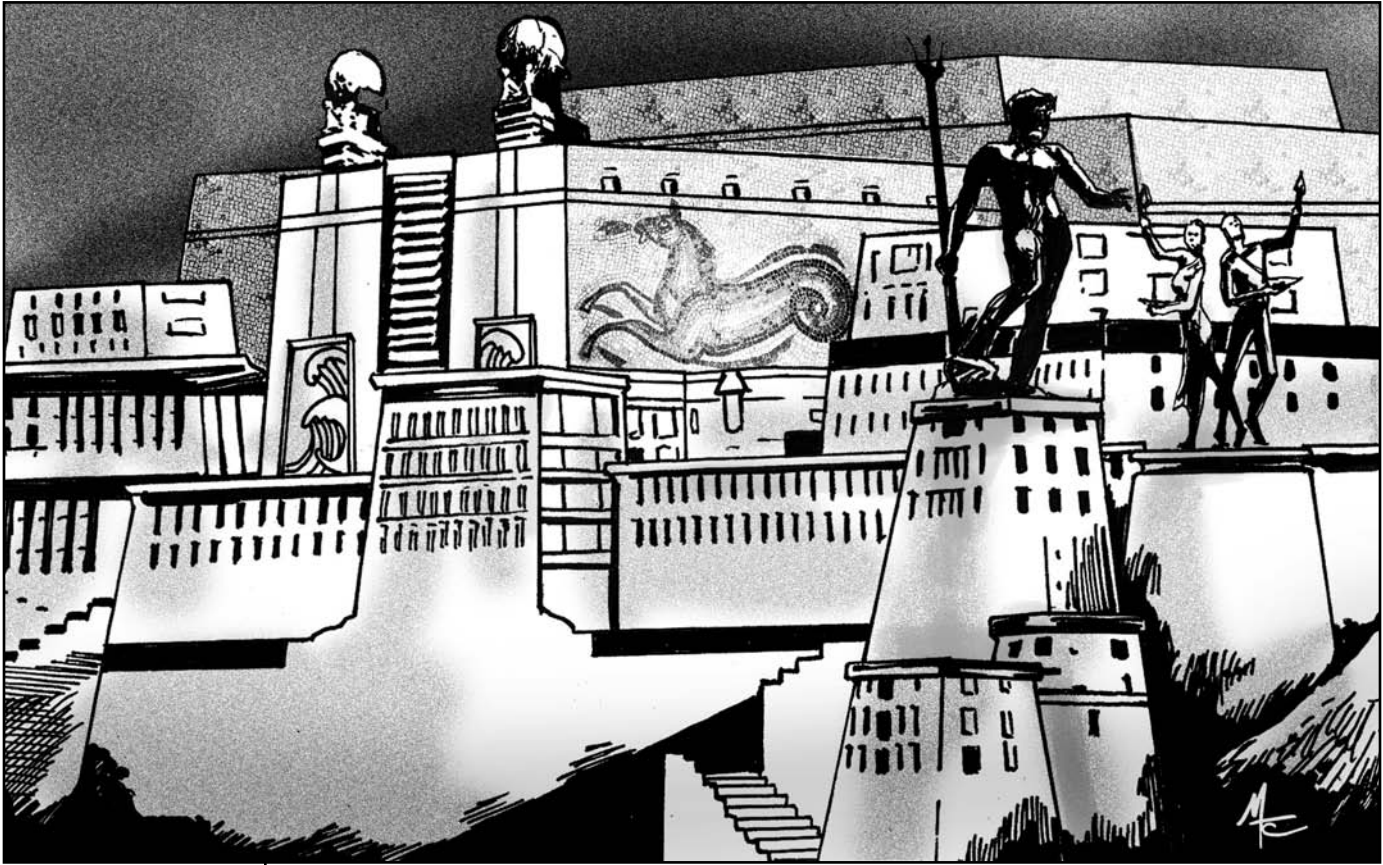
Divers who want to spearfish, or who'd like a little protection against marine predators, often carry a speargun. Spearguns use heavy-duty rubber bands or pneumatics to fire a small, sharp metal spear. Most have effective distances of about 9-18 feet.

RKA 1d6, *Armor Piercing* (+½) (22 Active Points); OAF (-1), *Limited Range* (4"; -¼), 1 *Recoverable Charge* (-1¼). Total cost: 6 points.

BANGSTICK

This protective weapon consists of a stick with a shotgun shell fitted to one end. The user jabs it into a shark (or similar threatening fish) and triggers it, inflicting a severe wound.

RKA 2d6 (30 Active Points); OAF (-1), *No Range* (-½), 1 *Charge* (-2). Total cost: 7 points.



Class penalty equal to the OCV penalty to reflect the reduction in force.

Thrusting and stabbing weapons — spears, tridents, and the like — suffer no OCV penalty at all. The GM may also eliminate the penalty for a slashing weapon if a character uses it to thrust (as he could with some swords).

Thrown And Propelled Weapons

See above for rules about throwing and propelling objects underwater.

Weapons made of wood, leather, and/or strings — such as most bows and crossbows — do not work for very long underwater, since they warp and stretch. For game purposes, assume 30 minutes of immersion renders such weapons useless (probably permanently). Bows and like weapons made from magical or high-tech materials may resist the effects of water longer, or all the time.

Firearms

For game purposes, assume that firearms will not work underwater, unless they use gyro-jet ammunition or are specifically designed for underwater use (like the H&K P-11 pistol). Some firearms, particularly older types, won't even fire if they get wet. Just making a gun Watertight won't necessarily allow it to fire underwater, but does let a character carry it underwater without damaging it or rendering it incapable of firing when taken out of the water. See *Dark Champions* for more information about firearms.

chapter two:



THE CITY OF GOLD

ARCADIA

THE CITY OF GOLD



Deep in the frozen mountains of Antarctica lies a hidden valley where the cold and snow do not penetrate. Creatures from the ancient past, long since extinct elsewhere but preserved here by remarkable science, stalk the fertile forests of this tropical vale. At the head of the valley stands a city of gold from whose spires and cathedrals the mysterious Empyreans look out over the rest of the world. Humanity's immortal cousins, the Empyreans frequently walk amongst mankind unseen, pretending to be normal folk. They have watched over Humanity for millennia, mistaken for gods or heroes. And yet, in many ways, they are not so different from ordinary Humans....

EMPYREAN HISTORY

The story of the Empyreans begins with the arrival of the Progenitors, a mysterious group of alien scientists, approximately two million years ago. The exact nature of the Progenitors remains a mystery even to the Empyreans. None of the aliens currently living on Earth claim to have any knowledge of such a species. According to Garon the Historian's files on them and his own memories from that distant period, they could change their physical appearance with ease. At times they were humanoids with varying skin colorations; at others they seemed to be nothing more than insubstantial, corruscating fields of "energy."

Whatever their true nature and goals, the Progenitors were apparently masters of the sciences of biochemistry and genetic manipulation. They arrived on a continent that no longer exists due to the Cataclysm (much of its land mass eventually wound up as part of Africa), where they found specimens of early humanity who were at the time little more than apes: covered in dark fur, they used only the most primitive bone and stone tools. The Progenitors later claimed they performed extensive experiments on the various species of proto-humans, selecting one as most fit for their project. They performed various genetic manipulations on this species, which was to be humanity's ancestor — they augmented its brain capacity and (according to at least one Empyrean's theory) increased its susceptibility to favorable mutations. Then they left Earth, returning every few thousand years to observe the progress of the experiment.

Approximately five hundred thousand years ago, they returned for a final time to finish their mysterious project. The creatures they had experimented on had developed into *Homo erectus* and spread to many lands across the globe. They had mastered fire, expanded their toolchest to include

carved wooden tools, and built small huts to protect themselves from the elements. Satisfied with their progress, the Progenitors set up a laboratory on a hill overlooking an *erectus* settlement. They took genetic samples from several of the proto-humans and from them created twelve advanced beings, whom the Empyreans refer to as "The Ancients."

500,000 BC: THE ANCIENTS

The first twelve Empyreans were very similar to the Empyreans of today, with physical forms like those of modern humans and varying but vast mental powers and/or beneficial mutations. Current theories held by Empyrean scientists suggest the Empyreans were an attempt by the Progenitors to determine what humanity's "end state" of evolution would be, the final form of humanity before the species outgrew the need for physical bodies and evolved into beings like the Progenitors themselves. For several thousand years the Ancients lived on the same hill with their creators, only occasionally traveling elsewhere and observing their primitive cousins as they struggled against the cooling weather and hunted mastodons and bison. During this period the Ancients were like children, eagerly absorbing their lessons and mastering concepts as basic as language and culture, and as advanced as the function and maintenance of Progenitor technology.

Gradually the individual Empyreans began to develop unique personalities to go with their remarkable powers. From the first the group's leaders were *Amlin*, who was wise and methodical and had the ability to communicate with his fellow Empyreans (as well as the more primitive humans) mentally; *Marya*, who was empathic and kind and could project incredible bursts of energy from her body; and *Ogurn*, who was aggressive and brave and could cause his body to grow to remarkable sizes and perform great feats of strength. Perhaps the most intelligent and inquisitive among them was *Garon*, physically the least of his siblings but who learned new skills and facts with amazing speed and never forgot anything. The other Ancients were:

Gaex, who quickly mastered the use of Progenitor devices and created new inventions of his own beginning with basic tools and soon moving on through steam- and water-powered devices, through clockworks, and into basic electronics and computers before he was fifty years old

Ashari, who could speak with both animals and plants and cause them to grow and change with the force of her will

Madux, who could fly at great speed and was fascinated by the lights in the sky

Hadon, for whom human flesh itself was a canvas and who could heal or harm with a thought

Shaneva, who could generate light and warmth from her own body

Laddoc, who loved to travel to and explore distant places and could move great distances in the blink of an eye

Abechan, who could reshape her body into countless forms

and *Othor*, whose quick wits and great humor entertained his siblings as much as his agile quickness and penchant for playing tricks with his ability to vanish from sight

Over the succeeding centuries, the Progenitors taught the Ancients, leading them in building a city that their devices kept invisible. They taught the Ancients science, philosophy, and art, patiently answering their thousands of questions, save for the one Amlin considered the most important: “Why?” Any efforts the Ancients made to try to determine why the Progenitors created them were met with vague and cryptic answers.

After several hundred years of idyllic life in the invisible city, which the Ancients called Arcadia, the Progenitors announced that their work on Earth was complete and they were leaving. Though the Ancients were horrified, nothing they did persuaded their teachers to remain — they faded into the air like mists along with everything they’d brought that the Ancients hadn’t built themselves. At first the Ancients nearly turned on each other in their fear, but Amlin and Ogurn took charge and helped the group adjust. In gratitude, the other Ancients agreed that Amlin should be their first leader, with Ogurn, Marya, and Garon as his advisors. All agreed, though Ogurn began to feel tremendous resentment that his own contributions were unappreciated.

Ogurn’s increasing estrangement from the rest of the group was only exacerbated by his realization that Marya favored Amlin over him. The Ancients fully understood the nature of sex and love and maintained open relations among themselves (since they were so different from the humans they observed, they did not yet see them as potential partners, or really as anything more than particularly advanced animals). But there were definite “favored pairings” within the group, such as Abechan and Laddoc and Marya and Amlin. The Emphyreans considered themselves above petty, primitive emotions like jealousy, but that very feeling festered deep in Ogurn’s heart. When Marya discovered she was pregnant with Amlin’s child, the group’s first offspring, the rift became so pronounced that Ogurn began spending long periods of time away from Arcadia, wandered the distant corners of the world.

Slowly the population of Arcadia grew — the Emphyrean genetic structure is sufficiently advanced that interbreeding does not generate birth defects.



Since they were immortal, the passage of time meant little to the Ancients; they mostly marked it by observing early humans, who continued to grow and evolve. Several of the Emphyreans took a particular interest in the humans that lived near Arcadia. In various guises they walked among them, sometimes subtly interacting with the brightest humans to teach them new technologies and improve their standards of living much faster than they could have on their own.

150,000 BC: THE COMING OF THE ELDER WORM

The Emphyreans lived happily, largely isolated from humanity, for thousands of millennia. After some two hundred centuries, their population was still less than a hundred. The later additions to the original twelve were collectively referred to as the "Second Generation," no matter their actual parentage; the term referred to those born after the original twelve Ancients but before the Emphyreans began interbreeding with humans. Among the most notable of the Second Generation of Emphyreans were *Hazor*, who could reshape and transform objects on a molecular level with a thought; his brother *Arvad*, whose powers of mental domination were without peer; and *Shaderon*, master of the realms of sleep and dreams.

The Emphyreans remained separated and aloof from humanity, hidden inside the walls of their invisible city. But Humanity had evolved to true sentience, and its collective psychic energy drew the attention of (or perhaps created) cosmic beings known today as gods. Battles and conflicts between these cosmic beings occurred regularly, with

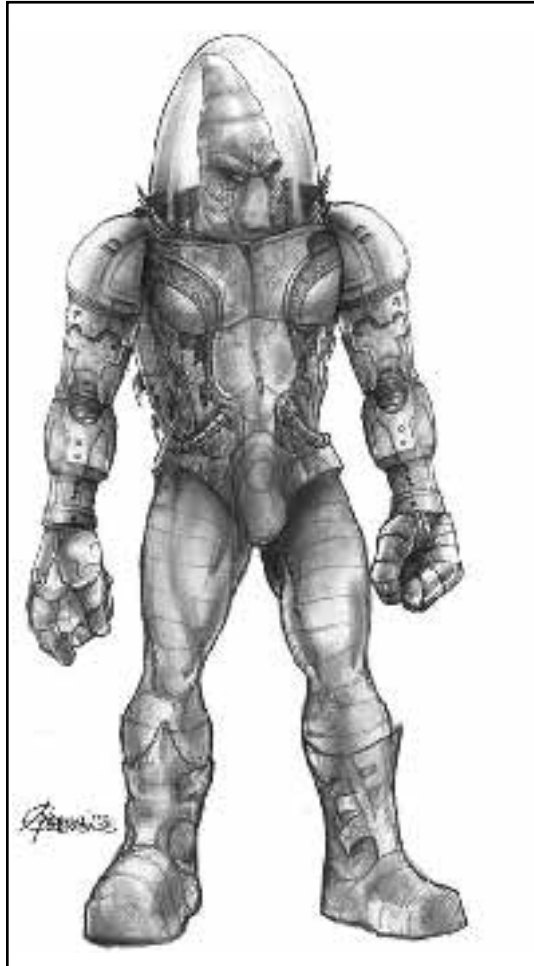
Humans helpless victims or at best pawns in these great games. The Emphyreans occasionally observed these events, but Amlin decreed that they should not interfere.

Approximately 150,000 years ago, the race of aliens known as the Elder Worm came to the Earth, bringing with them the foul worship of the Kings of Edom. The Elder Worm enslaved the early humans, forcing them to build massive unholy temples and shrines. For the most part the Elder Worm pre-

ferred the parts of Earth that were hot and wet like their own native planet, and so they built their cities in jungles, swamps, and tropical areas. Since Arcadia was located much farther north, the Emphyreans knew nothing of the Elder Worm for nearly fifty thousand years.

This isolation ended about 100,000 BC when Laddoc, who of all the Emphyreans was the most prone to venturing among humans, traveled to one of the distant southern continents and discovered the existence of the Elder Worm. He was nearly captured and enslaved by the evil beings, but narrowly escaped. He summoned several of his brethren, who out of a combination of pity for the enslaved humans and concern that the Worm would eventually be capable of even more advanced magics, disguised themselves and helped the human rebels overthrow their annelidoid masters. The Elder Worm

chieftain known today as the Slug and several of his followers were slain in the ensuing battle... or so the Emphyreans thought. In truth they escaped to caverns deep underground where the Worm-Orb placed them into a deep sleep that lasted until the end of the twentieth century. (See *Conquerors, Killers, And Crooks* and *Galactic Champions* for more about the Slug.)



CIRCA 100,000 BC: THE END OF ISOLATION

Their success against the Elder Worm created the first real ideological disputes among the Emphyreans, who by now numbered nearly three hundred. Some Emphyreans argued for noninterference with Human affairs, but others saw Humans as children to be molded and shepherded into evolved beings like themselves. The “teachers,” led primarily by Marya, Laddoc, Hadon, and Shaneva, were in the majority. They spent a great deal of time traveling among Humans around the world, subtly influencing the development of culture and technology. Occasionally they encountered actual gods, the extradimensional beings that ruled over specific populations of Humanity. When possible, the Emphyreans avoided the gods, but sometimes encounters were inevitable. Many of these meetings were peaceful, simple exchanges of ideas... but others were violent conflicts motivated by jealousy and fear.

CIRCA 80,000 BC: THE BREAKING OF THE WORLD

The powers wielded in these conflicts were mighty ones, often wreaking great havoc on the land and any humans who happened to be nearby. And the battles between the gods themselves were even worse. Eventually the Earth itself could take no more, and the world broke. Disasters both natural and supernatural wracked the entire planet, often testing the power and wisdom of the Emphyreans as they strove to protect and preserve Arcadia. Realizing they could destroy themselves by destroying their worshippers, the gods departed Earth for good, returning to their homes in other dimensions and leaving the planet to settle down and the few surviving humans to rebuild their shattered civilizations.

73,000 BC: THE TURAKIAN AGE

In the aftermath of the divine wars, the world remade itself in different form. As mankind slowly but steadily re-evolved to a medieval level of technology, other races — Dwarves, Elves, Orcs, Drakine, and many others — arose beside him, and many monstrous creatures besides. Mankind eventually called this era the Turakian Age.

For the Emphyreans, who preserved their secrecy as best they could, the most intriguing... and disturbing... aspect of this time was that mankind learned to master powerful magics. Few Emphyreans had any true mastery or understanding of magic, and they distrusted it greatly. For one, too much of it involved trafficking with powerful beings from other planes, and the Emphyreans naturally distrusted powerful beings who were not like themselves (and who were like the gods that had nearly destroyed the world). Further, a few wizards could command powers that made them nearly the equal of the Emphyreans. This change came so rapidly that even the most levelheaded in Arcadia feared Humanity was unprepared to wield such power, as one would fear a child with a gun. Once again, a philosophical dispute split Arcadia; some Emphyreans insisted on withdrawing from human society, while others argued that never had Humanity needed them more as teachers and guides.

Some Emphyreans put deed to word and ventured out of Arcadia, wandering the world and making their way among the various races of the Turakian Age. It was during this time that Brax was born of the Emphyrean Haldor and an orcish woman, the first Emphyrean known to have inhuman blood.

All too soon a dark power rose in the far north. Kal-Turak the Ravager began to slowly bring all other realms in the world under his control. The Emphyreans were slow to recognize his threat, as the rise and fall of mortal kingdoms happened so quickly in their perception, but eventually they realized the Ravager was as dangerous to them as he was to Man and Elf. A small group of Emphyreans encountered his army in Mhorecia, and though they were able to slay many of the demons and monsters he commanded, they in turn suffered losses and deaths in battle. Horrified, Amlin decided the Emphyreans had to act on their own, without the help of Man or Drakine and in secret, to end the Ravager's threat once and for all. The Emphyreans attacked the Darkspire, Kal-Turak's stronghold, *en masse*, hurling themselves against the defenses of the Ravager, but they were driven back and dozens of them slain by his powerful magics. The Emphyreans retreated to Arcadia, determined to protect themselves and their city regardless of what happened to the outside world. But before Kal-Turak's questing-spells could penetrate Arcadia's secrecy and find the Emphyrean stronghold, the armies of the Four Peoples led by the paladin Venghrest were on his doorstep, and the two titans slew each other in battle.

Their failure humbled the Emphyreans. They spent millennia within the walls of Arcadia mourning their dead and questioning their own purpose. Eventually they healed and returned to walking among men, but not until after the Turakian Age had passed into legend and the Valdorian Age was well in bloom.

36,742 BC: THE LEMURIANS ATTACK

In the Atlantean Age, when the Dominion of Atlantis ruled much of the world and the world's ambient magic reached one of its highest points ever, many Emphyreans spent time among Humans, often masquerading as powerful wizards or adventurers of various sorts. It was during this time that they encountered a realm that would become one of their greatest enemies: the Empire of Lemuria.

The Lemurians, a strange and secretive people possessed of a powerful mechano-mysticism (see Chapter Five), lusted for the secret of immortality. When they discovered the existence of the undying Emphyreans, the conquest of Arcadia and seizing of their secret of eternal life became one of the Lemurians' chief goals.

Time and again the Lemurians attacked Emphyreans abroad, or assaulted the City of Gold itself. In addition to their squadrons of ornithopters and fleets of pisciremes, they often brought with them enchanted weapons of vast power and capable of wreaking great havoc. At first the Emphyreans were puzzled, since they thought the Lemurians were just another race of Humans, but in time they

learned that the Lemurians were much more tenacious, and posed a much greater threat. Devices like the Ultra-Coruscator, Aeroreme Armada, and Solar Tormentia (see page 102) made the Lemurians a real threat to the Emyreans — but every time the Arcadians staved off ultimate defeat (though always at the cost of many lives). The Lemurians would retreat, lick their wounds, and come back again years later. Zoltar developed a burning hatred of these vicious conquerors, who inflicted such misery on his people, and he passed those feelings on to his son Archon as well.

The greatest of the Lemurian efforts to conquer the Emyreans was the *Mandragalore*, a super-weapon so powerful that it could ravage entire continents. But once again luck was with the Emyreans: when their hated enemies activated this engine of destruction, the *Mandragalore* exploded with energy, ravaging Lemuria itself and causing that land to sink beneath the sea forever (see page 103).

30,598 BC:

THE CATAclySM, AND THE RELOCATION

The Atlantean Cataclysm (page 8) changed everything for the Emyreans once again. The massive destruction wrought by the battle between Vondarien and Sharna-Gorak caused upheavals across the globe, and even distant Arcadia suffered catastrophic changes. The Progenitor devices were damaged, and for some time the Shining City was actually visible until Gaex repaired the ancient machinery. Concerned that the world was changing too fast, and that magic-wielding humans were too dangerous and unpredictable, Amlin ordered Arcadia moved to the Antarctic, the continent least affected by the Cataclysm. Ogurn considered this cowardice; he argued that the Emyreans should conquer humanity. He had a few supporters, but most Emyreans rejected his arguments.

8,000 BC:

THE EMPYREAN CIVIL WAR

Ten thousand years ago, the Emyreans experienced their greatest challenge yet. For millennia, Ogurn's hatred and resentment of Amlin had festered like a suppurating wound. Whether it was the fact that the other Emyreans had come to see Amlin as their main leader, the way Marya loved him and not Ogurn, Amlin's power and social grace, lingering disgust at the move to Antarctica, or just the "fawning servility" (in truth, respect) most Emyreans showed Amlin, Ogurn simply couldn't take it anymore. His hatred began to bubble over, making him more foul-tempered than ever.

Matters came to a head one day when a game involving several Emyreans, including Amlin and Ogurn, began to go against the size-changing Emyrean. Ogurn's behavior — his sarcastic and cruel comments to the other players, his abrupt and too-forceful gestures — grew worse and worse, eventually earning him a rebuke from Amlin.

It was a mild rebuke, to be sure, but to Ogurn it was a grave insult. Unable to contain his rage any longer, he smashed Amlin in the face with his great strength, felling the Emyreans' leader not just through the might of his blow but because of its ferocity and surprise.

Ogurn rallied his followers (who though few in number, were all powerful) and fled to the Royal Palace, where he declared himself king of the Emyreans. The usurper and his forces held off the rest of their people for nearly two weeks of skirmishing, in part because the Emyreans weren't willing to destroy the Royal Palace just to stop his rebellion. At first Ogurn fought cleverly, showing a tactical genius few had suspected, but eventually his rage against Amlin and the others drove him to full-scale battle. Ogurn and his followers sallied

forth from the Palace in a surprise attack, smashing their way through the cordon around the building in an effort to reach Amlin. While his followers took on the rest of the Empyreans, Ogurn fought Amlin himself in a one-on-one duel.

After devastating several buildings, the two enemies took to the air, flying at tremendous speeds while they fought. Ogurn pitted his powers of growth and strength against Amlin's more subtle, but equally powerful, mental and telekinetic abilities. At first the battle went Ogurn's way, so he kept growing... and growing... and growing in an effort to overcome Amlin's power and smash him to a bloody pulp. Eventually he grew so big that even his powerful frame couldn't cope with it — his skin split in several places, and his limbs became twisted (but no less powerful). But he used the pain as a shield against Amlin's powers of mental domination and kept fighting. Now the battle shifted the other way, soon leaving Amlin bruised and bloody.

After hours of single combat and hundreds of miles of top-speed flight, both combatants were almost too fatigued to continue. Each of them decided to risk everything on one final, devastating blow. As the luck of battle would have it, they struck simultaneously — Ogurn smashing Amlin with a blow that would shatter mountains, Amlin lashing out with a bolt of mental energy powerful enough to destroy the brain of even the mightiest Empyrean. Marya and the others, following far behind, saw and heard a tremendous thunderclap as the attacks were unleashed. And then they saw both Amlin and Ogurn fall into the sea.

Arriving at the scene of the final blow, the Empyreans quickly found Amlin's body — but to their profound sorrow, he was dead, his body unable to withstand or heal the force of Ogurn's last attack. Ogurn's body they never found, despite hours of searching, but they knew he must be dead. After all, who among them could resist the full power of Amlin's mind?

The Aftermath

After they buried their dead and mourned their king, the Empyreans entered an extended period of soul-searching. What had they done wrong, that one among them should become so evil? How could they prevent this from occurring again?

The conclusion that many Empyreans, including almost all of the Ancients, reached was this: the solution to this problem depends on the one question they'd never answered: why? Why did the Progenitors create them? What was their purpose? Why wouldn't the Progenitors answer these questions?

Unwilling to watch her people fall into evil and ruin for lack of an answer to "Why?", Marya suggested a bold but dangerous quest: to go into outer space, find the Progenitors, and do whatever they had to to get answers from them. While the younger Empyreans rejected this plan (since they had no desire to leave Earth), it appealed greatly to the Ancients, who were eager not only for answers, but new challenges and experiences.

Four years after the deaths of Amlin and Ogurn, all of the surviving Ancients except Garon

took off for space, with Marya in the lead. They promised to find the Progenitors, obtain answers, and come back to Arcadia with what they'd learned. The rest of the Empyreans wished them well, and before even a day had passed already longed for their return. But to this day, ten thousand years later, not so much as a single word has reached Arcadia to report on the progress of the quest, much less bring back the long-sought answers.

The New King

The remaining Empyreans realized they needed a new leader — with Amlin and the Ancients gone, someone had to lead them. It didn't take much thought to narrow the field of potential kings down to two: Arvad, who had mental powers similar to those of Amlin, and who was very charismatic but lacked Amlin's wisdom and patience; and Hazor, who was considered thoughtful and clever. Although Arvad pressed hard for the throne, in the end the Empyreans preferred Hazor's wisdom and compassion to Arvad's power and arrogance. This "rejection" made Arvad bitter and grim, and planted the seeds for his betrayal of his people thousands of years in the future.

3970 BC: SILENCE FALLS

Shaderon discovered the Realm of Silence in the year 3970 BC, after spending little of the previous thousand years awake. His powers had long been concentrated on astral projection and the exploration of higher mental realms, but though he had traveled to many worlds astrally he had found no respite from the tedium of immortal existence until he discovered this dimension. Once he found Silence, however, he spent nearly thirty years there before awaking to share his discovery with his brethren.

Early on, he worked with several students — Empyreans who shared his distaste for the mortal world. Together they developed the mental techniques that any Empyrean could theoretically use to travel with him to Silence.

At first many of the Empyreans doubted his claims. But several of his earliest followers returned from their own mental explorations of Silence and told the others of the wonderful sights and sensations they had experienced... and their strong desire to return to Silence as soon as possible. They had only awoken, they said, to help others understand how wonderful it was and allow them to share in the glory. Their words convinced some Empyreans, who joined them. But most considered the process either potentially dangerous or dismissed it as a waste of time.

Over the succeeding centuries, Shaderon woke occasionally and regaled the other Empyreans with descriptions of the wonders he had seen and experienced. None of the others came back. Shaderon said they'd decided the other Empyreans would have to come of their own free will. He wrote down his experiences in several books, along with information about the other realms he had visited astrally and his philosophies about creation and existence, and these he left in the library of

SILENCE

An increasing number of Empyreans have adopted Shaderon's philosophy of *Silence*. This means studying the books he wrote, meditating for several days to get one's brainwaves attuned to the proper psychic resonance, and then placing oneself in a deep, comalike trance. This takes place in the Temple of Silence, an enormous trapezoidal building on the western side of Arcadia. A pair of attendants, Tramiel and Dukar, look after the bodies of hundreds of Silent Arcadians with the assistance of robotic caretakers built by Zadin. Both are loyal adherents of Shaderon and fully intend to join the others in Silence once they have convinced the rest of the Empyreans.

The process of going Silent seems similar to going to sleep, except that the preparation creates a sort of harmonized feedback loop within the Empyrean's body. Silent Empyreans no longer require sustenance of any sort. According to Shaderon, Silent Empyreans dream as though they were sleeping, but it's a shared dream — a new, higher form of reality manipulable by the will alone. Shaderon (the only Empyrean since the earliest days of his experiments to awaken from Silence) says that Empyreans who become Silent live in a sort of heaven, where immortality is no longer a burden and boredom has been eliminated. Entering the realm of Silence, he claims, removes one's earthly cares and opens incredible new vistas of exploration, insight, freedom and pleasure.

his temple for any who might want to join him. His periods of waking became fewer and farther between — the last time he awoke was in the early nineteenth century.

As time passed for the Empyreans, more and more began to feel jaded and tired by their immortal existence, and the promises of Silence became more attractive. Every few years another Empyrean would lay down in the Temple and project his astral self to join the others. As of 2005 there are nearly a hundred Silent Empyreans in the Temple, and more and more consider *Silence* every day.

2000 BC: THE FACADE ARISES

By about the year 2000 BC, many Empyreans began to take an increasing interest in Humanity. Humans had evolved culturally to the point where they fascinated many of the Empyreans. Their political institutions, religions, and social customs differed greatly from those of the Empyreans — and to the Empyreans, many of whom were beginning to feel that life in Arcadia was somewhat stifling and bland, these differences were fresh and exciting. More and more Empyreans began to leave the City of Gold for extended periods of time to live among mortals in disguise. In response to this, King Hazor dictated that no Empyrean might reveal his powers, or the existence of Arcadia, to any non-Empyrean Human. Empyreans soon began referring to this as “the facade.” They did their best to live up to the king’s edict, since they all knew how dire the consequences could be if Humanity discovered it shared Earth with a race of super-powerful immortals.

1800: ARVAD’S BETRAYAL

Approximately two hundred years ago, Empyrean society was rocked by events that mirrored the civil war ten thousand years before. Arvad the Mighty had long resented the other Empyreans for choosing Hazor as their king instead of himself... and in time, that resentment turned into hatred. He came to see his people for the fools and weaklings they were. They could accomplish so much with him as their leader! Rather than simply sitting in their Antarctic valley, they could conquer the world — Humans were little more than vermin, for all that they’d advanced in the past few millennia.

Knowing his people would never agree to follow him, Arvad conceived of a bold and daring plan: he would take over Arcadia and *force* them to obey his commands, using his mental powers to quell all dissent if necessary. But even as powerful as he was, he could not fight all the Empyreans together. He needed an army at his back, one with enough might to oppose his people. There was only one such army in the world: that of the Lemurians, ancient foes of the Empyreans.

Without so much as a single regret, Arvad turned his back on his people, earning a new epithet: “the Betrayer.” He journeyed to Lemuria and made himself its king... and ever since, he has made attack after attack on Arcadia. So far he has always failed to conquer it, but some Empyreans fear it may be just a matter of time before he finds the

super-weapon he needs to succeed. (See Chapter Five for more information about King Arvad and the Lemurians.)

1966: HUMANS IN ARCADIA

“Well, this place’s got the Bronx beat by a mile.”
—Diamond of the Fabulous Five

For centuries the Empyreans maintained the facade without falter or failure — no one, not even the wisest and most powerful of Humans, even suspected their existence, or the existence of Arcadia. But all good things must come to an end.

In 1966, the Fabulous Five found themselves locked in battle with the Lemurians. King Arvad had hatched a scheme to try to steal a nuclear bomb. The Five foiled that foul plan, but Arvad had a back-up plan at the ready. He knew how much the Empyreans valued their privacy, and perhaps if he shattered the facade, it would weaken Arcadia so much that he could easily conquer it. When his forces fled from the United States, with the Fabulous Five in hot pursuit, they headed toward Antarctica, not the Indian Ocean. They cleverly lured the Five within sight of Arcadia — then triggered a Lemurian device that temporarily disrupted the invisibility field that hid the City of Gold.

Thinking they’d located the Lemurians’ home, the Fabulous Five attacked in force, hoping to end the threat the Lemurians posed once and for all. Taken completely by surprise, the Empyreans reeled from the blow... but quickly recovered. A titanic battle took place, pitting the world’s greatest crime-fighters against the super-powerful immortals. Fortunately, before too much of Arcadia was destroyed, Amazing Man and King Hazor both realized that the two sides were fighting pointlessly — Amazing Man because he could see that Empyrean architecture and technology was nothing like the Lemurian devices and vehicles he’d seen, Hazor because several Empyreans with mental powers told him they sensed no ill intent in the humans’ minds. A truce was called, and the two sides began talking. They soon realized what had happened, teamed up, and together delivered a powerful warning blow to Lemuria that has kept King Arvad from ever trying such a thing again.

But the more important effect was how the incident changed Empyrean perceptions of Humanity. For all of their existence, most Empyreans had considered Humans to be degenerate second cousins at best, little more than animals at worst. The encounter with the Fabulous Five showed them just how noble... and powerful... a Human could be. Archon in particular was impressed by the bravery and valor of the Five, and ultimately chose to spend several years among Humans with their allies, the Sentinels, as a crime-fighter. Other Empyreans speculated that maybe Humanity was finally beginning to evolve to a level approaching their own. More cynical immortals suggested that superhumans were more like a sub-race of Humanity, or even separate species, and that most Humans weren’t worth considering.

The discussion and debate continues in Arca-

dia to this day, but one thing's for sure — the facade can never wholly be restored. More than a few superheroes know of the existence of Arcadia and its powerful people. Though they have all chosen to honor the facade and preserve the Empyreans' isolation, King Hazor knows it's only a matter of time before someone with less compassion or more greed tells the newspapers.

MODERN ARCADIA

Located in a valley between two small mountains about 900 miles (1600 km) from the South Pole, at roughly 74 degrees South latitude and 55 degrees East longitude, Arcadia lies in a largely-unexplored inland territory officially claimed by Australia. The valley that Arcadia occupies is approximately twenty miles in length and varies from four to ten miles wide; the far end of the valley forms a sort of cul-de-sac fifteen miles across. The mountains on all four sides rise up from the valley floor to about four thousand feet above sea level, and remain encrusted with ice and snow despite the warmth of the valley below. The city sits at the far northwestern end of the valley, where the ground slopes gently upward for the last two miles or so before the rock wall begins. Through the length of the valley runs a small river, emerging from the mountain range in the south and ending in a lake to the east of the city proper.

The valley is hot and humid, increasingly so the farther down one goes, until at the valley's lowest point the jungle becomes positively tropical. This is the home and living laboratory of the Empyrean scientist Noatar, a brilliant geneticist who has long experimented with the breeding of extinct animals using fossilized remains and advanced cloning techniques still unknown in the outside world. He's created several small groups of dinosaurs of various breeds; they roam freely through the valley along with several other extinct species, such as giant sloths, moas, and dodos. Despite living so close to the city, Noatar is a bit of a hermit and rarely interacts with other Empyreans, preferring the company of "his" animals.

THE INVISIBILITY FIELD

The "invisibility field" (more accurately, camouflage field) projected around the valley by Progenitor devices buried in the ground throughout the area begin at the actual boundaries marked on the accompanying map. Anyone looking at the field from the outside (even with satellites, telescopes, or other technological devices) sees only a pure, featureless snowfield. As soon as an observer steps inside the valley's "boundary line," he sees things as they truly are.

THE CITY

The city itself is approximately 100 square miles, roughly laid out in an oval and about 8.5 miles across. Inside the city walls are hundreds of vast buildings, most

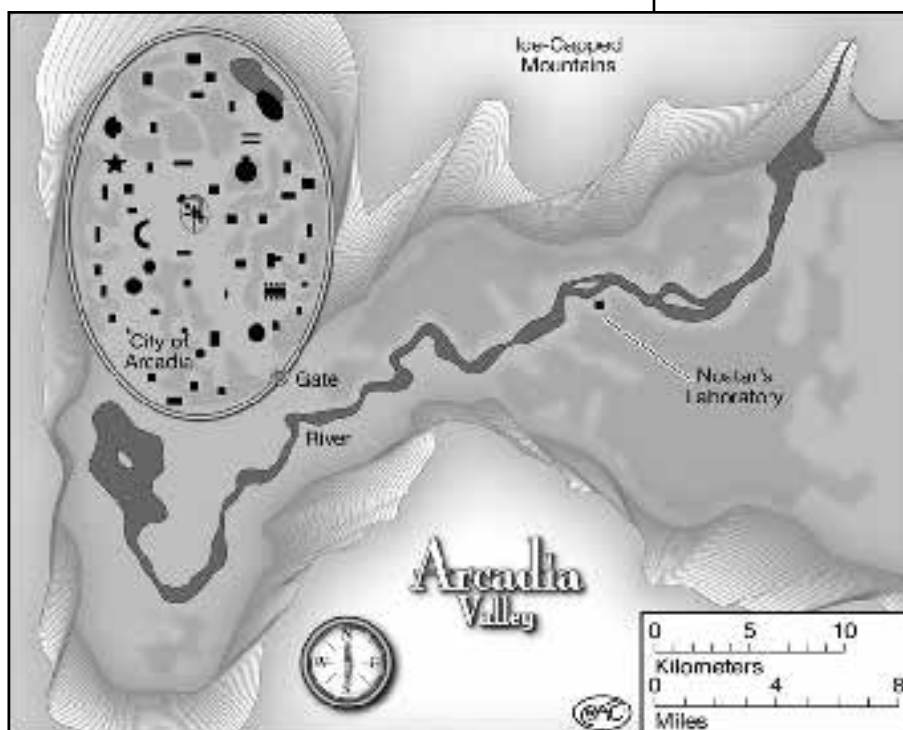
of them residences for the Empyreans. Most are only a few stories tall, and are made from various advanced materials that resemble gold or brass and reflect the light of the sun during the summers or the intricate network of light structures that illuminate the city during the months-long winter night. There are extensive gardens and parks inside as well, keeping the overall feel of the city open and airy despite the impressive buildings. The wide "streets," lined with dozens of varieties of trees, frequently open into small plazas featuring sculptures, murals, or fountains. The largest building inside the city is the Temple of Silence, a golden ziggurat 200 feet high. This is where the Empyreans who have "gone *Silent*" sleep (see sidebar, page 49). Shaderon's body reposes in the first of these cases, near the entrance.

The Royal Palace

In the center of the city sits the Royal Palace, home to King Hazor and his entourage. Apart from the living quarters, which are large and luxurious, the sprawling complex of the Palace includes multiple great halls used for meetings and celebrations, several large museums dedicated to the work of various Empyreans, and areas for recreation, relaxation, and entertainment. The few humans who have visited the Palace are invariably astonished to see original works by artists famous in the outside world whose Empyrean heritage remains a secret.

The Watch Tower

At the city gates stands the Watch Tower, the home of Chard, who guards the city and the valley from intruders. Empyrean tales claim Chard can identify individual butterflies in the jungle five miles away with his remarkable senses. Chard rarely leaves his post, though actual assaults on the city rarely occur. He passes his time observing the animals in the valley and composing poems that

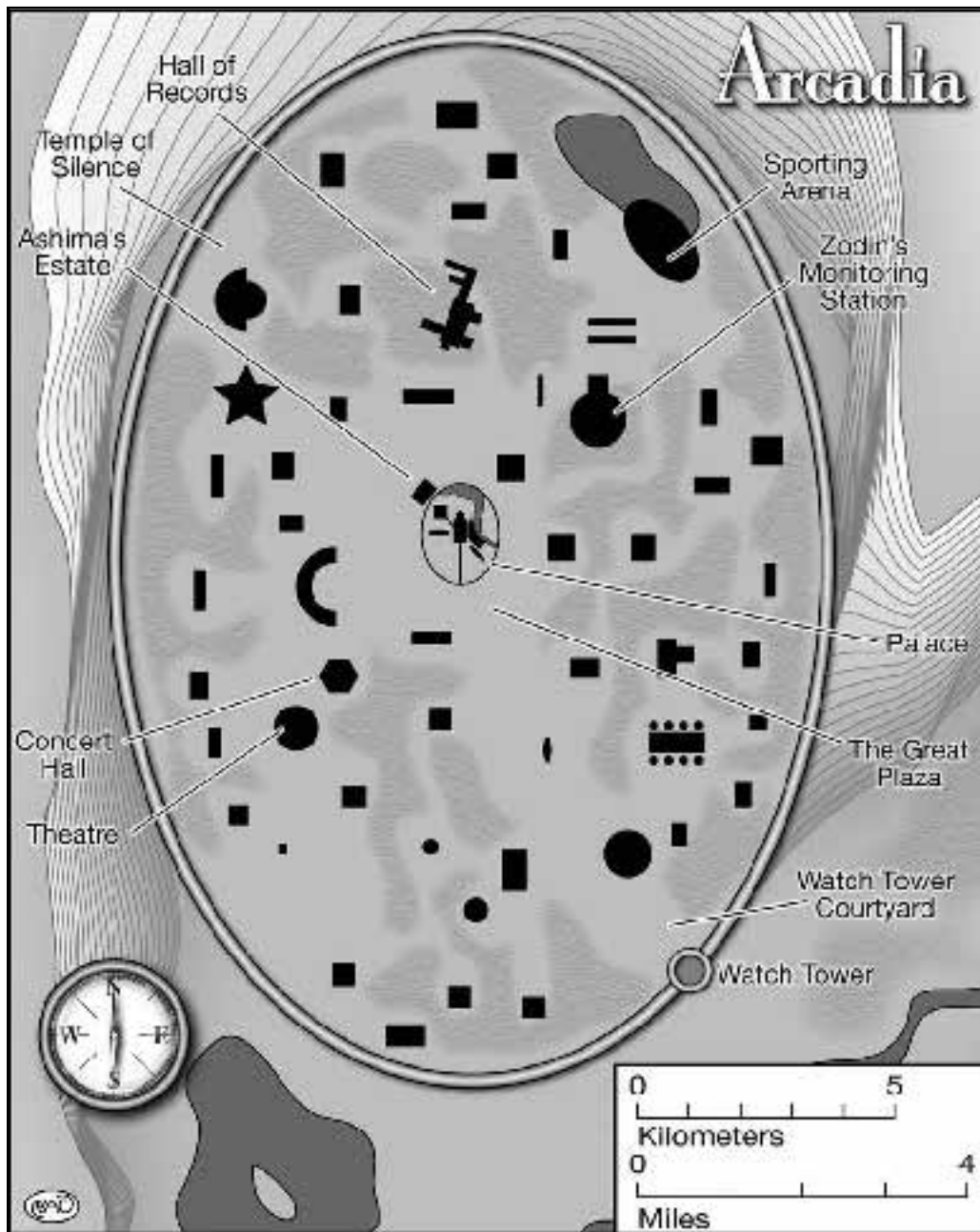


CONDITIONS IN ANTARCTICA

Outside the Emphyreans' valley, visitors will find the climate considerably less hospitable. Outside the area protected by the Progenitors' weather-manipulation devices, the temperature drops rapidly, reaching -35 Celsius (-30 Fahrenheit) within two hundred feet of the border and even colder farther out. In mid-winter temperatures in the area have been known to hit -70 C (-90 F), extremes that even the hardy Emphyreans find unpleasant. What's worse, the wind outside the valley is also powerful, battering the body with forty-mile-an-hour gusts and lowering the wind chill factor into the negative triple digits.

Generally, the conditions outside the valley should be considered a Temperature Level (see the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised*, pages 441-42) of at least -5 and occasionally as bad as -7 or -8. An average, unprotected person falls unconscious in about an hour and freezes to death not long after that.

The Antarctic air is thin thanks to the altitude and dryness of the interior. (Antarctica is technically a giant desert, since actual precipitation is rare.) Dehydration is nearly as dangerous a threat as freezing, especially when combined with lowered body temperatures. Clouds frequently hang low over the snow fields, possibly leading to "snow blindness" because the human eye can't pick out points of reference in the unrelentingly-white landscape.



often take days to recite (Empyreans who have the time and patience to listen to them claim they're quite good). The Watch Tower is a single enormous spire, two hundred and fifty feet high with a vertiginous but majestic view over the city behind and the valley ahead.

KING HAZOR

Hazor is the current ruler of the Empyreans... at least to the extent that such a disparate group can be said to have a single leader. Universally acclaimed for his wisdom and thoughtfulness, he's accepted by nearly all Empyreans as the ultimate arbiter of disputes between them and the organizer of any sort of concerted action or activity by the Empyreans (particularly of a military nature). Born in the "Second Generation" some three hundred thousand years ago, Hazor is among the oldest active Empyreans. He became ruler about ten thousand years ago as a reward for his great efforts in restoring stability to Empyrean society in the aftermath of the battles with Ogurn and the departure of Amlin and the other Ancients.

Hazor is one of about three hundred Empyreans to make his full-time home in Arcadia, where he lives in a splendid palace decorated with countless invaluable works of art he has commissioned and collected over the centuries. He spends much of his time with Ashima (his assistant and the enforcer of his laws) and Garon (the only Empyrean significantly older than he, and with whom he can share insights into Empyrean history). Hazor is deeply interested in the general activities of his people, and with Garon spends much of his time cataloguing and recording their various achievements in different fields.

Hazor is also very concerned with the fate of ordinary Humanity. He's seen mankind develop from near-animals to intelligent — worthy beings gradually approaching the evolutionary level of the Empyreans themselves. The recent increase in superhuman mutations fascinates and worries him. He believes it signifies a new stage of human evolution, but he's also concerned that Humanity may not be quite mature enough to handle its new levels of power and technology without destroying itself. Hazor is torn between his desires to protect and nurture Humanity so Humans can become more Empyrean themselves, and his fear of contaminating the natural evolutionary process by revealing the existence of Humanity's "older brothers." So far, he's contented himself with merely observing, interfering only when Humanity has been threatened by outside menaces like the Lemurians or the Gadroon (and then only providing secret assistance). But under the right circumstances, he might take a more active hand.

Hazor looks like a middle-aged white man with brown hair ever-so-slightly fading to grey. He stands 6'4" and usually wears a red tunic with black highlights and a long blue cape fastened at the shoulders with a golden chain. His primary powers include transmutation and manipulation of objects (but not living tissue) on an atomic level using an advanced, specific application of telekinesis; he can

change the shape of objects or even their molecular composition. He uses this ability to create art in his spare time, casting giant sculptures in metal and stone with the force of his mind. It's rarely useful in combat because it takes too long (transmuting a man-sized object takes him about a minute), but he can sometimes deform weapons, ruin devices, and the like.

The Royal Family

Hazor is currently unmarried. His wife Talilla, a mighty warrior, died in battle fighting the Lemurians five thousand years ago. Their son Zoltar was the Crown Prince for several thousand years but himself died about a thousand years ago fighting a terrible monster off the coast of Japan. The new Crown Prince is Hazor's grandson, Archon.

DAILY LIFE IN ARCADIA

Life in Arcadia passes much the same way today as it has for hundreds of thousands of years. The Empyreans like tradition and history, even as they embrace the changes that happen so quickly in human society by their standards. They rarely build new buildings, since the current layout provides plenty of space for both the limited number of full-time residents and those who visit. There is no "commerce" as Humans conceive of it; Empyreans don't need to buy things from each other, and artistic creations are usually either gifts or traded in barter.

Most of the buildings in Arcadia feature courtyards with lovely gardens. These are the centers of social activity among the Empyreans — as small groups gather at someone's home to talk, tell stories, enjoy a meal or snack, play games, or engage in friendly competitions. Empyreans do eat, though they can go without food for months if necessary; they respect the culinary arts as much as any other artform, if not more. Some Empyreans are among the greatest chefs the world has ever seen.

There are few children in Arcadia, and the birth of an Empyrean child is cause for a lengthy celebration. At any given time there may be one or two actually being raised in the city itself, but their schooling is informal and generally done by volunteer tutors.

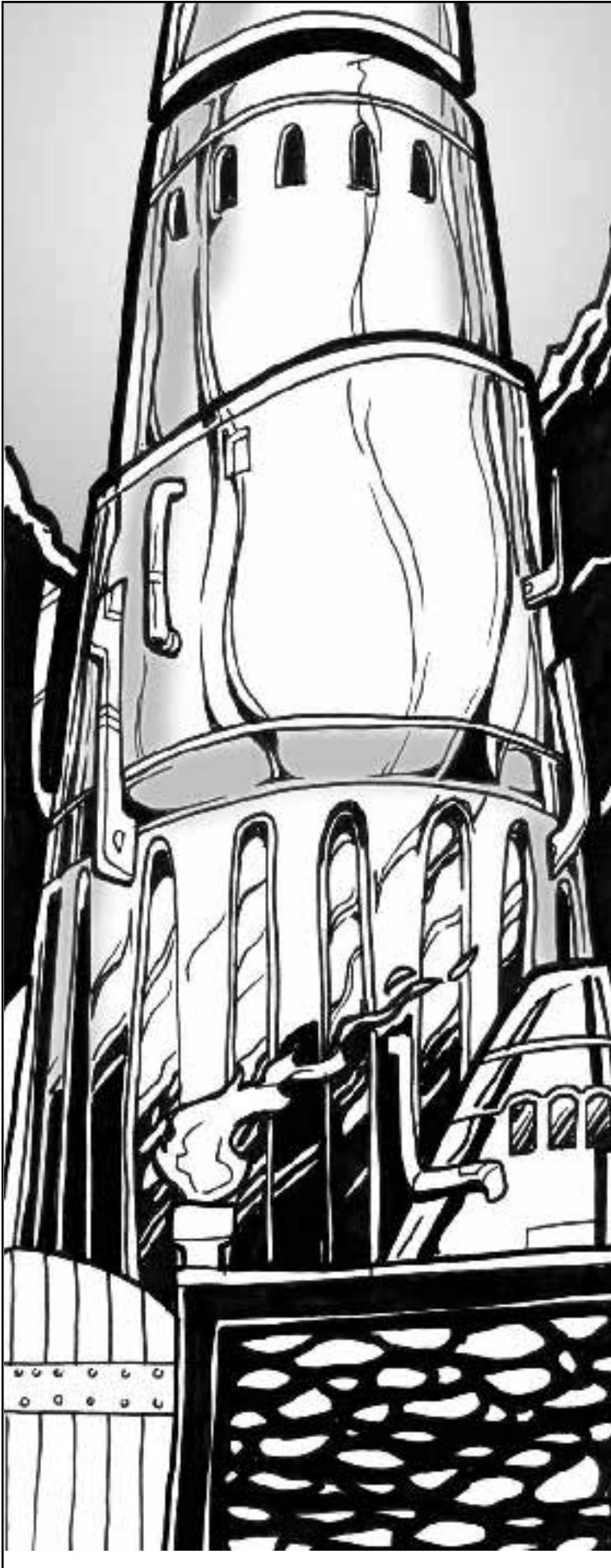
EMPYREAN LAW

Empyrean laws (really more like customs that have assumed the force of law over millennia) boil down to a few basic commandments... though of course there are entire books debating the finer points and specific cases.

First, an Empyrean must maintain the facade. This means not allowing humanity to know that Empyreans as a race and society exist. No Empyrean may "go public" with his true origins. Those who reveal the existence of their unusual powers (whether as god, wizard, or superhero, depending on the place and time) must claim publicly that their powers come from some other source as a part of their false identity. There are specific exceptions — individual humans Hazor deems trustworthy are permitted to know about the Empyreans, but they too must promise to maintain the facade in

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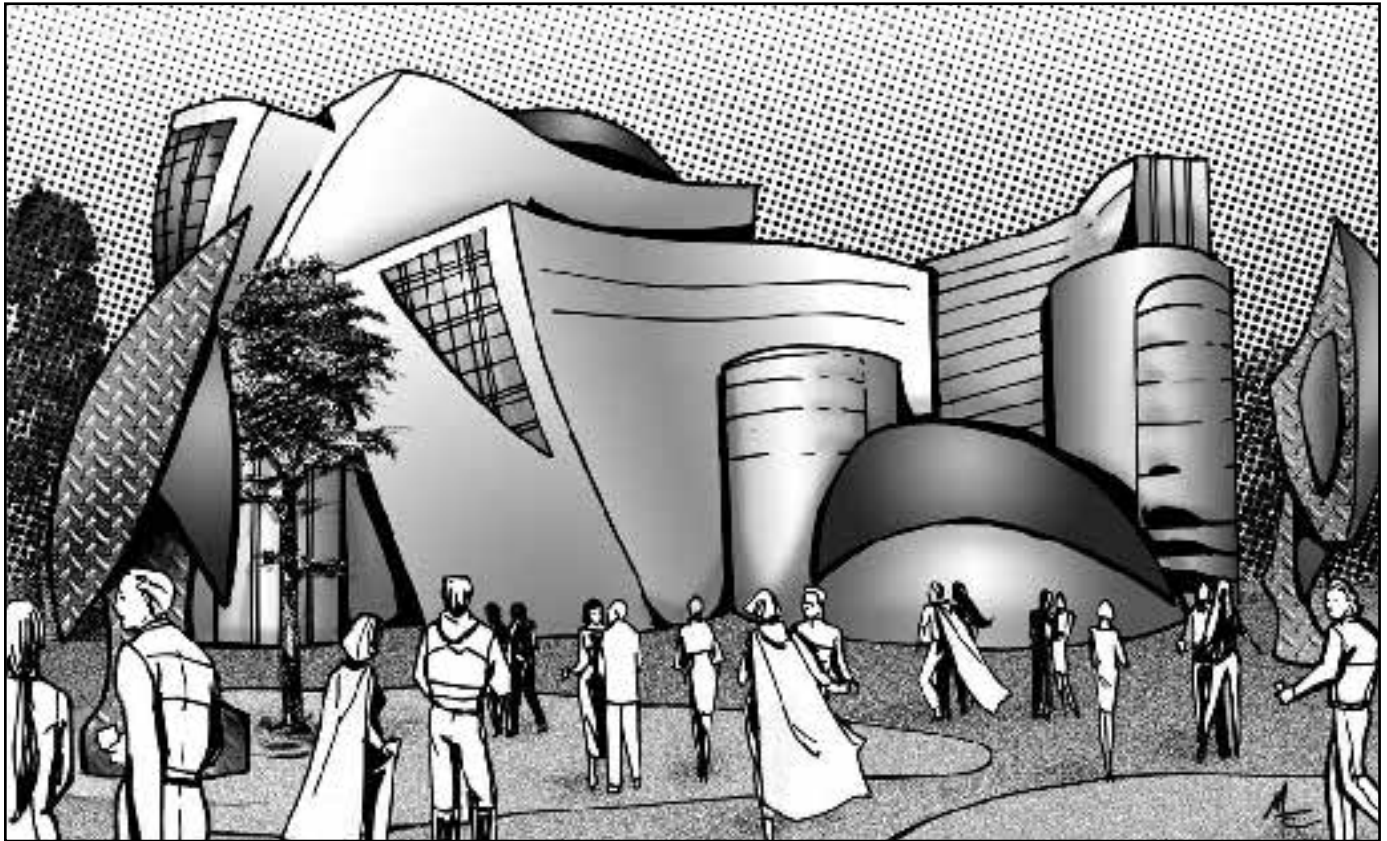
Thanks to its extreme southern location, Arcadia is in darkness for half the year, while the sun never fully sets during the heights of "summer." Though the city itself has plenty of artificial lighting, during the winter months the rest of the valley is illuminated only by stars and the occasional "lightshow" displays of the Aurora Australis (the "Southern Lights," caused by the interaction of charged particles in the solar wind with the Earth's magnetic field).



general. (Humans who currently know about the Emypreans include the Sentinels and the Justice Squadron, among others.)

Second, when necessary, Emypreans should provide for each other to the best of their ability. There's a complicated network of assistance between Emypreans, including training, teaching, and even financial help where necessary. Several Emypreans are among the world's wealthiest individuals, some because they enjoy making money for its own sake and others as a natural outgrowth of whatever it is they do. Whatever areas of expertise an Emyprean has mastered, custom dictates he put his skills at the disposal of his people whenever he's called upon. This network springs into action most frequently when an Emyprean's false identity ends (either by choice or accident). Half a dozen different Emypreans combine their business and legal wiles, generally under the direction of Brax, to provide forged documents and whatever else is required to create another identity. King Hazor himself frequently coordinates the activities of the "social network" with the assistance of Garon and his massive database.

Third, Emypreans are responsible for bringing any new Emypreans they sire into society. While most children of Emyprean and human pairings are ordinary humans (though they frequently are remarkably attractive, healthy, and intelligent), a tiny fraction of them are Emypreans, immortal and possessing superhuman powers. The Emyprean parent is responsible for any such "illuminated" children. He must teach them about their nature and heritage, instruct them in the other laws of Emyprean life, and induct them into Emyprean society. Emypreans whose parents are somehow unknown or unavailable become the responsibility of Enforcer Ashima (see below).



Hazor and Ashima deal harshly with any attempt to break these laws — but fortunately, such instances are rare. Empyreans officially do not recognize the laws of human society, though as a group they're fairly moral and (with a few notable exceptions) do not behave unethically. Most do not kill without severe provocation, for example, though the only penalties for doing so in Empyrean society may be social ostracization. On the other hand, any lawbreaking activity in human society must not threaten the facade, or Hazor will impose penalties up to and including death (though once again he prefers exile or ostracization, if that's enough to handle the matter).

EMPYREANS LIVING ABROAD

The majority of Empyreans do not live in Arcadia — they maintain false identities and live among Humans. Most of them opt for glamorous, high-profile lives: tycoons with a penchant for spending most of the year sailing around the world on gigantic yachts; pop stars who score mega-hits almost at will and get married and divorced as easily as regular people snap their fingers; sports stars; superheroes. But since no Empyrean truly wants for anything (he can always get money or whatever else he needs from his relatives), an Empyrean can be whatever he wants without concern for making a living: Bohemian artist; rock groupie; reality TV show contestant; game designer.

The only time many Empyreans see each other is when a new Empyrean is formally inducted into society in Arcadia, an event traditionally marked with lengthy ceremonies and parties in the City of Gold. While not every Empyrean attends these gatherings, a sizable majority do, treating it like an extended “family reunion.” The ceremony includes the presentation of the new Empyrean to the King by his sponsor (usually his parent) and a series of oaths of loyalty to the throne and his new “family.” There's a second ceremony in the Hall of Records, where Garon reads selected passages from the Assembled Histories that form a basic overview of Empyrean history, culture, and philosophy. This reading can last for up to two days — a pretty daunting experience for a young immortal not yet accustomed to Empyrean patience. The final ceremony is the hanging of a new banner with the inductee's coat of arms in the outer throne room. Afterwards, magnificent feasts go on for several days (Zadin's robotic servitors serve food continuously, though most partiers wander away to other small parties and return periodically). Empyrean artists of various stripes frequently present new works to the group at this time, while those with other interests also may make presentations on whatever they're working on. For example, historians and scientists read papers on their latest discoveries or theories, usually drawing at least polite interest from the crowds. There are also athletic competitions, business meetings between financially-inclined Empyreans, and plenty of low-key social gatherings.

EMPYREAN CHARACTERS



Many Champions Universe campaigns feature characters of Empyrean origin. They might be superheroes, prominent NPCs, or even just some unusual and intriguing people the PCs meet during their adventures.

EMPYREAN PACKAGE DEAL

The accompanying Empyrean Package Deal describes the abilities common to all Empyreans. Most Empyreans have other powers, as indicated by the power templates and character sheets in this section.

EMPYREAN PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities	
Cost	Ability
20	+20 STR
30	+10 DEX
20	+10 CON
10	+5 BODY
5	+5 INT
10	+5 EGO
10	+10 PRE
5	+10 COM
10	+1 SPD
37	<i>Graviton-Manipulating Flight</i> : Flight 15", Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)
46	<i>Empyrean Physiology</i> : Life Support (Diminished Eating: only has to eat once a month; Immunity: all terrestrial diseases and biowarfare agents, all terrestrial poisons and chemical warfare agents; Longevity: Immortal; Safe Environments: High Pressure, High Radiation, Intense Cold, Intense Heat, Low Pressure/Vacuum; Self-Contained Breathing)
10	<i>Empyrean Toughness</i> : Damage Resistance (10 PD/10 ED)
3	<i>Empyrean Physiology</i> : Lack Of Weakness (-3) for Resistant Defenses
10	<i>Empyrean Physiology</i> : Power Defense (10 points)
10	<i>Empyrean Mental Shielding</i> : Mental Defense (10 + (EGO/5)) points
3	Lightsleep
20	Universal Translator
18	Contact: The Empyreans (very useful Skills or resources, very good relationship, organization)
11-	
100	Powers Template (see below)

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 377

Options: Many Empyreans spend more points on some of their abilities to fly faster, lift more weight, be more resistant to injury, and so on. A few reduce some of their natural abilities to compensate for more powerful abilities of other sorts.

The fact that Empyreans and Humans can occasionally have Empyrean children (see below) creates plenty of interesting roleplaying opportunities. A young person who has never known one or both of his parents might suddenly discover he's superhumanly strong and fast, or can fly or read minds. Shortly after this discovery, a mysterious stranger arrives at his door, claiming to be his long-missing parent and insisting that the youngster drop everything and accompany him on a trip to Antarctica (?!?) to meet his "family." (If the Empyreans do not know which one of them is a child's parent, the child becomes the responsibility of Enforcer Ashima.)

HUMAN CHILD OF EMPYREAN PARENT PACKAGE DEAL

Empyreans can mate with Humans, but this does not result in low-powered "crossbreeds." One such birth in a thousand is an Empyrean (what the Empyreans refer to as the "Third Generation"). The other 999 are ordinary Humans — though they almost always are remarkably attractive, healthy, and intelligent.

HUMAN CHILD OF EMPYREAN PARENT PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities	
Cost	Ability
3	+3 STR
3	+1 DEX
6	+3 CON
5	+5 INT
3	+3 PRE
2	+4 COM

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 22

EMPYREAN POWERS

The following templates, each containing 100 Real Points' worth of abilities, represent some "typical" Empyrean power suites. Every Empyrean is distinct, with powers that often relate to his special interests, so you should tailor or customize these as you see fit. But they're a good way for GMs and players to quickly create Empyrean NPCs if necessary.

BIO-ENERGY EMPYREAN

Cost Power

15	+5 DEX
10	+10 ED
60	<i>Bio-Energy Powers</i> : Multipower, 60-point reserve
6u	1) <i>Bio-Energy Blast</i> : Energy Blast 12d6
6u	2) <i>Bio-Energy Field</i> : Force Wall (12 PD/12 ED)
3u	3) <i>Bio-Energy Storm</i> : Energy Blast 6d6, Explosion (+½), Personal Immunity (+¼); No Range (-½)

Total cost: 100 points

MENTAL EMPYREAN

Cost Power

5	+5 INT
20	+10 EGO
60	<i>Mental Powers</i> : Multipower, 60-point reserve
6u	1) <i>Mindblast</i> : Ego Attack 6d6
6u	2) <i>Mental Control</i> : Mind Control 12d6
3u	3) <i>Mindscape</i> : Mental Illusions 7d6

Total cost: 100 points

STRONG EMPYREAN

Cost Power

20	+20 STR
10	+5 CON
10	+5 BODY
10	+10 PD
10	+10 ED
10	Increase Empyrean Toughness to Damage Resistance (20 PD/20 ED)
2	Increase Empyrean Physiology to Lack Of Weakness (-5)
10	Knockback Resistance -5"
18	Leaping +18"

Total cost: 100 points

SWIFT EMPYREAN

Cost Power

27	+9 DEX
10	+5 CON
5	+5 PD
10	+1 SPD
48	Increase Graviton-Manipulating Flight to Flight 34"

Total cost: 100 points

TELEKINETIC EMPYREAN

Cost Power

60	<i>Telekinetic Powers</i> : Multipower, 60-point reserve
6u	1) <i>Telekinesis</i> : Telekinesis (40 STR)
5u	2) <i>Precise Telekinesis</i> : Telekinesis (30 STR), Fine Manipulation
5u	3) <i>Telekinetic Blast</i> : Energy Blast 10d6
4u	4) <i>Telekinetic Spear</i> : RKA 3d6
20	<i>Telekinetic Shield</i> : Force Field (10 PD/10 ED)

Total cost: 100 points

TRANSMUTER EMPYREAN

Cost Power

100	<i>Transmutation</i> : Major Transform 3d6+1 (anything to anything, heals back through another application of this or a similar power), Improved Results Group (+1)
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Total cost: 100 points

ARCHON				
Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
60	STR	50	21-	Lift 100 tons; 12d6 [6]
25	DEX	45	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
30	CON	40	15-	
20	BODY	20	13-	
15	INT	5	12-	PER Roll 12-
18	EGO	16	13-	ECV: 6
25	PRE	15	14-	PRE Attack: 5d6
24	COM	7	14-	
30	PD	18		Total: 30 PD (20 rPD)
24	ED	18		Total: 24 ED (20 rED)
6	SPD	25		Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12
18	REC	0		
60	END	0		
65	STUN	0	Total Characteristics Cost: 259	
Movement:		Running:	6"/12"	
		Leaping:	12"/24"	
		Flight:	25"/100"	
Cost	Powers			END
50	Bio-Energetic Projection: Energy Blast 12d6, Indirect (can come from any point on Archon's body; +¼); Increased Endurance Cost (x2 END; -½)			14
20	Empyrean Toughness: Damage Resistance (20 PD/20 ED)			0
10	Graviton Control: Knockback Resistance -5"			0
5	Empyrean Physiology: Lack Of Weakness (-5) for Resistant Defenses			0
10	Empyrean Physiology: Power Defense (10 points)			0
10	Empyrean Mental Shielding: Mental Defense (14 points total)			0
46	Empyrean Physiology: Life Support (Diminished Eating: only has to eat once a month; Immunity: all terrestrial diseases and biowarfare agents, all terrestrial poisons and chemical warfare agents; Longevity: Immortal; Safe Environments: High Pressure, High Radiation, Intense Cold, Intense Heat, Low Pressure/ Vacuum; Self-Contained Breathing)			
69	Graviton-Manipulating Flight: Flight 25", x4 Noncombat, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)			2
6	Keen Senses: +2 to PER Rolls with all Sense Groups			0
Perks				
18	Contact: The Empyreans (very useful Skills or resources, very good relationship, organization) 11-			
5	Fringe Benefit: Military Rank: General of the Arcadian Armies			
3	Fringe Benefit: Membership: Sentinels			
Talents				
3	Lightsleep			
20	Universal Translator 12-			
Skills				
20	+2 Overall			
24	+3 with All Combat			

3	AK: Arcadia 12-
3	Combat Piloting 14-
5	Defense Maneuver I-II
3	Disguise 12-
3	High Society 14-
3	CuK: Empyreans 12-
4	CuK: Lemurians 13-
3	KS: History of Warfare 12-
3	KS: Empyrean History 12-
4	Navigation (Air, Land, Marine) 12-
3	Oratory 14-
3	Seduction 14-
10	Survival (Arctic/Subarctic, Temperate/ Subtropical, Tropical, Desert, Mountain) 12-
15	Tactics 18-
3	Teamwork 14-
11	TF: Common Motorized Ground Vehicles, Riding Animals, Balloons & Zeppelins, Carts & Carriages, Chariots, Combat Aircraft, Railed Vehicles, Tracked Military Vehicles, Wheeled Military Vehicles
17	WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons, Early Firearms, Emplaced Weapons, Siege Engines, Small Arms, Flame- throwers, General Purpose/Heavy Machine Guns, Grenade Launchers, Lances, Shoulder- Fired Weapons

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 415**Total Cost: 674****200+ Disadvantages**

10	DNPC: Arcadian Empyreans 8- (Slightly Less Powerful; Group DNPC: x2 DNPCs)
15	Enraged: when an opponent cheats or behaves dishonorably (Common), go 8-, recover 11-
25	Hunted: All Lemurians 11- (Mo Pow, PC has a Public ID or is otherwise very easy to find, Harshly Punish)
15	Psychological Limitation: Does Good Deeds For Their Own Sake, But Tries To Avoid Emotional Connections (Common, Strong)
15	Psychological Limitation: Hates And Mis- trusts Lemurians (Common, Strong)
5	Rivalry: Professional (other Bricks in combat)
15	Social Limitation: Secret Identities (Fre- quently, Major)
364	Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 674

Background/History: Archon is the current Crown Prince of the Empyreans and grandson of King Hazor. A member of the "Fourth Generation" of Arcadians, he's a little over three thousand years old. His father, Zoltar, was the Crown Prince for countless centuries as well as Commander of the Empyrean military in its campaigns against the Lemurians and other threats. Zoltar died over a thousand years ago in combat with the bizarre monster called Kikada, and his mother Aleja followed Shaderon into Silence in the mid-eighteenth century.

From an early age Archon took after his father as a master of combat and general militia, regularly leading Empyrean forces in their battles against Lem-

urians and other forces that threatened Arcadia. As he grew older, Archon became fond of living among Humans through various fictitious identities. Usually he takes on the role of a soldier, because he's fascinated with war and the study of tactics and strategy. In this manner he participated in most of the major wars of Earth's recent history, from the Peloponnesian War to the Gulf War, usually serving as a low-ranking officer or enlisted man and eschewing the use of his powers (though of course his superhuman durability made his activities virtually risk-free).

Archon also has spent considerably more time among Earth's superhuman community than any other Empyrean. He first met the Fabulous Five in 1966. He fought alongside the Sentinels against a Lemurian attack in 1973 and was so impressed with their bravery and warrior spirit that he joined their team for several years. He remains close friends with Diamond and several other heroes from that period, most of whom are retired now.

As of 2005, Archon serves as King Hazor's military advisor and general. He organizes the assembled forces of Arcadia whenever a threat emerges. Since Arcadia is at peace and remains hidden from the eyes of Humanity, this means Archon focuses most of his attention on the Lemurians as a potential threat. He spends a lot of the time that he's not campaigning as a Human soldier monitoring Lemurian activities.

Personality/Motivation: Archon is first and foremost a soldier, most comfortable on the battlefield and fascinated by the art and science of tactics. He believes combat in the name of a worthy cause is inherently ennobling, and his definition of "worthy" is probably broader than that of most superheroes.

Because of his warlike demeanor, he had frequent conflicts with some of his teammates on the Sentinels, particularly over his willingness to kill his opponents. Though Archon was never entirely convinced by these debates, he was willing to follow Sentinels guidelines and did not kill anybody during his time as a superhero (though he has killed opponents since leaving the team).

Archon is absolutely devoted to protecting innocents and noncombatants, and his bravery and loyalty are above reproach. Despite his fascination with war and combat, he has a generally positive outlook on life, and is fairly easy to get along with. His largest "blind spot" is Lemuria. He's regarded Lemurians as "the enemy" for so long that he tends to see Lemurian plots behind every negative event,

and absolutely will not consider working with them or treating them as anything besides foes to be defeated... and if possible, exterminated.

Quote: "I have sworn my allegiance to these mortals, monster, and I will die before abandoning them."

Powers/Tactics: Archon is one of the most physically powerful Empyreans known, though his mental abilities are weaker than the typical Arcadian's. Besides being enormously strong, he can project the bioenergy that sustains him in destructive blasts. He typically fires these blasts from his eyes, but they can come from his hands, chest, or any other part of his body.

Archon is a tactical and strategic genius with centuries of combat experience with all types and levels of warfare. He works very well in teams, equally comfortable in either a command or support role. He prefers a straightforward fight to sneakiness, but is perfectly willing to use stealth and deception if that's what's required for victory.

Campaign Use:

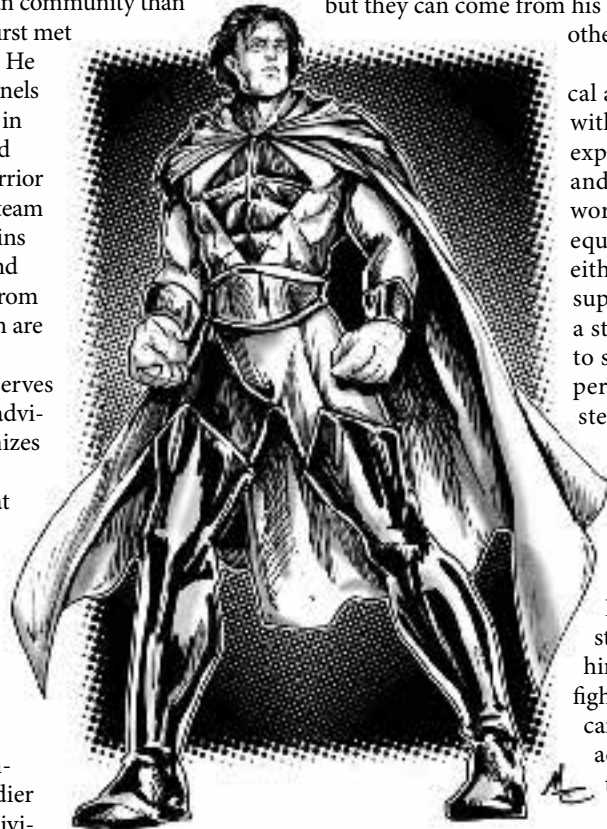
Archon is an excellent ally for the PCs. His flight and super-strength powers make him a good all-around fighter, and even if he can't fight his tactical advice will always be top-notch.

If you want to make Archon

tougher, expand either his bioenergy powers or his super-strength capabilities: give him a Multipower of energy powers or "brick tricks." If he's already too tough, scale his Characteristics back until they meet campaign standards.

Archon won't Hunt anyone unless King Hazor orders him to... or he thinks the target is a Lemurian. In the latter situation, he might be the most implacable Hunter a PC will ever have.

Appearance: Archon looks like a massively-muscled Human. He's 6'5 and weighs over 300 pounds. His hair is black, his eyes steel grey, his features grimly handsome; he has a demeanor of power and authority. His typical costume (he has worn several) is a white bodysuit that shows off his sculpted frame, over which he wears a sweeping cobalt-blue cape that comes over his shoulders and connects in a diamond-shaped pattern on his chest. (The cape swells out at the shoulders, further enhancing his apparent size.) He wears blue bracers on his forearms, and his belt and boots are also oversized and blue.



ENFORCER ASHIMA

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
35	STR	25	16-	Lift 3,200 kg; 7d6 [3]
23	DEX	39	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
28	CON	36	15-	
18	BODY	16	13-	
20	INT	10	13-	PER Roll 13-
28	EGO	36	15-	ECV: 9
25	PRE	15	14-	PRE Attack: 5d6
20	COM	5	13-	
19	PD	12		Total: 19 PD (18 rPD)
18	ED	12		Total: 18 ED (18 rED)
6	SPD	27		Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12
13	REC	0		
56	END	0		
50	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 233

Movement:	Running:	6"/12"
	Leaping:	7"/14"
	Flight:	20"/160"

Cost Powers **END**

40	<i>Vast Psionic Ability:</i> Elemental Control, 80-point powers	
85	1) <i>Search The World For A Single Thought:</i> Mind Scan 18d6, +5 ECV, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	5
32	2) <i>Mind Lance:</i> Ego Attack 4d6, Does BODY (+1); Visible (-¼)	8
40	3) <i>Sleep Infliction:</i> Ego Attack 8d6	8
54	4) <i>Domination:</i> Mind Control 15d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	3
40	5) <i>Mind Reading:</i> Telepathy 16d6	8
46	<i>Empyrean Physiology:</i> Life Support (Diminished Eating: only has to eat once a month; Immunity: all terrestrial diseases and biowarfare agents, all terrestrial poisons and chemical warfare agents; Longevity: Immortal; Safe Environments: High Pressure, High Radiation, Intense Cold, Intense Heat, Low Pressure/Vacuum; Self-Contained Breathing)	
18	<i>Empyrean Toughness:</i> Damage Resistance (18 PD/18 ED)	0
5	<i>Empyrean Physiology:</i> Lack Of Weakness (-5) for Resistant Defenses	0
10	<i>Empyrean Physiology:</i> Power Defense (10 points)	0
15	<i>Empyrean Mental Shielding:</i> Mental Defense (21 points total)	0
62	<i>Graviton-Manipulating Flight:</i> Flight 20", x8 Noncombat, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	2

Perks

18	Contact: The Empyreans (very useful Skills or resources, very good relationship, organization) 11-	
2	Fringe Benefit: Local Police Powers: Arcadia	

Talents

3	Lightsleep	
20	Universal Translator 12-	

Skills

20	+2 Overall
4	+2 OCV with Sleep Infliction
3	AK: Arcadia 13-
4	AK: Earth 14-
3	Concealment 13-
3	High Society 14-
2	CuK: Empyreans 11-
7	KS: Empyrean Law 17-
3	KS: Empyrean History 13-
3	Shadowing 13-
3	Stealth 14-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 545**Total Cost: 778****200+ Disadvantages**

15	Hunted: various Lemurians 8- (As Pow, PC has a Public ID or is otherwise very easy to find, Harshly Punish)
15	Hunted: Assorted Empyrean Criminals 8- (As Pow, PC has a Public ID or is otherwise very easy to find, Harshly Punish)
20	Psychological Limitation: Obsessed With Enforcing Empyrean Law (Common, Total)
20	Psychological Limitation: Utterly Loyal To King Hazor (Common, Total)
10	Psychological Limitation: Particularly Protective Of Young Empyreans And Other Helpless Youth (Common, Moderate)
10	Psychological Limitation: Humorless, Hides Emotions (Common, Moderate)
488	Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 778

Background/History: Ashima is a Third Generation Empyrean, born to a Human father and an Empyrean mother during the Valdorian Age some 45,000 years ago. Since her earliest days she used her various mental abilities in the service of the King, first Amlin and then Hazor. As the Enforcer of the King's Law, she makes sure that Empyreans obey the few regulations that keep their society running. Since Arcadia has few criminals and most of its citizens understand their vested interest in keeping the system going, Ashima is frequently underemployed in this role. But she also serves as both an advisor to young Empyreans recently inducted into Arcadian society — she's responsible for finding and collecting any Empyreans born in the outside world unbeknownst to his parent. She rarely had to do this in years past, but these days this sort of thing happens far more frequently due to the increased numbers of Empyreans living abroad.

Personality/Motivation: Ashima is completely devoted to King Hazor and her role as his Enforcer and advisor. She's consistently at his side, and he has come to rely on her wise and cautious counsel. She concentrates solely on ensuring that the city of Arcadia remains safe and that the social network of Empyreans around the world stays secure and healthy. She takes her role very seriously and publicly tries to present an image that is calm, rational, and without bias. Of course, this also makes her seem somewhat cold and humorless.

Quote: “You have committed a crime against Arcadia and must face the King’s justice. I recommend that you come peacefully, since as you can see you are greatly outnumbered.”

Powers/Tactics: Ashima is a powerful mentalist. She can perceive thoughts on a global scale, allowing her to trace individual criminals or detect the presence of newly-manifested Empyreans. She can also read thoughts, dominate the wills of others (including putting them to sleep, her favored form of attack), or even project pure mental energy into the brains of opponents. The latter power manifests as a purple beam of energy that projects from her forehead; no one knows why this one power has a visible component.

Although a fairly experienced combatant, the Enforcer has little knowledge of tactics. She works well with a team; when pursuing a powerful criminal, she “deputizes” any trustworthy Empyreans (and almost all Empyreans qualify) around to assist her in the arrest, since she prefers to bring overwhelming force to bear on any problem and minimize risks.

Campaign Use: Ashima represents a potential adversary for PCs who interact with the Empyreans. Until they prove themselves absolutely trustworthy, she’ll regard it as her duty to keep a close eye on them — and to stop them from imperiling Empyrean society, with force if necessary. Once they show they won’t harm Arcadia or its people, she’ll treat them with the same polite but distant respect she gives others.

To make Ashima more powerful, expand the scope of her mental powers. Give her some Telekinesis and psychokinetic abilities, perhaps up to and including minor matter-rearranging powers reminiscent of (though not nearly as power-



ful as) King Hazor’s. To weaken her, reduce the Active Points in all of her mental powers except for her Mind Scan (without it, she can’t easily track down new Empyreans).

Ashima Hunts anyone whom King Hazor orders her to, who breaks the laws of Arcadia, or who poses a serious threat to the Empyreans. She’s not subtle; in most cases she gathers up a posse of Empyreans and confronts the offender directly and as soon as possible.

Appearance: Ashima is a young-looking Empyrean woman, apparently Asian in appearance though her parentage involves a race of Men from before the Cataclysm. She’s 6’6” and lean but muscular, with short black hair. Her eyes are milky-white and have no apparent pupils. Her customary “uniform” consists of a gold and red bodysuit, over which she wears a hooded scarlet cloak.

DAVOS				
Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
38	STR	28	17-	Lift 4,800 kg; 7½d6 [4]
28	DEX	54	15-	OCV: 9/DCV: 9
25	CON	30	14-	
16	BODY	12	12-	
15	INT	5	12-	PER Roll 12-
17	EGO	14	12-	ECV: 6
21	PRE	11	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
18	COM	4	13-	
20	PD	12		Total: 20 PD (10 rPD)
16	ED	11		Total: 16 ED (15 rED)
8	SPD	42		Phases: 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12
16	REC	6		
60	END	5		
48	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 234
Movement:		Running:	6"/12"	
		Leaping:	7½"/15"	
		Flight:	48"/768"	
		MegaFlight:	32"	
Cost	Powers			END
166	<i>High-Speed Graviton-Manipulating Flight:</i> Multipower, 166-point reserve			
17u	1) <i>Super-Flight:</i> Flight 48", x16 Noncombat, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)			0
13u	2) <i>Overdrive Flight:</i> Flight 32", MegaScale (1" = 10 km, can be scaled down to 1" = 1 km; +¾), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)			5
63	<i>Speedster Tricks:</i> Multipower, 63-point reserve			
3u	1) <i>Widescale Grab:</i> Telekinesis (18 STR), Area Of Effect (3" Radius; +1), Selective (+¼); No Range (-½), Only To Disarm, Grab Or Otherwise Manipulate Objects (-½)			6
2u	2) <i>Wrapping Things Up:</i> Entangle 6d6, 6 DEF; OIF (items of opportunity; -½), No Range (-½), Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Defense Depends On Materials Used (-½), Cannot Form Barriers (-¼)			6
2u	3) <i>Sonic Boom:</i> Energy Blast 5d6, Area Of Effect (3" Radius; +1), Personal Immunity (+¼); No Range (-½), Must Make Half Move With Super-Flight (-½), Does Not Work In Vacuum (-¼)			6
3u	4) <i>Rain Of Blows:</i> Hand-To-Hand Attack +9d6; Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½)			4
1u	5) <i>Superspeed Deflection:</i> Missile Deflection (bullets and shrapnel)			0
2u	6) <i>Speedy Processing:</i> Rapid (x1,000) with Sight Group and Hearing Group; Costs Endurance (-½)			0
46	<i>Empyrean Physiology:</i> Life Support (Diminished Eating: only has to eat once a month; Immunity: all terrestrial diseases and biowarfare agents, all terrestrial poisons and chemical warfare agents; Longevity: Immortal; Safe Environments: High Pressure, High Radiation, Intense Cold, Intense Heat, Low Pressure/Vacuum; Self-Contained Breathing)			
13	<i>Empyrean Toughness:</i> Damage Resistance (10 PD/15 ED)			

3	<i>Empyrean Physiology:</i> Lack Of Weakness (-3) for Resistant Defenses	0
5	<i>Empyrean Physiology:</i> Power Defense (5 points)	0
5	<i>Lucky Guy:</i> Luck 1d6	0

Perks

12	Contact: The Empyreans (very useful Skills or resources, very good relationship, organization) 8-
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Talents

15	Lightning Reflexes: +10 DEX to act first with All Actions
20	Universal Translator 12-

Skills

30	+6 DCV
10	+2 HTH
9	+3 with Combat Driving, Combat Piloting, and PS: Racer
3	Breakfall 15-
3	Combat Driving 15-
3	Combat Piloting 15-
3	Electronics 12-
2	Gambling (Sports Betting) 12-
2	CuK: Empyreans 11-
7	KS: History And World Of Racing 16-
3	Mechanics 12-
4	Navigation (Air, Land, Marine) 12-
3	PS: Racer 15-
3	Tactics 12-
22	TF: Common Motorized Ground Vehicles, Riding Animals, Balloons & Zeppelins, Bobsleds, Carts & Carriages, Chariots, Jetskis, Large Motorized Boats, Large Planes, Large Wind-Powered Boats, One-Wheeled Muscle-Powered Ground Vehicles, Sleds, Small Motorized Boats, Small Planes, Small Rowed Boats, Small Wind-Powered Boats, Snowmobiles, Two-Wheeled Motorized Ground Vehicles, Two-Wheeled Muscle-Powered Ground Vehicles, Windsurfing

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 498**Total Cost: 732****200+ Disadvantages**

20	DNPC: Catherine Barras (girlfriend) 11- (Normal; Unaware of character's adventuring career/Secret ID)
10	Hunted: various Lemurians 8- (As Pow, Harshly Punish)
20	Psychological Limitation: Obsessed With Setting Speed Records (Common, Total)
10	Psychological Limitation: Showoff, Enjoys The Limelight (Common, Moderate)
0	Rivalry: Professional (Other Speedsters; Rival is As Powerful, Seek to Outdo, Embarrass, or Humiliate Rival, Rival Unaware of Rivalry)
15	Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Rick Swift) (Frequently, Major)
20	Vulnerability: 2 x Effect from Drains (Common)
437	Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 732

Background/History: Davos was one of the first children born in Arcadia after the city moved to Antarctica. From his earliest days, he was fascinated by speed, danger, and competition. As soon as he was an adult, he moved away to live among humans, where he mastered racing every form of vehicle he could find. He's had countless names and human "lives," almost always making his living as a competitive racer. He's been a charioteer in ancient Rome, a sailor in medieval Italy, a competitive skier in Sweden, and currently competes as Rick Swift, one of the leading money winners on the NASCAR circuit. Each time he completely submerges himself in his false identity, spending decades living among humans until it's time to fake his death. Then he returns to Arcadia for a few years before some new form of racing captures his attention and he has Brax create another identity for him.

Personality/Motivation: Despite his advanced age, Davos still comes across as a bit childish and immature. He's a daredevil, prone to taking unnecessary risks and throwing himself into his latest passion with unbridled enthusiasm. He never uses his powers to assist himself in his races; he's far too interested in the thrill of competition to cheat (though his amazing physiology has allowed him to walk away from some crashes that would have killed an ordinary Human).

Davos is extremely fond of Human society. He considers ordinary Humans in many ways superior to most Empyreans, who are boring and conservative. Humans are so fragile and ephemeral, but spend so much of their time dreaming up ways to make their lives even more dangerous and exciting! Though he doesn't consider himself either a hero or a warrior in any way, he'll happily support any actions required to protect Humans from outside threats. He's good friends with Archon, whom he enjoys teasing about his seriousness.

Quote: "All right, now open 'er up!"

Powers/Tactics: Davos has dedicated all of his considerable energies to becoming the fastest Empyrean. At his top speed he can fly at approximately 477,000 miles per hour, a speed he only attempts to reach when in outer space. He's easily capable of hitting Mach 3 within the atmosphere, a speed that allows him to create small "sonic booms" in his wake. His reflexes and reaction time are also proportionally greater than any normal Human's.

Davos doesn't have much experience as a soldier, and his grasp of tactics is weak. Nevertheless, he's a scrappy fighter who takes full advantage of his surroundings and his usual edge in speed. If all else fails, he resorts to throwing hundreds of punches at the same target in a matter of seconds, an onslaught that (given his Empyrean strength) few targets can resist.

Campaign Use: Davos in his Secret Identity makes a great friend or Contact for a PC. He's fun, has a glamorous job (and access to glamorous people), and has abilities that a superteam might need to call on from time to time. If he becomes attached enough to the PCs (or if supervillains keep threatening his girlfriend, Catherine Barras), he might even create a superhero identity and fight crime alongside them.

To make Davos more powerful, expand the scope of his abilities. He's already fast enough and tough enough — what if he also had heightened senses, or a suite of low-level mental powers? To weaken him, reduce his speed by trimming inches of Flight and reducing his MegaScale to 1" = 1 km; you might also want to reduce his STR and SPD.

Davos doesn't Hunt people — he doesn't really have it in him, and it's not worth the effort when he's got other things on his mind. If someone hurt Catherine, he might go after them, but he wouldn't make a long-term vendetta out of it.

Appearance: Davos appears to be a brown-skinned male of uncertain ethnicity in his mid-thirties. He stands 5'10" and weighs 165 pounds. He wears his black hair shoulder-length, and has brown eyes. He doesn't wear a costume; he tends to favor casual clothes like jeans and t-shirts, unless he's dressed for some sort of race.



OTHER EMPYREANS

Here are brief descriptions of a few other notable Emypyreans.

COUNSELOR BRAX

Brax is one of a small handful of Emypyreans born during the Turakian Age some seventy thousand years ago, and the only one known to have been born to a non-human parent. His father was Lannet, an Emypyrean well-known for his studies of the “arts of love.” His mother was apparently an orcish woman of remarkable intelligence for her species and, according to Lannet, a delightful personality. (Lannet, who left Earth along with Amlin and the Elders, is the father of more Emypyreans than any other, and his various children tend to “keep in touch” more than other Emypyrean siblings.) Thanks to his mixed heritage, Brax stands nearly eight feet tall and has mottled green skin, a flat, porcine nose, pointed ears, and jagged teeth that don’t entirely seem to fit inside his mouth.

Despite his fearsome appearance, Brax is a gentle soul with a keenly analytical mind. His personal obsession is the law. He’s a student of the fine points of dozens of different legal systems around the world and throughout history. He can use his mental powers to disguise his appearance when he needs to interact with Human society, but doing so tires him, so he prefers to study various legal journals (which he receives at a post office box in Tierra del Fuego and then reads at his leisure in Arcadia). He has served as counsel to a number of Emypyreans who have found themselves involved in some legal dilemma, and many Emypyreans rely on his expertise in estate management and identity creation when dealing with a changeover of assumed identities.

DREAMER EIDOLON

Eidolon is a Fourth Generation Emypyrean, born more than ten thousand years ago in Egypt. After centuries of studying various forms of art and science, he found himself fascinated by Humanity’s relationship with the Dreamzone (see *The Mystic World*) and how their subconscious minds interact with its denizens. He learned how to psychically enter the minds of humans and their connections to the Dreamzone as they slept, allowing him to travel all over Earth almost instantaneously. He currently lives in San Diego and works as a dream therapist, helping patients suffering from bad dreams, sleep deprivation, or related disorders. On more than one occasion he’s taken it upon himself to combat (and if necessary, kill) particularly foul beings native to the Dreamzone who haunted his patients. Eidolon also searches for a means to access the dimension that Emypyreans who choose *Silence* live in, since it seems to be related to but different from the Dreamzone both Emypyreans and Humans can access naturally.

THIEF HANDREL

Handrel is a Second Generation Emypyrean born nearly 200,000 years ago. Her personal obsession is with thievery — she’s a master at slipping past security measures of all sorts. The object of her work isn’t particularly important to her; in fact, she usually secretly returns the items she steals, since what fascinates her is the challenge and the thrill. Her non-standard Emypyrean powers involve sound manipulation; she can create fields of absolute silence, or deafening bursts of noise that can stun her opponents. She’s also mastered various technical skills related to her “hobby”; almost no lock can slow her down for long (let alone resist her efforts), and she’s remarkably agile and stealthy.

MUSICIAN JUBAL

Jubal has devoted his immortal life to writing and playing music. He’s lived under countless assumed identities in the Human world over the last several thousand years, many of whom have become famous as composers or performers (and who often die early, unexpected deaths so he can move on to some other type of musical expression). There’s no musical instrument he cannot play with consummate skill, and no style of music he does not love and play brilliantly. He’s equally at home as lead violinist in some of the world’s finest symphonies, trombonist in the swingiest jazz combos, drumming with Nepalese monks, or playing smoking guitar solos in leather-clad heavy metal acts.

THALYA

Thalya, a young and headstrong Emypyrean woman, was born in Italy in 1854. A brave warrior and compulsive adventuress, she’s become enamored with Archon and seeks to emulate his heroic career. Fascinated by new experiences, she longs to travel in space. Currently she lives in Nevada under the assumed identity of Alyce Thayers, where she works for the Air Force developing experimental orbital aircraft. While working there, she’s secretly thwarted an attempt by VIPER agents to steal plans for a top-secret stealth bomber, and has become intrigued by the appeal of costumed crimefighting.

MASTER BUILDER ZADIN

Zadin is the Emypyreans’ greatest master of technology, having been a student of the Ancient Gaex and inheriting his work when he traveled into space. He builds the robots and other mechanical devices that serve the Emypyreans, maintains the Progenitor technology that hides and sustains Arcadia, and keeps a careful eye on Human technological developments. He’s fascinated by how inventors’ minds work, and sometimes creates a false identity so he can journey to the outside world to meet and talk with such people.

chapter three:



OTHER HIDDEN LANDS

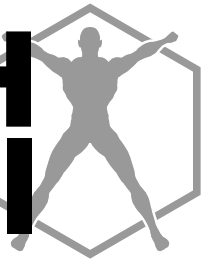
OTHER LANDS

Besides Atlantis, Arcadia, and Lemuria, there are other mysterious locations in the Champions Universe, hidden away from the eyes of man and ripe with potential for adventure. This chapter describes just a few of them.

HOW OLD IS SHAMBALLAH?

No one knows when or how Shamballah itself was founded — even the Nine Wise Monks claim its origins are lost to time. Some stories claim the city was founded by, or at least visited early in its life by, the legendary Chinese poet and sage Lao Tzu, the father of Taoism and supposed author of the *Tao Te Ching*. Certainly the style of architecture and design within Shamballah is appropriate for that period (approximately the sixth century BC), and Chinese legend does say Lao Tzu left his job as archivist of the Imperial Court and set off for Tibet and the mysterious lands beyond. But other legends place the foundation of the city much earlier than that, claiming it was already old when the Xia Dynasty began, some four thousand years ago.

SHAMBALLAH & AGHARTI



The city of Shamballah, known to some as Shangri-La or the City of Lotuses, lies under the majesty of Mount Everest. Legend says it's the repository of centuries-old secrets of magic and the martial arts. Rumors about the city can be heard all over the world; some say Shamballah is a fortress dedicated to goodness, life, and order, while others claim it's secretly a prison for some of the worst and most demonic of criminals. Many of the stories claim it's a city of immortals, and that living there means never having to age or die. Most who have tried to find it have not made it back to tell the tale, and those few who have are changed by the experience. Still people search for it, seeking wisdom, knowledge, or power.

But even if Shamballah is heaven on Earth, balance demands that it have a counterpart — an earthly hell that's a font of evil, wickedness, and the darkest of magics. That place is Agharti, and of it mystics do not speak.

THE CAVES OF EVEREST

To reach Shamballah, one must first pass a series of imposing physical trials. First, you must travel to Tibet and make it more than halfway up Mount Everest, no mean feat for visitors without superhuman powers. Everest itself is over 8850 meters (4,425") high, but the hidden entrance to the caves is located only about 5600 meters (2,800") up the south side. Nevertheless, it's a daunting journey on foot, involving hours of walking and climbing over icy crevasses and vast snowfields.

Near the entrance is a well-hidden lamasery, home to a small order of monks. Just finding it is difficult; somehow it blends into the rocks and ice so that even someone a mere fifty feet away from its walls may not see it. Numbering only about twenty, the monks are notoriously unfriendly to visitors, and climbers who know enough to ask about the place receive a stern warning from the locals to avoid the place even if they can find it.

A seeker who finds the monastery is ignored at first. If he remains polite and respectful despite the indifference of the monks and having to stand outside in the bitter cold for four or five days, they let him in... assuming he survives. The monks serve their visitor a light but nutritious dinner, then invite him to join them in the evening services. These primarily consist of nearly-silent meditation, chanting of mantras, and the spinning of large, wall-mounted prayer wheels for several hours.

Assuming a visitor remains polite, patient, and respectful, the monks eventually answer any

questions he has. They don't bring up Shamballah themselves, but if asked about it they confirm that they know the way and lead the visitor to a hidden door at the back of the lamasery that leads into the mountain itself. They're not particularly concerned about the reasons a visitor has for seeking the city — the Caves of Deceit sort out motivations, and the Shamballans can take care of themselves. The monks help the city by keeping out the riffraff and the obviously unworthy. The monks may also ask visitors to carry items with them; these range from foodstuffs and delicacies, to pieces of artwork, to small scrolls carrying news of interest from the outside world.

Beyond The Doors

The doorway leads to a set of carved stone stairs that wind down into a complex of caves — a maze that leads into the heart of the mountain itself. (The monks provide torches if a visitor didn't think to bring light along.) The caves contain many traps. Some, like hidden pits and blades that emerge from recesses in the walls, are simple physical challenges that test the skills and reflexes of a visitor. Others are more dangerous and insidious, using illusions to test the will and discipline.

Most notorious obstacle is the Caves of Deceit, the last group of caverns before the entrance to Shamballah. The Caves conjure up fearsome shades of the mind, pitting adventurers against whatever they fear the most. (In game terms, treat this as Mental Illusions, Only To Force Target To Experience His Greatest Fear, with enough dice to achieve effects of at least EGO +40 on each character, so the Illusion can completely alter the setting if necessary and do STUN and BODY damage.)

If a visitor has the physical and mental fortitude to make it all the way through the caves, the final cave passage opens into a grand chasm whose icy ceiling is hundreds of feet overhead. The city sits in a chamber underneath a massive icefall near the Khumbu Pass — the "ceiling" isn't stone at all, but a massive slab of permanently-frozen snow that has sealed over a crevasse. A small amount of sunlight penetrates the snow, bathing the chamber in a soft, dim, bluish-white light during the day. The cave is surprisingly warm thanks to extensive lava flows not far beneath the cave floor, with temperature usually in the 5-10 degrees Celsius range (mid-40s Fahrenheit). On the far wall of the cavern a small, icy cold mountain stream flows down into a pool no more than fifty feet across. A dirt path leads down a gentle hill into the city itself.



SHAMBALLAH

The actual city of Shamballah is not particularly large — only a few blocks on a side, with maybe thirty buildings. Between the buildings are open spaces, gardens, and courtyards. Most of the buildings are made of wood with lattices, terraces, and tiled roofs. Scattered among the low, flat houses and temples are large columns of ice extending all the way to the “ceiling.” The ice in these enormous towers remains frozen despite the positively balmy temperatures thanks to a coating of dust and oils created by the monks. The brightly-colored powders catch and reflect what little light shines down on the village, making the columns glow in beautiful but muted hues. Between these columns the Shamballans have erected ropes and wooden bridges; it’s possible to climb all the way to the roof by maneuvering from one column to another.

The founders of the city laid it out in a harmonious pattern. The streets divide the city into eighths, with curving and narrowing paths that cause the city, if seen from above, to resemble an enormous lotus blossom. In the center is the *Kalapa*, the massive “palace” where the nine monks live and teach; it’s decorated with gold, diamonds, jade, and coral, making it one of the most beautiful and spectacular buildings on Earth.

Shamballah has only about 200 permanent inhabitants, plus a dozen or so visitors at any given time. Visitors who make it here typically stay anywhere from a few months to a couple of decades, depending on what they came to learn and the strength of their ties to the outside world. The population includes nearly every ethnic group found

on Earth, as well as a few that aren’t. The majority are Chinese and Tibetan, with Indians and Afghans the next most common groups.

Visitors soon realize that everyone in the city speaks in his own native language, and yet everyone else hears what’s said in his own tongue — and that’s only the most obvious of the ancient city’s wonders. This mystical “field of understanding” extends precisely as far as the city limits; when someone walks up the hill back to the caves, the understanding fades.

The city itself also creates a “zone of immortality,” with the same boundaries as the translation effect. While time passes in Shamballah at exactly the same rate as in the outside world, no one ages, gets sick, or dies while physically within the exact bonds of the city. For short term visits (less than fifty years) this applies to visitors as well; upon leaving the city, they age normally. However, anyone who lives in Shamballah for 50 years or more becomes physically dependent on the effect — leaving the city causes the body to age rapidly and crumble into dust.

SHAMBALLAH’S PURPOSE

The true purpose of Shamballah is to gather, protect, and control the dissemination of arcane secrets, particularly regarding the martial arts. The secrets of mystical awareness, control and manipulation of bodily energies, and mastery of one’s self and others as shown through hundreds of different disciplines are studied, refined and taught here by various monks and scholars. The city’s plazas throng with combatants practicing their skills upon each other, and its libraries and temples contain thousands of scrolls, tomes, and librams describing occult

and martial lore thought by the outside world to be lost for centuries. It is said, for example, that the skills and principles once taught in the Yengtao Temple (see *Champions Universe*, pages 60-61) are preserved here... and perhaps once originated here.

Students looking for teachers of advanced techniques and skills can almost certainly find what they're looking for in Shamballah. But different masters have their own requirements for taking on students — some demand rigorous testing to prove one's worthiness, others say the honest desire for knowledge is the only requirement, and still others refuse to state what will persuade them to teach, forcing the student to figure it out on his own.

Though the Shamballans are dedicated to their craft, they always make time for relaxation and pleasure. Any day the streets may be filled with celebrants, wandering musicians, or monks engaged in earnest and lively philosophical debate, while the gardens and parks are home to quieter, more spiritual practices of meditation, exercise, or simple tasks of weeding and planting.

THE IMMORTAL MONKS

Shamballah's leaders are nine mysterious figures known as the Immortal Monks. They are always masked and wear robes of a particular color. Each has several apprentices, who wear robes of similar color; students studying directly from one of the Immortals also wear robes of matching color for the length of their study. Their masks are embroidered with special symbols in silver and gold threads, and these symbols are also painted on the board signs outside their respective homes (which also serve as their individual schools). Each of the Immortal Monks has taken the name of one of the legendary Eight Immortals of Chinese mythology, except for the ninth who calls himself Lao Tzu after the famous founder of Taoism. Some mystics believe the Nine are in fact the deities themselves, or at least were once mortals whose adventures were the factual basis for the myths. Others insist the names are purely ceremonial and meant to be instructive. The Nine Monks are:

Lu Tung-Pin, the patron of wealth, literacy, and health. He is apparently Chinese, tall and thin. His color is red and his symbol is a small set of balance scales. He's generally concerned with the training of the young and less-experienced students... but of course, "less experienced" is a relative term, since finding Shamballah itself is usually only possible for warriors and mystics who are already highly skilled by the standards of the outside world. He is also a master of swordplay of all types.

Ts'ao Kuo-Chin, master of Imperial courtliness and patron of actors. A tall Caucasian man with an aquiline nose and an air of the aristocracy, he always wears a gold chain around his neck. His color is yellow; his symbol is a jade tablet, the traditional sign of admission to the court. He is a master of direct, outwardly-focused styles of martial arts, and it is his traditional role to humiliate those who come to Shamballah believing in their own martial superiority by defeating them easily and showing how much more they have to learn.

Chang Kuo-lao, a short and slightly chubby Asian man with laughter-lines around his eyes. The patron of transportation, he instructs his students on the skills of running, leaping, swimming, and even flying. His color is orange, and his symbol is twofold; a mule and a tubular bamboo drum with iron sticks.

Li T'ieh-kuai, a short black man who walks with an iron crutch. He is the patron of martial artists who must overcome handicaps — whether physical, mental, or spiritual. His color is blue, and his symbol is a crutch or cane.

Lan T'sai-ho, a remarkably young-appearing Chinese man, with unusual deep-brown eyes. Lan is the master of Shamballah's gardens and vegetation, and it is due to his skill that plants and flowers flourish in the inhospitable, dark, cold cavern. He teaches mastery and appreciation of the natural world; his color is green, his symbol a basket of flowers.

He Hsien-ku, a beautiful older woman of uncertain ethnicity, perhaps Indian or Afghani. She's in charge of female students (a small minority of the students of Shamballah) and is particularly skilled at Aikijutsu. Her color is purple, her symbol a lotus blossom.

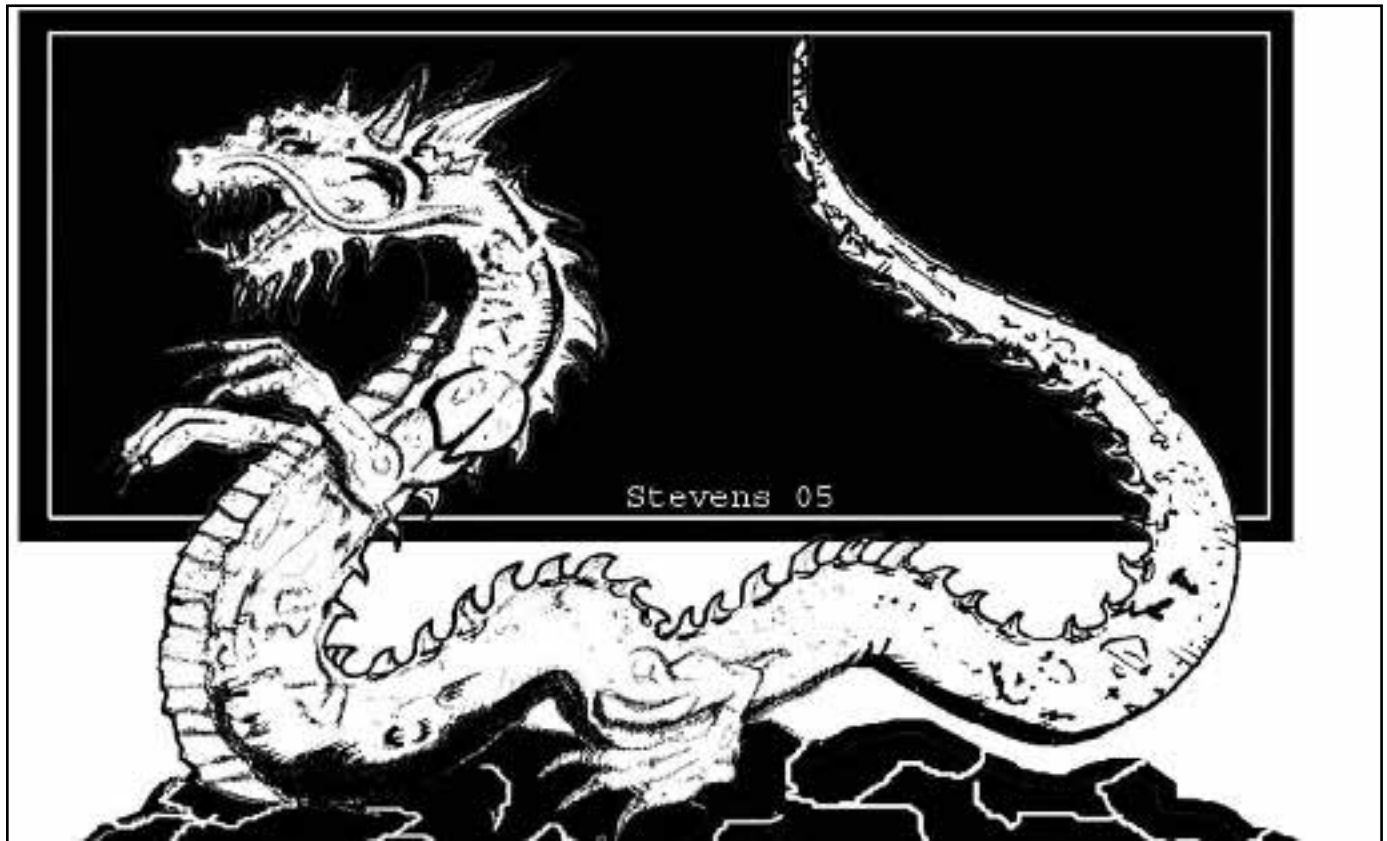
Chungli Chu'an, a large, heavily-muscled Chinese man. As the patron of military skills, he teaches his students tactics and strategy along with brutally efficient fighting maneuvers. He's also responsible for the defenses of the city. His color is black, and his symbol is a fan.

Han Chi'huang, a tall and foreboding-looking Indian man. He is Shamballah's judge and expert on the law, and specializes in training students who still have some evil intentions or hidden "dark side" so they can find redemption. His color is brown, and his symbol is a flute.

Lao Tzu, an older Chinese man of average appearance and build. He (or at least his namesake) was the founder of Taoism... and according to some rumors, Shamballah itself. He is the patron of guests to the city — those who come for information and do not intend to stay long. (In other words, he's the monk that visiting PCs are likely to get to know the best.) He's also the only monk to interact with the outside world, since he regularly receives news from the monks of the lamasery at the caves' entrance. His color is white, his symbol a jug of wine.

Each of the Nine is a master of several martial arts and also possesses related superhuman abilities and attributes; some wield mighty mystic powers as well. (In game terms, the least of the Immortals would be built on about 500 Character Points; the most powerful on more than 1,000.) Several other monks and teachers within the city are also at or near such high levels of skill and power.

The Nine Immortals rule Shamballah jointly, making any necessary decisions as a group. They agree with each other most of the time, so any conflicts are easily straightened out by simple majority rule.



In general, the Shamballans believe in a hands-off policy regarding the outside world. They are loath to involve themselves with politics or conflicts among the unenlightened in any way, and anyone requesting aid beyond teaching or training quickly becomes frustrated by the Immortals' desire for isolation. They believe strongly in a particularly fatalistic form of Taoism: the world has a natural order, and attempting to mold the universe to one's own beliefs and desires will only lead to conflict, pain, and sadness. Instead, one should seek to harmonize himself with what is, and what the universe actually wants to do, letting events take their course. If a terrible threat presents itself to the outside world, it is for the outside world to deal with; if the outside world should fail, and the world (for example) be destroyed, then that is the way things are meant to be. Many would-be heroes and masters of the martial arts have found themselves too frustrated with this philosophy to remain in Shamballah... and this is also part of the natural order of things, from the Shamballan viewpoint.

AGHARTI

Several miles deeper beneath Everest lies a second city, one even more mysterious than Shamballah and which even fewer people visit. The Shadow-City of Agharti lies at the end of a small, bitterly cold underground river that winds slowly down through a maze of tiny, dark passages until it emerges a hundred meters up the side of a massive cave. The river turns into a waterfall that plunges precipitously down the wall of the cave into a vast, black lake of icy

water, which glows ever so slightly from the lights of small cave fish and other creatures swimming in its depths and creates long, vague flickering shadows on the rocky walls. Agharti stands on a small island in the center of the lake.

In an alcove behind the waterfall lives the ancient dragon Gulong, who protects the city and confronts any invaders with a show of force and demanding questions. Gulong is an excellent judge of character: if visitors seem weak, or side with the causes of Light and Truth, he simply eats them; if they are both powerful and evil (and therefore belong in Agharti), he welcomes them. If they are powerful, strong, and intent on fighting him, he calls on assistance from the city.

Living in the city are perhaps fifty of the worst, vilest, most evil masters of martial arts the world has ever known, trapped there by spells and bonds laid down by the Shamballan monks countless centuries ago. Originally Gulong was their jailer, but he has long since been corrupted by the pervasive and elemental evil of the dark caves. Outsiders who travel to Agharti (who, unlike the residents, may leave at any time) also suffer from this effect: the longer they remain in the cave, the more the dark sides of their personalities manifest themselves. They may become more greedy, cruel, or argumentative, or just simply "more evil" (however that expresses itself). The GM should encourage and reward entertaining roleplaying of the effects. By no means do basically good characters become evil right away; a change of that magnitude would require years of exposure. But characters visiting Agharti will notice the first manifestations of the effect within minutes.

THE DARK MONKS

The Dark Monks of Agharti are also immortal, though this is due to magics they have created rather than any effect of the caves — should they escape their prison, they would retain their youth and powers in the outside world. And they desperately seek to escape; indeed, it is almost all they think about. Fortunately for the rest of the world, the Aghartians are so twisted and irredeemable that they're almost completely incapable of trusting each other or working together for any appreciable length of time. Every effort to combine their forces to overcome the spells that keep them from passing the boundaries of the cave collapses due to infight-

ing and betrayal. Should they ever succeed, the only way out of the cave complex itself is through Shamballah, and there they would be outnumbered nearly five to one by monks with powers as great as their own. Of course, this doesn't stop them from plotting new means of escape (or trying to find ways to influence the outside world without having to leave Agharti). If they ever succeed, the monks of Shamballah, who consider Agharti their own responsibility, would have to call on the outside world for the first time in centuries for assistance in recapturing them.

OTHER SUPERHUMANS IN AUSTRALIA

As noted in *Champions Universe*, there are relatively few superhumans in Australia. Probably the most noteworthy is the Aboriginal hero called Walkabout, a powerful mystic who primarily resides in the Dreamtime and only enters our world during times of crisis or to battle mystical threats. He and Wanambi Man are allies; Walkabout periodically visits the older man at Uluru to confer about matters beyond the ken of most mortals.

Other noteworthy heroes include:

—Harrier, a female hero based primarily in Melbourne, whose only superhuman power is flight but who's also a highly-trained martial artist and skilled combatant with the staff and bolo. She's battled the Keen Keeng on two occasions.

—Brigade, a moderately-powerful brick

In the southeast corner of the Northern Territory of Australia sits Ayers Rock, or Uluru as it's known to the native Anangu aborigines. The second-largest natural monolith in the world (after Mount Augustus, also in Australia), Uluru is a massive stone prominence more than eight kilometers around that rises up from the desert floor to a maximum height of 318 meters (159"). The rock itself is riddled with caves, and along its sides are striations that look like massive claw marks; local legends say they were carved by Tjati, the red lizard, when he lost his throwing stick somewhere within the rock and was searching for it. At sunrise and sunset the layers of sandstone and feldspar catch the light and reflect it in a wave of glorious colors, reds and purples almost too vibrant to believe.

Uluru extends more than two kilometers below the surface. Caves within the rock have dozens of enormous, primitive paintings on the walls, some as much as fifty thousand years old. The paintings are mostly of animals, usually the totems for various Anangu clans. Some of the animals portrayed are extinct, while others have apparently never actually existed (for example, the *bunyip*, a bellowing, disease-bearing monster who lives at the bottom of rivers and water holes).

Uluru is the centerpiece of the Kata Tjuta National Park, which was returned to the control of the Anangu by the Australian government in 1985. Despite its remoteness, the park is a major tourist destination. Anangu guides take visitors on walking tours around the base of Uluru; they do not prohibit anyone from climbing the rock (except in rough weather; the area's prone to windstorms), but don't encourage it either, and provide no assistance. Several of the caves with interesting paintings inside are easily accessible, though local legend has it that deeper inside are caves no non-Anangu has ever seen.

The nearest major city to Kata Tjuta is Alice Springs, about 450 kilometers (280 miles) to the northwest. A small town called Yulara, about 20 kilometers (12 miles) north of Uluru, serves tourists. Beyond Yulara the park is scrubby desert that features massive outcroppings of red and orange sandstone, the howls of dingoes, and ever-present flies.

ULURU AND THE DREAMTIME

Uluru is one of the central locations in Australian Aboriginal mythology, which primarily features an alternate dimension called the *Dreamtime*, a world connected to but greater than our own and the source of all creation. The Dreamtime is a place in the past, but still active and accessible. It is the period before Earth became matter, when everything was still made only of spirit. Though physically separated from this ur-state, mystics can still access the Dreamtime, communing with the spirits who live there and divining the omens that are part of everyday life.

The Dreamtime, called *Tjukurpa* or sometimes *alchera*, was created by an ancient god, also called Alchera or sometimes Baiaame, who then retired to the sky and no longer interacts with Humanity. Once he began the process of creation, it was taken over by the other inhabitants of the Dreamtime: spirits and minor gods who spend much of their time singing mystical songs that "create" more reality.

Everything in the "real world" contains a spirit that has its origins within the Dreamtime. Furthermore, every meaningful event in either our world or the Dreaming leaves a mark on the world, so that the shape of the land itself and its unseen vibrations are a map of the history of the world. Natural features like Uluru and the Kata Tjuta Gorge are



iwara — tracks and signs of events or actions taken in the Dreamtime that have manifested in our own world. In most other ways, the Dreamtime looks like an idealized form of the Australian Outback: broad, scrubby desert punctuated with large gorges, hills, and rocky outcroppings. The mounds and promontories of rock in Tjukurpa reach impossible heights, with stones balanced precariously on edges that violate all laws of gravity and physics. The colors seem brighter and sharper, and shift as the sun moves across the sky in a spectrum of reds, greens, and browns.

Aboriginal people are divided into clans with complicated family interrelationships. Each clan has a totem, an animal spirit that provides the people a direct connection to the cosmic. The totems are the idealized forms of local animals (or sometimes extinct or unique creatures) who live in the Dreamtime and are therefore of a higher order — more “real” than the animals in the waking world. Totem animals are highly intelligent; they frequently manifest to powerful mystics and shamans to provide information and advice.

There are numerous ways for mortals to enter the Dreamtime. Shamans learn to do so simply by meditation, leaving their bodies behind and projecting themselves astrally. Specific rituals exist that allow the untrained to do the same, usually under the supervision of shamans. There are also several mystical talismans that can project a person physically to Tjukurpa.

Time behaves very strangely within the Dreamtime. It seems to pass subjectively to the viewer, but events related to the “waking world” happen simultaneously or in random order from the viewpoint of a visiting outsider. Someone visiting the Dreamtime today may encounter another visitor from thousands of years ago, or perhaps from his own future.

THREATS FROM THE DREAMTIME

Though most of the beings and creatures who live in the Dreamtime are benign, several are inimical to man. It's rare for most of them to emerge into our world, but it does happen. Among the most unpleasant of Tjukurpa's denizens are *Thugine*, the Rainbow Serpent who preys on the careless and lazy (especially young boys who don't listen to their elders), and *Whowhie*, another river monster who looks like an enormous six-legged lizard with the head and tongue of a giant frog.

The *Keen Keeng* are a race of people ten feet tall with batlike wings that fold out of the way when on the ground. They're strong, have only three fingers on each hand, and apparently worship fire (to whom they sacrifice captured victims.) They particularly don't like humans, and can often be found supporting more powerful evil beings who promise to rid the world of men.

THE WANAMBI MAN

Deep in a cave nearly a mile inside Uluru, only accessible by a complicated series of tunnels and switchbacks, is the home of the Wanambi Man. The cave is large and only vaguely lit by several small torches in recessed wall sconces. A small mat on the floor is the only concession to comfort. Every few days one of the local tribespeople brings down various delicacies and drinks — though it seems Wanambi Man does not actually need to eat, there are several foods and wines he enjoys for their own sake.

An elderly Anangu *wirinun*, or shaman, the Wanambi Man is the guardian of the Well of Worlds, a pit about thirty meters across with a series of disturbing but beautiful statues and sculptures around the edge. As the flames from the torches flicker, the shadows of these statues move on the wall, occasionally seeming to come to life and act out scenes from the past or future as the Wanambi Man wills. The bottom of the pit, if there is one, is not visible.

The Well of Worlds is not really a pit at all, but a dimensional portal that connects both our world and the Dreamtime to an infinity of other magical Asiatic and Astral dimensions (see *The Mystic World* for more information). As a means of mystical transportation, it's both perilous and unfortunately erratic; the spells required to use it to get precisely where one intends are complicated for even the most skilled of sorcerers, and a number of creatures inimical to humanity wait in its misty recesses to prey upon the unwary. Errors in spellcasting (or accidental entry into the Well) may deposit the unfortunate victim nearly anywhere in the multiverse.

Even worse, various nasty inhuman creatures sometimes try to enter the world through the Well, whether from the Dreamtime or other dimensions. According to legend, the Wanambi Man once met a white man, the first the Anangu had ever seen. Together they narrowly thwarted an invasion by evil reptilian creatures known as the Poisonous Snake Men as they attempted to exit the Well. The Well is apparently a permanent part of Uluru, and therefore sacred and not to be destroyed; instead, the Wanambi Man has chosen to live next to it, both defending Earth from any future invasions and drawing upon its strange energies for his own spells and studies.

The Wanambi Man is an Aborigine man who appears to be in his mid-sixties (though legend says he's *much* older than that). He has white hair, a long, sparse white beard, and pupilless white eyes. He wears animal skin pants and a belt of braided hair, and his chest is bare but painted with white markings. He carries a wand carved from a bone with various animal totems painted in red along its length. He's not a particularly skilled combatant, though he can summon a powerful windblast to defend himself if necessary (a *wanambi* is a spirit of the hills, whose breath is the wind that whips through the gorges). He's primarily a source of useful information; in times of crisis, he summons other heroes like Walkabout (or perhaps the PCs) for assistance.

Continued from last page

who defends the city of Sydney.

Harrier's primary enemy is the superhuman thief called Tuckonie, himself a skilled martial artist despite his diminutive size. She was also a central figure in the capture of the notorious superhumanly-fast assassin Taipan, who was responsible for countless murders (including several superheroes) across Australia, Oceania, and Southeast Asia before several superhumans and UNTIL finally captured him in 1999. Taipan was sentenced to hotsleep incarceration in a special facility near Alice Springs built specifically to contain him; he remains there as of 2005. Brigade's only known superhuman enemy is the crazed villain Lightning Man, who wields two small axes that can project deadly bolts of electricity.

See *Champions World-wide* for more details about the superhumans of Australia and other countries besides the United States.

SUNDAY POND, MAINE



Deep in rural Maine, there's a tiny community that's home to far more than its rightful share of unusual and mystic phenomena. Weird events occur often enough that most of the locals know to take it all in stride — but the few visitors the area gets, even those who specifically come to investigate the strange goings-on, find it disturbing.

OXFORD

Oxford is a small town of about 4,000 people located in the woods of western Maine. The most notable attractions in the area are the Oxford Plains Speedway, the capital of New England auto racing, and the excellent fishing in the various small lakes, ponds, and streams fed by the Androscoggin River.

Among these small fishing holes is Sunday Pond, a lake a little more than a square mile in size that's located about five miles southwest of the Oxford town limits. There are several dozen houses and cottages along the shores of Sunday Pond. About half of them are permanent residences; the others are "summer residences" or vacation homes for wealthy seekers of peace, quiet, and excellent fishing. Most are two stories, and are set far enough back from the shore of the lake to maintain the illusion of privacy and unspoiled nature.

The lake is well stocked with trout (brown, black, brook, and rainbow) as well as a number of warm freshwater species like pickerel and perch. Though it's not one of the "destination" lakes in the area, it's well-regarded by anglers in the know. There are several campsites near the pond that cater to fishermen and families seeking to get away from it all. They offer limited amenities (like communal showers and a single small store) along with quiet lots for campfires and relaxation.

About half a mile northeast of the lake is a small "town center" for Sunday Pond, centered around the crossing point of the area's two paved roads. There's a country store (with a counter in the back where they serve coffee and a mean blueberry cobbler), a small schoolhouse and library, a gas station, and a bait and tackle shop. A few small houses and farms line the nearby roads.

THE SUPERNATURAL

Rural Maine in general and the area around Sunday Pond in particular are well-known for strange and mysterious events and beings. For example, Sunday Pond itself is reputed to have some sort of lake monster named Sammy living in it, though few people have actually seen the creature... and even those who have can't agree on its appearance. Some say Sammy is an enormous serpent, thirty feet long or more, with undulating coils that emerge from the water as it swims. Others claim the creature is covered with fur, like a beaver but many times larger. Investigators of a more scientific bent explain that the lake isn't large enough, nor does it contain enough food, to support a creature as large as Sammy is supposed to be. But that doesn't convince the dozens of witnesses.

But Sammy's far from the only strange phenomenon in the area. Local radios frequently pick up strange voices and mysterious sounds when tuned away from broadcasting stations. Compasses occasionally go haywire, spinning wildly or pointing resolutely south-south-east. Every so often, a hunter or fisherman comes across a dead deer, moose, or other animal, the carcass still entirely intact no matter how long it's apparently been deceased, but with all of the blood drained from a single wound in the neck. More than once, people have reported seeing UFOs. And sometimes a tourist comes along, usually from a big city. He blunders about annoying the locals, being rude to waitresses, and making a lot of noise with his expensive car or snowmobile. The locals simply wait. More often than you'd think, the obnoxious tourists simply disappear.

Visitors to Sunday Pond notice that the locals seem to know a great deal about occult matters in a very matter-of-fact way. It's certainly true they enjoy a good ghost story, especially one set in the area and told around a campfire. There are many reputedly haunted houses, forests, and graveyards in the area, and every kid knows the stories of hitchhikers accepting rides from strangers who turn out to be dead themselves, ghostly children waiting by the sides of train tracks where phantom engines rush past in the night, or people accidentally buried because they *seemed* to be dead. But in Sunday Pond, the locals carefully check the garlic hanging from the windowsill and the design sprinkled in salt on the front drive before going to bed.



ST. JULIAN'S

The best-known haunted building near Sunday Pond is the former church and rectory of St. Julian's, a long-abandoned Episcopal church founded in the mid-nineteenth century during efforts to expand the town around a granite mine. The mine was much less profitable than predicted and closed after a few years. Engineers collapsed the mine's entrance with explosives, but they didn't do a very good job — ever since, local children have snuck into the main shaft to smoke cigarettes and drink cheap beer despite their parents' admonishments. Not long after the mine closed, the church shut down for lack of parishioners and money to keep going.

St. Julian's is classically Gothic in style, two stories high with a steeple rising a total of fifty feet. The steeple once had a large bell inside, but the bell fell and shattered over a hundred years ago. The building is mostly wooden but retains stone facing on two sides. A small set of stairs leads up from

the dirt road to enormous wooden doors bound in iron; the doors were long ago nailed shut to keep adventurous kids out. The stairs, as well as the remains of the church's sign and the long, low stone wall around the edges of the property, have been defaced by spray-painted graffiti and assorted trash, but for some reason no paint seems to stick to the walls of the church itself. Frustrated artists always find their efforts washed away by the next rain. Around the church a lot of local vegetation has grown up, and ivy and assorted weeds cling to the wooden outer walls. Quiet visitors may occasionally see deer.

Out back behind St. Julian's is a small cemetery. Only a few of the markers are in any way ornate, and most graves only have a small stone plaque set in the ground that displays a name, dates, and a short phrase or Bible quote. A small number of graves have large crosses or statues, including one large grey granite angel whose right wing broke off long ago.

BEAST MOUNTAIN



The voice in the dark began intoning a mad litany, line by line, and I and the rest to repeat it. As they did so, they swayed from side to side in the oddest way, and beat their hands upon their knees; and I followed their example. I could have imagined I was already dead and in another world. That dark hut, these grotesque dim figures, just flecked here and there by a glimmer of light, and all of them swaying in unison and chanting, 'Not to go on all-fours; that is the Law. Are we not Men?'

*'Not to suck up Drink; that is the Law.
Are we not Men?'*

*'Not to eat Fish or Flesh; that is the Law.
Are we not Men?'*

*'Not to claw the Bark of Trees; that is the Law.
Are we not Men?'*

*'Not to chase other Men; that is the Law.
Are we not Men?'*

—*The Island Of Dr. Moreau*,
H. G. Wells (1896)

Beast Mountain is the home of a small group of creatures, the result of terrible experiments and bizarre perversions of science, who have chosen to try to live their lives hidden away from the eyes of man in a secret village in the Ukraine. A few have left the village to see the outside world, such as the celebrated ape scientist Dr. Silverback (see *Millennium City*, pages 48-51), or Ram, the bouncer at the notorious Vibora Bay nightclub the Minefield (*Vibora Bay*, page 39), but most of the village's residents are quiet, retiring, and protective of their privacy. They'd prefer to avoid the scrutiny of the outside world, and most would rather not ever see the inside of a hospital or laboratory again. For nearly twenty years the town has kept itself secret. How much longer will its idyll last?

THE STORY OF GORNYY ZVER

The tale of Beast Mountain (or *Gornyy Zver* in the local Russian patois mixed with Ukrainian and other Slavic words that the beast-men speak) begins with Dr. Phillippe Moreau, their evil creator. Moreau is the grandson of the famous Victorian mad scientist Henri Moreau, whose experiments with vivisection and surgical grafting to create hybrid beast-men on a South Seas island in the late nineteenth century was recorded by H. G. Wells

(though he presented his findings as fiction to avoid horrifying people).

Born in 1949 in France, Phillippe Moreau studied medicine, anatomy, and genetics in some of the finest schools in Europe. He had to leave several of them under faint clouds of scandal, as he was a notoriously difficult student fond of confronting his teachers and performing extracurricular experiments without permission after hours. Eventually he could find no legitimate teachers willing to work with him, and turned to VIPER for funding and access to the work of other scientists who had run afoul of small-minded authority figures.

Moreau fulfilled his contracts with VIPER and left their employ in 1979, having contributed directly to its ongoing work by creating superhuman agents like Fatalla and Cottonmouth. He acquired a small piece of land in the Ukraine, in the foothills east of the Carpathian Mountains, and built himself a laboratory in the depths of a nearly impassable forest to ensure his privacy. There he began his work on test animals brought to him by mercenaries and hunters. He was seeking ways to duplicate and eventually improve upon the work his grandfather had begun: "uplifting" base animals into beings more like men, to serve as slaves and spare mankind the drudgery of work and the suffering of war.

Imagine what mankind could do if it were able to devote its energies to the finer things in life, to science and art and philosophy, with its common tasks taken care of by an endless supply of half-human servants! Nations would no longer need to send the very flower of youth off to die in wars — battalions of fierce, savage warriors with the instincts of beasts but the intelligence of men would fight on man's behalf, allowing humans to live like gods! Of course, the financial rewards for the man who brought about this glorious new age would be beyond measure....

This was Moreau's dream, and he worked for years in the dark forests of Russia to achieve it.

His first real breakthrough came in 1984, when he mutated a young mountain gorilla using radiation, surgical grafting, and chemical baths to give it remarkable intelligence (that was soon revealed to be considerably higher than the human norm) as well as the ability to talk. Doctor Silverback, as the ape became known, added his own brilliance to Moreau's to duplicate the process, and within a matter of months Moreau's lab began churning out dozens of additional beast-men, mutated from a wide range of mammals such as foxes, deer, possums, oxen, moles and squirrels. In 1985 Moreau successfully expanded the procedure and began

creating beast-men derived even from non-mammalian creatures, including a small number of bird-men, fish-men, and reptile-men. He put these creatures to work as servants, expanding his single laboratory into a small village with cultivated fields and gardens.

BEASTLY CRIMES

By the summer of that same year, however, Moreau had begun to run out of the various chemicals and radioactive elements he needed to pursue his work, and the poor condition of his lab equipment was also causing unnecessary delays (as well as occasional deaths among his followers). He put together a small cadre of his most dangerous beast-men and trained them to commit robberies on his behalf, first stealing money from nearby towns as practice and then journeying to Kiev to steal medical supplies and equipment. While there, his band of criminal beast-men narrowly avoided being captured by the Soviet costumed hero Quake, who was intrigued by his opponents and began to track them down. A month later, Moreau found himself completely out of Radium X, which can cause spontaneous mutations in certain subjects under proper conditions. The nearest place he could get more was London. He sent his cadre there... but they botched the robbery and had to flee the New Knights of the Round Table.

They arrived back in Moreau's village barely ahead of the British heroes, who had by this time coordinated their efforts with Quake. Moreau ordered Silverback and the cadre to lead the rest of his animal subjects in battle against the invaders, but Silverback, tired of the abuse and seeing an opportunity for escape, instead joined the

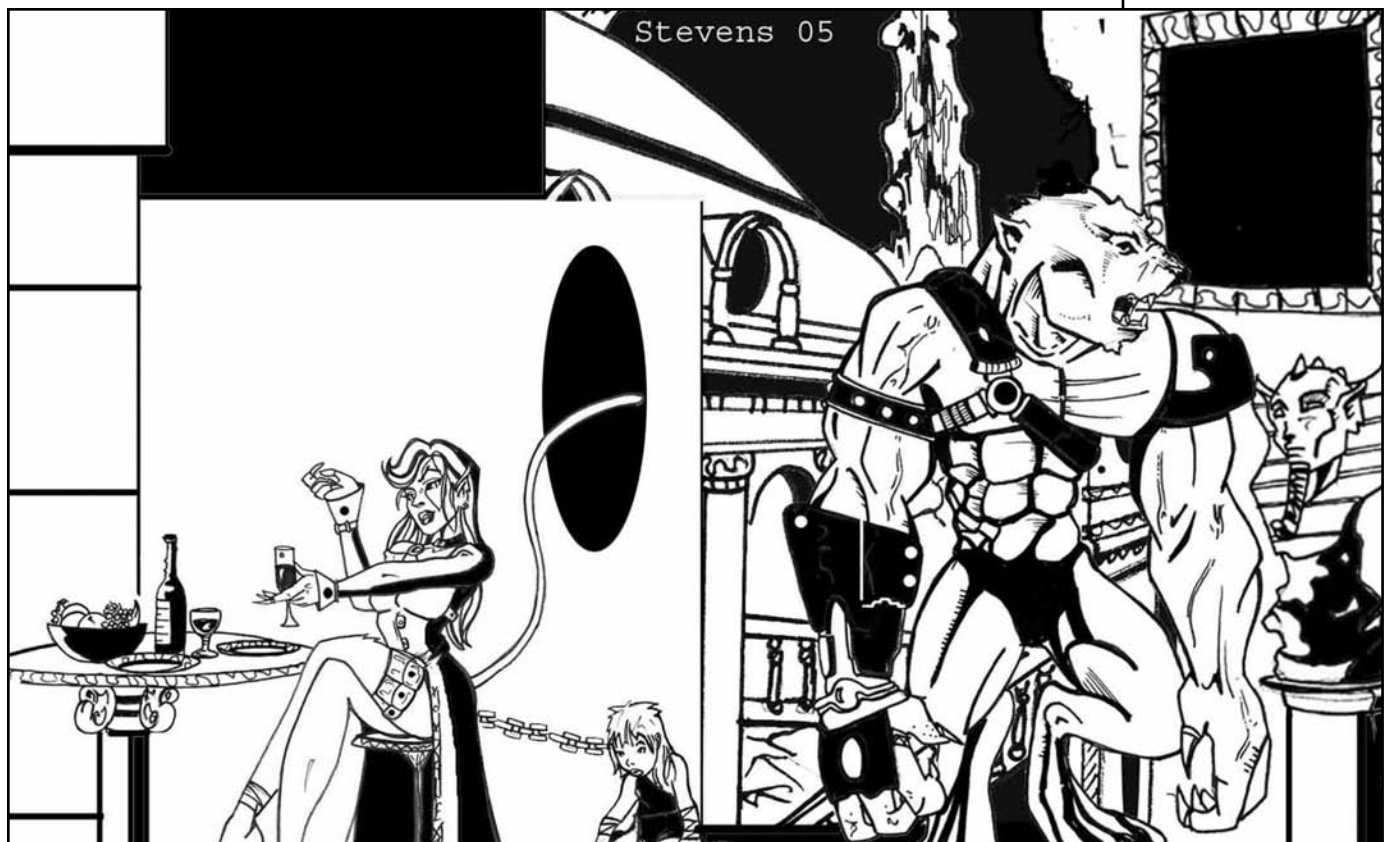
heroes. The rest of Moreau's forces fell into disarray (though a few beast-men fought hard against the heroes, and several were injured). Moreau was defeated and turned over to UNTIL, who incarcerated him for some time before VIPER freed him in exchange for his returning to its service in its superhuman-creation program.

The New Knights had to decide what to do with Moreau's beast-men. Given their strange appearances and general lack of sophistication, it was clear that bringing them back to human society would be difficult at best. Further, Clansman was concerned that the beast-men would be targets for anyone desiring to duplicate Moreau's work. After some debate, the New Knights agreed to let the beast-men continue to live in the village they had built around Moreau's lab (after, of course, the heroes removed the dangerous devices). The heroes left the medical facilities and supplies intact, since many of the beast-men needed them to live. Silverback taught Sister Armadillo basic medical skills, and she in turn trained several other beast-men.

The beast-men held a vote and elected Silverback as their leader. But he had decided to enter the outside world and live among men, so he declined and instead suggested Father Elk, whom the beast-men considered to be thoughtful and brave. Elk has held the post of Mayor of Beast Mountain ever since.

GORNJ ZVER TODAY

At first the village struggled to become self-sufficient, but eventually the beast-men found ways to support themselves with their gardens, gathering nuts and berries, and fishing in the plentiful nearby streams. All seemed well until the summer of 1986, when a small group of hunters from the nearest



human village, a small hamlet called Bohdanselo, shot Brother Impala as he grazed in the woods. The other animals, interpreting this as an attack, pursued and captured the terrified hunters, bringing them to Father Elk for judgment. Elk negotiated a deal with them: in exchange for sparing their lives, the villagers of Bohdanselo would protect Gornyj Zver from the outside world, claiming the entire forest as their hunting grounds and keeping government officials and loggers from exploring the area. The villagers agreed, and over the last eighteen years the two communities have grown quite fond of each other, occasionally visiting for holiday feasts. The two mayors, Father Elk and Mykola Moroz, have become particularly close friends in the last decade.

The future of the village is unfortunately in some doubt these days. Apart from Silverback, several other beast-men have left the village to make their way in the world, most notably Ram (see above), Snake (a supervillain operating in Los Angeles), and Lynx (who's become a singing sensation in Japan). So far none of these expatriates have revealed their true origins to the world; all are believed to be mutants, mutates, or other types of superhumans. Nevertheless, the success they've had in the outside world makes younger and more adventurous beast-men consider leaving Gornyj Zver to seek their fortunes among Humanity.

Father Elk is very concerned about the continuity of the town, especially because few new children are born. Most of the beast-men are infertile, so pregnancies are both rare and difficult.

BEAST-MAN PACKAGE DEAL

This Package Deal represents the typical abilities of the beast-men of Gornyj Zver (apply it to a standard Human character sheet, not to an animal's character sheet from *The HERO System Bestiary*). The options allow you to customize it for various specific types of animals.

Cost	Power
5	+5 STR
9	+3 DEX
6	+3 CON
4	+2 BODY
15	<i>Claws, Horns, Antlers, Or The Like:</i> HKA 1d6 (2d6 with STR)
2	<i>Animalistic Skin:</i> Damage Resistance (2 PD/2 ED)
6	<i>Animalistic Senses:</i> +2 PER with all Sense Groups

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 47

Optional Abilities

Cost	Power
6	<i>Heavy:</i> Knockback Resistance -3"
2	<i>Keen Nose:</i> +1 PER with Smell/Taste Group
10	<i>Keen Nose:</i> Tracking for Smell/Taste Group
+10	<i>Larger Claws/Horns/Antlers:</i> Increase to HKA 1½d6
8	<i>Swift Runner:</i> Running +4"
4	<i>Swift Swimmer:</i> Swimming +4"
5	<i>Tail:</i> Extra Limb (1), Inherent (+¼) (6 Active Points); Limited Manipulation (-¼)
12	<i>Tougher Skin:</i> Armor (4 PD/4 ED)
8	<i>Wings:</i> Flight 6" (12 Active Points); Restrained (-½)

Unless the beast-men find some way to increase the birth rate, the village will die away over the next few decades. And the continuing political unrest in the Ukraine worries beast-men who pay attention to such matters; should hostilities break out, they fear the government might discover their existence, and either take them captive or press them into military service.

THE VILLAGE

Gornyj Zver sits among rolling, heavily wooded hills in the Central Beskides mountain range, at a height of about 1800 meters above sea level. The Beskides themselves are a low but wide mountain range at the base of the Carpathians, but despite being overshadowed in height they're still very difficult to travel through thanks to steep grades and thick forests of oak, maple, and ash.

The village occupies a fairly level clearing about two miles across on the southeastern face of one of the Beskides, with daunting drop-offs in three directions. There are several gardens in the area, but mostly the terrain consists of beautiful rolling fields alive with red poppies and sunflowers, bounded on all sides by thickly-forested slopes. The earth is rich and black, and everywhere one sees white geese and ducks flying back and forth from the nearby ponds. Warm winds from the Mediterranean keep the temperature moderate, though snow is not uncommon in January and February.

The village consists of about thirty buildings, many of them little more than small wooden huts, with a central "plaza" of open green space about a hundred feet on a side. The plaza includes a lovely small garden of colorful wildflowers and a small raised platform for anyone who wants to address the assembled beast-men. The largest buildings include Father Elk's home (which serves as the "mayor's office"), the town store, and Moreau's old lab.

Moreau's laboratory has largely become a simple country hospital over the last twenty years. The tables where Moreau once strapped down the victims of his horrific experiments have been replaced with comfortable chairs and benches, most of them fashioned by Brother Beaver. The freezer in the back now stores food.

In addition to the buildings, tunnels honeycomb the entire area, since many of the beast-men prefer to living underground. Many of these tunnels have been carved by Sister Mole, who rarely shows her face in the sunlight but has provided many of the villagers with happy, comfortable warrens.

There is a small pond near the western edge of the clearing; it's fed by streams that originate farther up the mountain. Cold and clear, these streams provide both fresh drinking water for the villagers and a place to swim and fish. Several of the villagers keep their homes near the pond; Brother Beaver and his wife Sister Nutria live in a dam of mud and wood on the banks of one of the feeder streams.

FATHER ELK				
Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
28	STR	18	15-	Lift 1,200 kg; 5½d6 [2]
14	DEX	12	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
22	CON	24	13-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll 12-
15	EGO	10	12-	ECV: 5
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
10	COM	0	11-	
8	PD	2		Total: 8 PD (2 rPD)
5	ED	1		Total: 5 ED (2 rED)
4	SPD	16		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
10	REC	0		
44	END	0		
40	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 106
Movement:		Running:	6"/12"	
		Leaping:	5"/10"	
Cost	Powers		END	
20	<i>Antlers:</i> HKA 1½d6 (3d6+1 w/STR); Concentration (½ DCV; -¼)		2	
2	<i>Tough:</i> Damage Resistance (2 PD/2 ED)		0	
6	<i>Heavy:</i> Knockback Resistance -3"		0	
6	<i>Delicate Senses:</i> +2 PER with all Sense Groups		0	
Perks				
2	Fringe Benefit: Ruler of Beast Mountain			
Skills				
10	+2 HTH			
3	Bureaucratics 13-			
3	Concealment 12-			
3	AK: Beast Mountain 12-			
3	KS: Moreau's Creations 12-			
1	Language: Russian (basic conversation; Beast-Russian is Native)			
3	Oratory 13-			
3	Tactics 12-			
3	Tracking 12-			
Total Powers & Skills Cost: 68				
Total Cost: 174				
200+ Disadvantages				
15	Psychological Limitation: Protective Of His People And Their Privacy (Common, Strong)			
Total Disadvantage Points: 215				

Background/History: Like the other denizens of Beast Mountain, Father Elk is the creation of the fiendish scientist Phillippe Moreau (see above). Though he appears to be physically older than most of the beast-men, he was actually one of the last created before Moreau's work ended in 1985. Moreau had been unable to duplicate the advanced intelligence he'd inadvertently given Dr. Silverback, and was concerned by his assistant's rather wayward and questioning nature, so he concentrated on making the rest of his creations intelligent enough to follow orders without being so brilliant that they posed a potential threat to his own leadership. In Elk, he thought he had found a happy medium — the creature was bright, but certainly no genius. Moreau assigned Elk to lead his cadre of criminals, and they performed several robberies in Kiev without being captured (as described above).

When the cadre's mission to London went awry, leading the New Knights back to the secret mountain lab, Elk fought them on behalf of Moreau out of an almost religious fear of his creator. He was defeated by the Clansman, and when he saw Moreau beaten by a combined force of British and Soviet heroes, he realized his "master" was not nearly as all-powerful as he claimed. When the Knights agreed to allow the beast-men to live in privacy, Elk requested that Silverback remain with them as the town's leader. But Silverback had been seized with the desire to see the outside world firsthand, and he in turn suggested that Elk himself was best-suited for the job. The other beast-men supported that decision, and Elk has led the village as a sort of mayor ever since. It was Elk who first made contact with the villagers of Bohdanselo, and he remains close friends with their own mayor, Mykola Moroz — they play chess every Friday night.

Personality/Motivation: Father Elk has grown into the job of leading the beast-men with aplomb. He's friendly, honest, and open, and he respects the wide differences in personality between the citizens without allowing the village to collapse into chaos. It certainly helps that he has such a forceful presence; though he's no longer in the fighting trim he was nearly twenty years ago, there are few in the village who would want to feel the thrust of those imposing antlers. He's cautious and careful, and prone to taking a long time to consider his decisions.

Quote: "Welcome to our little village, stranger. I believe you mean us no harm; do not prove me mistaken in my faith."

Powers/Tactics: Father Elk has slowed a step or two as he's aged, but he's still an imposing physical specimen. His rack of antlers is a dangerous weapon; the *Concentration* Limitation signifies that actually using them in battle is fairly complicated (since they're attached high on his head) — bringing them to bear requires him to hold his head in awkward positions. If a fight breaks out,

he's at the front of Beast Mountain's forces; the village may have more skilled fighters (though not many), but none braver or more determined.

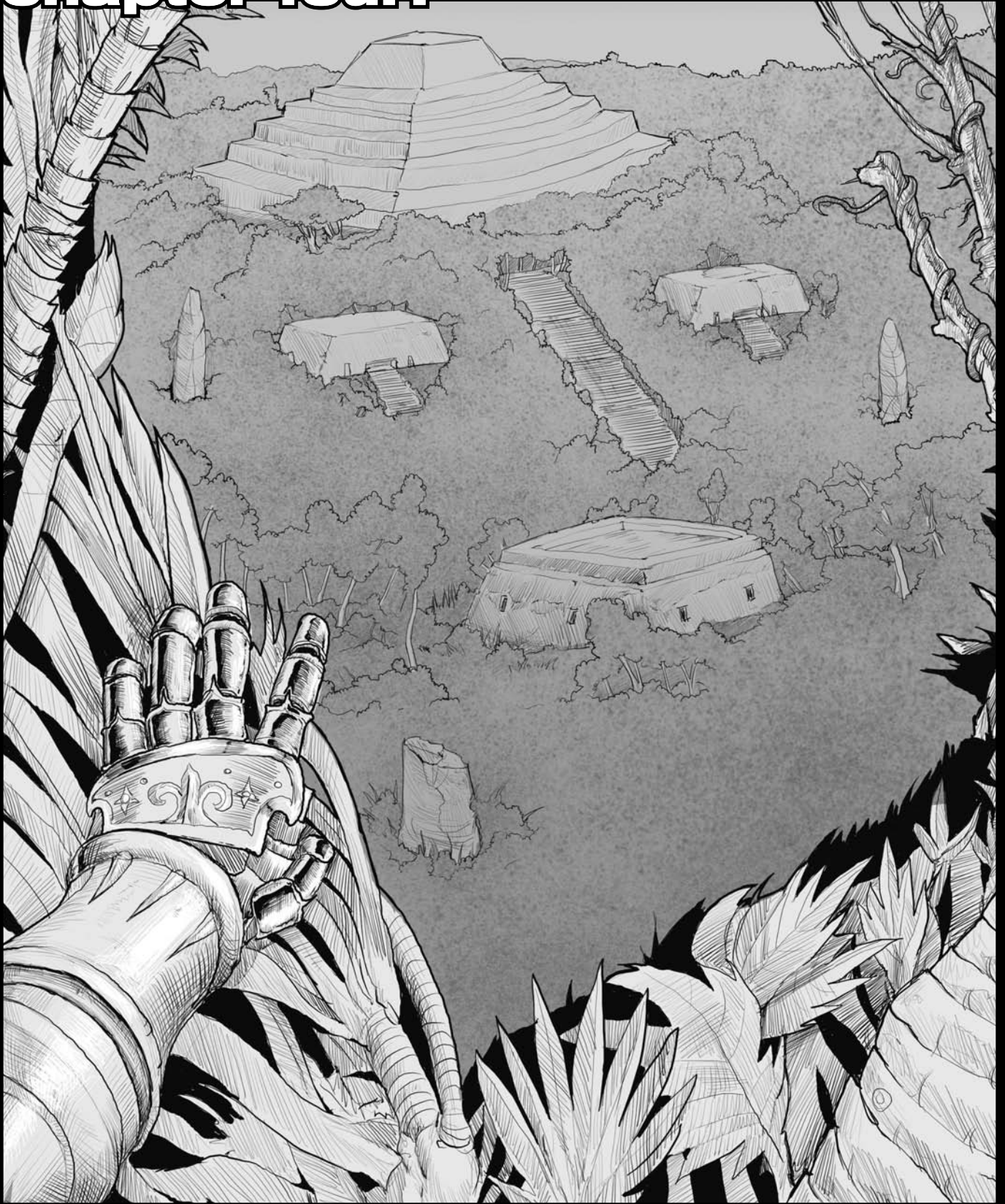
Campaign Use: Father Elk is the beast-man the PCs are likely to interact with the most if they visit Beast Mountain; he speaks for his people, represents Gornyj Zver to the outside world when necessary, and has more experience interacting with humans than most of the other beast-men combined. When roleplaying him, emphasize the way he considers everything carefully and makes decisions slowly — he's not a bureaucrat who loves delay for its own sake, but neither is he a head-strong, wayward young person.

To make Father Elk tougher, remove the *Concentration* Limitation from his attack and give him Running +4". To weaken him, reduce his Antlers to 1d6+1, and his STR and CON by 2-4 points each.

Father Elk does not Hunt people. He's got a village to look after.

Appearance: Father Elk is a human/elk hybrid, standing 6'4"; his dozen-point rack of antlers adds nearly another three feet to his overall height. His pelt is brown, his eyes large and wise-looking, and his feet cloven. He generally wears human clothes, favoring simple peasant-style work shirts and pants with suspenders; he rarely wears shoes.

chapter four:



GAMEMASTERING HIDDEN LANDS

HIDDEN LANDS CAMPAIGNING



When considering how to use *Hidden Lands*, you basically have three choices: you can incorporate them into an existing *Champions* campaign; run a Hidden Lands-based *Champions* campaign; or use them in some other genre altogether.

Using Hidden Lands In Existing Campaigns

For most *Champions* GMs, the most useful approach is to incorporate the Hidden Lands into an existing campaign. Fortunately, this tends to be extremely easy because of the nature of the subject: they're *hidden* lands. Creating a brand-new master villain or villainous organization and dropping it into your campaign with no warning may strain the players' credibility a little, but you don't have that problem with hidden lands. Their defining feature is that they have hidden themselves from the rest of the world. Therefore it makes dramatic sense that no one would have heard of them until they choose to reveal themselves — or until the events of the campaign reveal them whether they want that or not.

In fact, you can use a particular Hidden Land, or perhaps two, as the focus of a major story arc in which they're introduced into your campaign. For example, instead of having the Fabulous Five "discover" Arcadia in 1966 when tricked by the Lemurians, your PCs can go through the same thing today. First the Lemurians reveal themselves by attacking the surface world, then they lure the PCs into assaulting Arcadia. The PCs find themselves drawn into a secret conflict they knew nothing about until now, and how they deal with it can lead to some great roleplaying and exciting adventure.

Hidden Lands Campaigns

Some GMs may find the concept of an all-Hidden Lands campaign appealing. Instead of playing typical superheroes teaming up to fight typical supervillains, the PCs are all Emphyreans or all Atlanteans.

ATLANTEAN CAMPAIGNS

As Atlanteans, the PCs have to deal with barbarian attacks, interaction with the surface world, surface supervillains who try to conquer or loot Atlantis, and Atlantean villains who want to do the same thing (or who attack the surface world for some reason). To keep the campaign from becoming too predictable and stale, you may want to expand the undersea civilizations of your

campaign. Atlantis and Lemuria fight each other frequently, but besides Atlantis there are several other city-states of Atlanteans who left the city (for whatever reason) to found their own subsurface realms in other parts of the ocean. That gives you a way to incorporate more politics, rivalries, and wars than you can with just one undersea city.

Atlantean *Champions* characters are typically built as Standard Superheroic characters (200 Base Points + 150 Disadvantage Points), but get the Atlantean Package Deal *in addition to* those points.

EMPHYREAN CAMPAIGNS

Emphyrean campaigns are much broader in scope, since the average Emphyrean is much more powerful than the average Atlantean (even the average Atlantean superhero). While many of their adventures will involve fighting Lemuria (in one way or another), their abilities let them do many other things. For example, you could run a more typical *Champions* game where the PCs are Emphyreans living among Humans, fighting crime as superheroes while interacting with their "cousins" and maintaining the facade. Another possibility is a *Galactic Champions* campaign in which the PCs go out into space to seek the Ancients and the Progenitors. That would even make for a fun short-term campaign with a defined ending point as a break from your usual game.

Hidden Lands In Other Genres

Although *Hidden Lands* is written for *Champions*, you can easily adapt it to many other genres.

DARK CHAMPIONS

As presented in this book, the Hidden Lands have no real connection to the modern-day action-adventure genre — they're too fantastical. However, you can "tweak" them slightly to create an interesting framework for certain types of Monster Hunter or Military Action campaigns. For example, if the Emphyreans aren't superpowered, but just a group of humans that were genetically altered by aliens at some point in the past, what happens when the world's governments learn about them? Is it possible for Humans to comprehend the alien technology used to maintain Arcadia? If so, what sort of "cold war" develops among the world's great powers for access to (or control over) the Emphyreans and their devices?

Similarly, maybe the Lemurians are lurking among Humanity, trying to take it over. The PCs are professional monster hunters. They start out



opposing garden-variety werewolves, vampires, and haunts, but eventually get involved in a conflict with the shapeshifting, reptilian Lemurians who've been manipulating Humanity from behind the scenes for decades, if not centuries. They have to find ways to detect them, stop their plots, and eventually plan a counterattack that will end the Lemurian threat forever.

FANTASY HERO

Many Fantasy campaigns feature isolated or secret civilizations of great power. *Hidden Lands* can fit easily into such settings with a few changes to make them more appropriate for Fantasy. For example, in a High Fantasy campaign, perhaps the Emphyreans are a race of elves with mighty powers of wizardry who have chosen to live in isolation to further their studies and prevent people from exploiting their power. Or they could be a group of demigods cursed to live apart and in secret for some great sin they once committed. Similarly, you can transform the Lemurians into a race of evil dwarves or gnomes who live deep underground and practice a special type of mechano-magic and dark alchemy unlike anything seen on the surface.

PULP HERO, VICTORIAN HERO

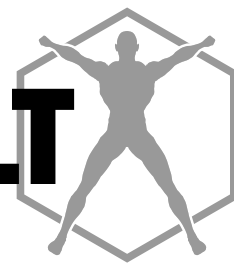
Both the Pulp and Victorian adventure genres feature "lost civilizations" and races as a major genre element, so using *Hidden Lands* in them is no problem — though again, you have to adapt them to fit the genre. Most Pulp and Victorian campaigns don't support adventuring in, much less living in, underwater or arctic environments very well. Instead, move the Emphyreans to the heart of darkest Africa (or South America) and replace

their powers with weird science gadgetry. Move the Lemurians to an undiscovered Pacific Island where they've evolved into an eerie race of people who build strange devices and command voodoo-like powers. Atlantis you can keep mostly as-is for a one-shot adventure involving a special submarine — just remove the superhuman Atlanteans and the wizardry, since living underwater is wondrous enough for Pulp!

STAR HERO

In a *Star Hero* campaign, you can easily transform any of the *Hidden Lands* to its own *Hidden Planet*. The PCs stumble across this strange, new world while exploring the Galaxy, fleeing from the authorities, looking for new trade routes, or trying to find a way to outflank the enemy fleet. After dealing with the usual "first contact" issues, they have to deal with the threat this new species poses, and/or find ways to exploit their discovery for personal or professional gain. For example, suppose the PCs in a military campaign encounter the Emphyreans (who are an ancient, psionically- and telekinetically-gifted species, rather than genetically-created superhumans). First they have to deal with the suspicion and paranoia of the aggressively isolationist aliens, then after making friends with them find a way to get them to use their powers to help with the coming military conflict.

THE GM'S VAULT



This section contains additional or secret information about the Hidden Lands of the Champions Universe that's for the GM's eyes only. *If you're a playing in, or plan to play in, a Champions campaign featuring any of the Hidden Lands, don't read this section!*

If the GM's Vault doesn't comment on some part of the main text, it's usually safe to take what's written there as accurate. Of course, you're free (and even encouraged) to change anything in this book to suit your own preferences or campaign.

CHAPTER ONE: ATLANTIS

PAGE 22 — ATLANTIAN MAGIC

Atlantean tales and histories generally exaggerate the extent of Nereus's magic powers — not deliberately, but out of genuine ignorance regarding the extent to which Atlantean magic powers faded over the centuries. Those who knew wizardry carefully hid from the rest of the Atlanteans how much their powers ebbed as the ambient magic in the world likewise diminished. (In some cases, they explained that the old lore was “lost,” implying that some of the secrets might be found in surface realms.) For example, Nereus's “summoning” of the sea serpent involved what little magic he could truly muster, combined with a partly-trained serpent he had previously befriended using certain hypnotic arts. After summer 1938, when the level of ambient magic rises enough to permit superhumans to exist, Nereus and other powerful Atlantean wizards “rediscovered” abilities long lost.

PAGE 25 — QUEEN MARA

Here are three plot seeds for Queen Mara:

The PCs receive a message from Mara, asking that they come to Atlantis immediately to aid her against a desperate menace. (This will undoubtedly seem even stranger if they've never met her before....) But when they get there, she claims she never sent the message and that everything's fine. What's going on?

A mysterious malady seems to be weakening all Atlanteans and their magic, up to and including Queen Mara. With no one else to turn to, she asks the PCs to find the source of the problem and stop it. Unless they act quickly, Atlantis may die....

After they help Atlantis in some fashion, Queen Mara gives the PCs a “pet” as a gift: a special type of sea-serpent that's about the size of a horse, has the loyalty of a dog, and can breathe air for short periods of time. Unfortunately, keeping the thing under control proves to be a major chore, even for superheroes! How can the heroes ask the Queen to take her gift back without causing great offense?

PAGE 27 — PRINCE MARUS

Here are three plot seeds for Prince Marus:

Without warning, Marus up and quits the Sentinels. Afraid they've offended him in some way, and not wanting to make the situation worse by chasing after him, the Sentinels ask the PCs to approach him and find out what's wrong.

Queen Mara falls ill, and her advisors, fearing she's in her last days, call Marus home. He soon decides her illness is not natural, but he lacks the ability to properly investigate the situation... and he can't afford to spend a lot of time away from the palace right now anyway. He asks the PCs to look into the matter for him.

While patrolling (or visiting) New York City, the PCs come upon Marus. He's lying in a gutter, badly beaten, and apparently in a coma. He's formally dressed, as if he recently spoke at the U.N. or attended a reception. What happened to him?

PAGE 29 — ATLANTEAN ADVERSARIES

GUNDHAR				
Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
65	STR	55	22-	Lift 200 tons; 13d6 [6]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
35	CON	50	16-	
28	BODY	36	15-	
11	INT	1	11-	PER Roll 11-
15	EGO	10	12-	ECV: 5
23	PRE	13	14-	PRE Attack: 4½d6
8	COM	-1	11-	
24	PD	11		Total: 24 PD (15 rPD)
18	ED	11		Total: 18 ED (15 rED)
4	SPD	12		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
20	REC	0		
70	END	0		
79	STUN	0	Total Characteristics Cost: 222	
Movement:		Running:	6"/12"	
		Leaping:	13"/26"	
		Swimming:	10"/40"	
Cost	Powers			END
25	Sword Of His Ancestors: HKA 2½d6 (5d6+1 w/STR), +1 Increased STUN Multiplier (+¼); OAF (-1)			5
15	Barbarian Toughness: Damage Resistance (15 PD/15 ED)			0
30	Barbarian Toughness: Physical Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50%			0
5	Nictating Membrane: Sight Group Flash Defense (5 points)			0
4	Atlantean Physiology: Life Support (Safe Environments: High Pressure, Intense Cold; Longevity: age at half normal rate)			
13	Speed Of The Shark: Swimming +8" (10" total), x4 Noncombat			1
5	Dark-Adapted Eyes: Nightvision			0
25	Starfish Healing: Healing 3d6 (Regeneration; 3 BODY per Turn), Can Heal Limbs, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½); Extra Time (1 Turn; -1¼), Self Only (-½)			0
Perks				
5	Fringe Benefit: Member of the Aristocracy/Higher Nobility			
3	Reputation: Fearsome Warrior (among Atlanteans) 11-, +3/+3d6			
Talents				
3	Aquatic Movement: Environmental Movement (no penalties while in water)			
Skills				
15	+3 HTH			
2	Animal Handler (Aquatic Animals) 14-			
3	Fast Draw (Common Melee Weapons) 13-			
3	High Society 14-			
3	Interrogation 14-			
4	AK: The Southern Reaches 13-			
3	KS: Tribes Of The Southern Reaches 12-			
1	Language: Atlantean (basic conversation; Gorro is Native)			
2	Navigation (Marine) 11-			

- 3 Oratory 14-
- 2 PS: Chieftain 11-
- 3 Stealth 13-
- 2 Survival (Marine) 11-
- 3 Tactics 11-
- 3 Tracking 11-
- 3 Trading 14-
- 2 WF: Common Melee Weapons

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 190**Total Cost: 412****200+ Disadvantages**

- 15 Dependence: must dowse or immerse self in water once per Hour or suffer 3d6 damage (Very Common)
- 15 Enraged: when someone uses dishonorable behavior against him in battle (Common), go 11-, recover 14-
- 10 Enraged: when he feels patronized or insulted (Common), go 8-, recover 14-
- 10 Hunted: Other Less-Powerful Chieftains 8- (Less Pow, PC has a Public ID or is otherwise very easy to find, Harshly Punish)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Loves To Fight (Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Protective Of His Position And Status (Common, Strong)
- 5 Reputation: most dangerous of the barbarian war chiefs, 11- (Small Group)
- 5 Rivalry: Professional (with other chieftains; Rivals are Less Powerful, Seek to Harm or Kill Rival, Rivals Aware of Rivalry)
- 122 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 412

Background/History: Gundhar is the chief of Clan Krosk, one of the largest and most-powerful of the Atlantean barbarian tribes. The Krosk, whose homelands are several hundred miles northeast of Atlantis, date their own history all the way back to the Cataclysm. They claim their forefathers were among the original Atlanteans, but chose not to live in the rebuilt city, preferring to explore the great open ocean their god provided for them. The Krosk currently number somewhere over a thousand members.

Gundhar is about fifty years old and has been chief since the death of his father Godolus about a decade ago. While the Krosk pride themselves on their great physical strength and skill in battle (which they have traditionally demonstrated via occasional raids on Atlantis), Gundhar is phenomenally strong even by their standards (or the standards of the Superhuman World, for that matter).

The Krosk were once fierce rivals of the Gorro, who live a few hundred miles to the south of their own caves. Godolus fought many battles against their chief Andrin and respected him greatly as an opponent. When Queen Mara of Atlantis married Andrin's son Andros, Godolus called an end to the Krosk's periodic raids on Atlantis out of respect for the family. The Gorro remain faithful to Queen Mara despite the death of Andros, but the Krosk have occasionally returned to their predatory ways.

**GUNDHAR
PLOT SEEDS**

Someone has stolen Gundhar's sword! All signs point to a thief from the surface, but Gundhar can't track him down now — important matters of state are taking up all of his time. He asks the PCs (whom he's previously met and respects, or has heard good things about from Mara or Marus) to help him.

A surface scientist sends Gundhar a message offering to "improve him" so he can breathe and survive out of the water. The offer intrigues Gundhar... but little does he know that if he accepts, he'll find himself in debt to the master villain Teleios!

Gundhar receives word that he's being openly mocked and made fun of in Queen Mara's court. Enraged, he plans an attack on the city. It's not true — he's being manipulated by a crafty Gorro who wants to take over all the tribes himself — but Gundhar won't find that out in time to prevent war. It's up to the PCs to figure out what's going on (perhaps after Marus requests their help).

Personality/Motivation: Gundhar has been raised since childhood to be the chief of a band of warriors, and has grown into the job admirably. He's brave, forthright, and respectful of tradition. He enjoys his life of privilege as chief and warrior among his people, and will do nearly anything to retain that power or increase his own standing among the other tribes. However, he won't betray his own sense of honor; he's a blunt, straightforward Atlantean who dislikes subterfuge, sneakiness, and excessive backroom dealings.

Like most of his people, Gundhar thinks "city folk" are weak, have no real appreciation for life and freedom, and unfairly hoard the best farmlands and mines... but they're still distant relatives and followers of the same faith. He allows his warriors to make the occasional raid to keep their spirits high and axes and wits sharp, but holds no particular animus against Mara, whom he generally respects as a soldier despite her being "civilized."

Quote: "Come, my warriors! Every one of you is worth a dozen of those Atlantean weaklings!"

Powers/Tactics:

Gundhar's semi-divine heritage has made him incredibly strong — he's a match for Marus in pure strength — and given him a remarkable ability to heal from injury. He's a swift swimmer, but lacks Atlan's Gift and therefore can only survive out of the water for as long as he can hold his breath (which is quite a long time).

Gundhar relies on his great strength in battle. He's generally dismissive of tricks and stratagems unless absolutely necessary — he'd rather just charge, smash into the enemy, and overwhelm them. However, he's surprisingly clever and understands basic tactics quite well; anyone who dismisses him as a pigheaded barbarian is in for a surprise.

Campaign Use: Now that Godolus, Andrin, and Andros are all dead, Gundhar is probably the most powerful and respected of the various barbarian tribal chiefs. The idea of unifying the tribes into a force strong enough to actually threaten and rival Atlantis has certainly crossed his mind. Should any likely villain decide a small army of barbarians would suit his purposes, Gundhar would be the most obvious choice of

an ally. But though it's possible to turn Gundhar's head with promises of power and glory on the battlefield, he's not nearly as dumb as he acts, and would-be masterminds underestimate him at their peril. So do villains who act "dishonorably"; Gundhar will soon turn his back on an ally who doesn't live up to his personal standards for proper behavior.

To make Gundhar tougher and more versatile, give him Atlan's Gift so he can bedevil your PCs on land. You can also make him stronger and increase his defenses if necessary. To weaken him, whittle down his STR and CON to more appropriate levels, and get rid of his Damage Reduction and/or Regeneration.

Gundhar generally doesn't Hunt anyone; he's got his hands full ruling his clan. But he definitely knows how to keep a grudge — characters who make him look foolish or badly defeat him will be

his first targets when next he and the PCs meet.

Appearance: Gundhar is an enormous Atlantean male, seven feet tall with green skin, sharp features, and long white hair he ties in a pony tail. He wears a sharkskin tunic and carries an enormous sword with several nasty-looking flanges and extra barbs along the blade.



MURK				
Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
60	STR	50	21-	Lift 100 tons; 12d6 [4]
26	DEX	48	14-	OCV: 9/DCV: 9
30	CON	40	15-	
25	BODY	30	14-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll 13-
25	EGO	30	14-	ECV: 8
35	PRE	25	16-	PRE Attack: 7d6
0	COM	-5	9-	
25	PD	13		Total: 25 PD (20 rPD)
25	ED	19		Total: 25 ED (16 rED)
7	SPD	34		Phases: 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12
14	REC	0		
60	END	0		
70	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 292

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
 Leaping: 12"/24"
 Swimming: 10"/40"

Cost Powers END

- 45 *Murkstuff Manipulation:* Elemental Control, 90-point powers
- 45 1) *Murkstuff Clouds:* Darkness to Sight, Hearing, and Smell/Taste Groups 5" radius (5" Any Area; +0), Personal Immunity (+¼), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) 3
- 45 2) *Terrors Of The Deep Darkness:* Drain PRE 4d6, Area Of Effect (5" Any Area; +1), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) 4
- 75 3) *Solid Darkness:* Energy Blast 12d6, Armor Piercing (+½), Personal Immunity (+¼), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) 5
- 75 4) *Bonds Of Murk:* Entangle 8d6, 8 DEF, Personal Immunity (+¼), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) 4
- 45 5) *Walls Of Solid Darkness:* Force Wall (11 PD/11 ED; 5" long and 3" tall), Opaque (Normal Sight), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) 3
- 46 6) *The Abyss Gazes Also:* Darkness to Sight, Hearing, and Smell/Taste Groups 1" radius, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼), Personal Immunity (+¼) **plus** Mental Illusions 15d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); Linked (-¼), No Conscious Control (only confronts target with his own personal fears, weaknesses, and failings; -1) 4
- 20 *Sea Creature Control:* Elemental Control, 40-point powers
- 20 1) *Speak With Sea Creatures:* Telepathy 8d6 (Animal class of minds); Concentration (0 DCV throughout use; -½), Aquatic Animals Only (-½)
- 28 2) *Control Sea Creatures:* Mind Control 10d6, Telepathic (+¼) (Animal class of minds); Aquatic Animals Only (-½)
- 60 3) *Telepathically Summon Sea Creatures:* Summon up to 16 sea creatures built on up to 300 points, Expanded Class (aquatic animals; +¼), Loyal (+½); Arrives Under Own Power (-½), Summoned Being Must Inhabit Locale (-½)

- 25 *Nasty Maw Of Teeth:* HKA 1½d6 (3d6+1 w/STR) 2
- 18 *Natural Toughness:* Damage Resistance (20 PD/16 ED) 0
- 60 *Natural Toughness:* Physical and Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50% 0
- 18 *Inhuman Physiology:* Life Support (Longevity: Immortal; Safe Environments: High Pressure, Intense Cold; Self-Contained Breathing) 0
- 13 *Swift Swimming:* Swimming +8" (10" total), x4 Noncombat 1
- 5 *Dark Sight:* Nightvision 0
- 5 *Two Extra Arms:* Extra Limbs (2) 0

Talents

- 20 *Gift Of Tongues:* Universal Translator 13-
- 3 *Aquatic Movement:* Environmental Movement (no penalties while in water)

Skills

- 32 +4 with All Combat
- 3 Breakfall 14-
- 3 AK: Ancient Atlantis 13-
- 3 CuK: Ancient Atlantis 13-
- 3 KS: Atlantean Mysticism 13-
- 3 Language: Atlantean (completely fluent; Ancient Atlantean is Native)
- 7 Power: Murk Manipulation 15-
- 3 Stealth 14-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 718

Total Cost: 1,010

200+ Disadvantages

- 20 Enraged: when treated disrespectfully by his lessers (Common), go 11-, recover 11-
- 10 Physical Limitation: Completely Unfamiliar With Modern History, Technology, And Culture (Frequently, Slightly Impairing)
- 25 Psychological Limitation: Lives To Destroy And Corrupt (Very Common, Total)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Hates Old Atlantis, Vondarien, And Any Who Venerate Him (Uncommon, Total)
- 10 Vulnerability: 2 x STUN from Divine Magic (Uncommon)
- 10 Vulnerability: 2 x BODY from Divine Magic (Uncommon)
- 10 Vulnerability: 2 x Effect from Divine Magic powers that don't cause STUN/BODY damage (Uncommon)
- 710 Experience Points

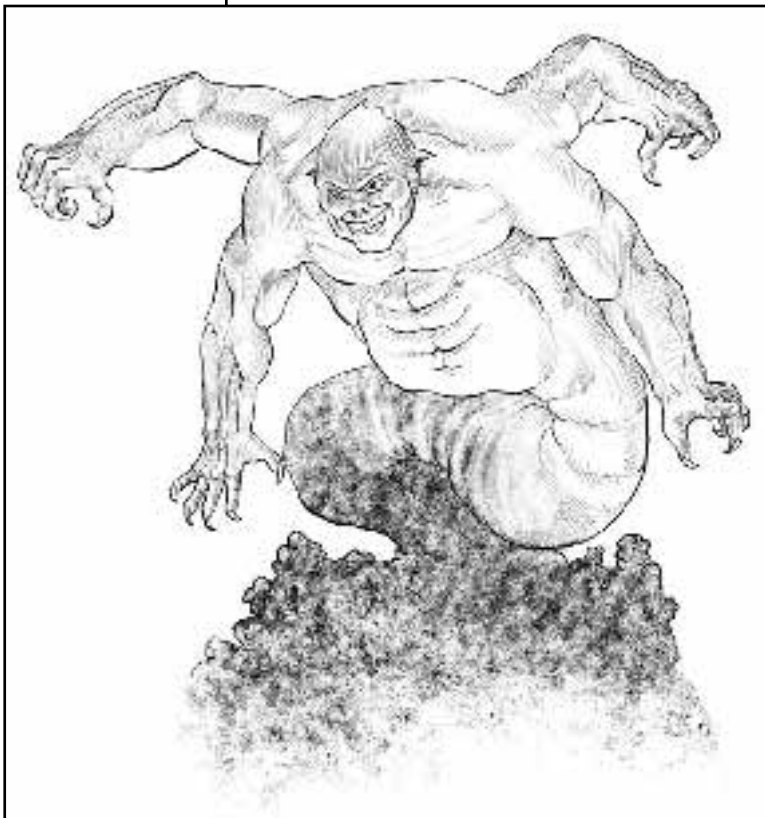
Total Disadvantage Points: 1,010

Background/History: It was the last days of the Age of Atlantis, though no one knew that at the time. Power was there for the taking if one had the wits and skill to master the right spells and rituals. Horgan the Dark had wits and skill aplenty, and had mastered many powerful magics, becoming a warlord ruling one of the small islands that dotted the seas between Atlantis and the mainland. But he desired more. He wanted the kind of power that so far had been reserved for Vondarien and the other wizard-kings, who were known and feared across

the world and worshipped as gods. That worship was rightfully Horgan's, and he intended to seize it.

When another lordling, Cormar the Mighty, sent ambassadors to Horgan's island seeking an alliance, and telling him of the other lands that had already joined his cause against Vondarien, Horgan leapt at the chance. Unfortunately, the assault on the city of Atlantis did not go well. Atlantean warriors and wizardry slew Cormar and thousands of infantrymen, and scattered the remaining soldiers across the great central plain of the island. Cut off from their own ships and unable to return to their separate kingdoms, they were hunted like vermin. Atlantean soldiers chased them into the northern mountains, where the attacking kings hid like children. It was Horgan's most humiliating moment, and his hatred for Vondarien, who had brought him to this low, was an unquenchable flame.

When Dalsith, Cormar's son and a powerful mage in his own right, suggested the use of the dark summoning spells he had uncovered to access powers beyond those of the gods themselves, Horgan gave the plan his full support. He stood with the other mages, lending Dalsith his strength as he struggled with the cosmic energies that permeated the dark cave... until he suddenly realized the price Dalsith was planning to pay was his own soul, along with those of everyone else there. Horgan struggled to break free of the ritual, exhausting his own arcane might, and then the doors of perception swung wide and Horgan caught a glimpse of what lay beyond: a starfield where bejeweled demonic spiders wove shimmering webs between eyes the size of worlds. He promptly went mad and blacked out.



Unbeknownst to Dalsith, who became Sharna-Gorak the Destroyer with the power he stole from his erstwhile allies, Horgan the Dark did not die in that cave along with the others. Instead, he lay in a coma, silent and unmoving, even as Atlantis sank into the sea and the cave was overwhelmed by the waters. There he sleeps today, transformed by the dark spells that befoul the very air around him. But he is no longer Horgan, after thirty thousand years of sleep. He is the Murk, a living personification of darkness and the abyss. And when he wakes, he will spread darkness throughout both sea and land.

Personality/Motivation: Extended exposure to Edomic magics has twisted the Murk into the personification of evil and darkness, a predator who thrives on terror and destruction. His primary interest is sadistic cruelty and the resultant fear spread in his wake. Deep inside, the part of him that was once Horgan the Dark still seethes with hatred for both his betrayer Dalsith and his rival Vondarien, and anything that reminds him of either is likely to provoke his rage.

Quote: “The Darkness I bring will consume you all!”

Powers/Tactics: The Murk's primary powers involve the creation and manipulation of various forms of mystical energy, all of which manifest as fields of inky blackness. The murkstuff is almost liquid in form, but extremely solid and resistant if he wants it to be. By its very nature, the strange, living darkness evokes apprehension and fear in mortals — effects the Murk can choose to focus on and increase. His most insidious attack is to capture someone within a field of his darkness, which then seems to manifest illusionary creations drawn from the pits of the target's fears.

The Murk also can communicate with, control, and command the allegiance of certain types of animals, particularly predators that humans find frightening: sharks, barracudas, squid, whales (killer or otherwise), and so on. If he were to spend extensive time on land, at the GM's option his powers might expand to affect similar land beasts: rats, snakes, spiders, wolves, and the like.

Campaign Use: The Murk provides a way for you to get PCs without other connections to Atlantis involved in undersea adventures. All you have to do is free him from his millennia-long entombment and let him go on a rampage that only the PCs can stop. Perhaps Landers or Atlanteans accidentally release via him through an undersea mining project, or it's the result of supervillain activity (knowing or unknowing), or maybe an undersea earthquake sets him loose.

Whatever the provocation, the Murk promptly begins a reign of terror and destruction. He starts with the city of Atlantis and moves on to the nearest coastal city. Heroes with connections to the UN may first hear of the Murk's pending arrival when Atlantean refugees and survivors make it to New York to get help for their besieged city. Or they may be drawn into the battle when the waters off the coast of Campaign City become unaccountably deadly as sharks, barracudas, and squid begin

attacking swimmers and divers as though they had a sinister intelligence and purpose. All of this, of course, is prelude to the Murk's arrival on shore, when the seas turn black with murkstuff....

It's dramatically appropriate (though not mandatory) for the Atlanteans to hold the key to the Murk's eventual defeat. Perhaps deep in their libraries still resides a spell from ancient Atlantis that can neutralize his Edomic power or banish him from our dimension forever. Alternately, DEMON might take an interest in so powerful an Edomic being....

If the Murk isn't sufficiently powerful to menace your PCs, you can increase the threat he poses both by increasing his own power level and/or expanding the number of creatures he can Summon. An army of sharks and other oceangoing predators acting with singular purpose may be one thing, but the Murk might also draw upon mysterious and unique sea monsters (*The HERO System Bestiary* has plenty of possibilities). If he's already too tough, start by diminishing his Characteristics, and perhaps his Damage Reduction (you could even get rid of the latter entirely, if appropriate). Don't reduce his Murkstuff or sea creature powers unless you absolutely have to; they're more important to his concept than his STR or INT.

The Murk can't Hunt anyone... yet. Once he's awake he'll probably be too busy with rampages (and, eventually, scheming to conquer the world) to pursue a single hero, but if one made him angry enough he might. His Hunting style will consist mainly of periodic all-out attacks; he's not much for subtlety.

Appearance: The Murk is a hideous humanoid creature with four arms, no hair, brown mottled skin, and a serpentine body that seems to trail off into a dark cloud of inky mist. Sharp, jagged teeth line his gaping maw.

CHAPTER TWO: ARCADIA

PAGE 44 — THE PROGENITORS

The exact nature and goals of the Progenitors are left for you to define if you want. They may have manipulated other alien races in the Champions Universe, and perhaps equivalents to the Empyreans exist among species like the Ackálans or Varanyi. The Progenitors might be related to the Malvans (though they're apparently considerably older than even that venerable race) or the Mandaarians (though you'd have to explain why they don't share the "Mandaarian Doctrine" of noninterference). Or perhaps the Progenitors are a part of the "species" known as the Galaxars, similar to the Examiner but devoted to manipulating entire races instead of individuals. (See *Galactic Champions*, pages 120-23, for more information about the Galaxars.)

PAGE 46 — THE ELDER WORM

Although he does not suspect that Humans had outside help in overthrowing the Elder Worm, the Slug retains some memories of the events described in the main text. If he ever encounters one of the Empyreans who defeated him, or sees their powers in action, he might make destroying them a top priority.

PAGE 47 — OGURN

Ogurn did not die in his battle with Amlin. Instead his body drifted into an undersea cave, where he remained unconscious because of the force of Amlin's awesome mental attack. He healed, though his body retained scars from where his skin split as he grew to tremendous heights. Thousands of years later he awoke... but even his vast powers weren't enough to free him from the cave, which had been sealed over by geological action. He remains trapped there today, plotting what he'll do when he eventually wins free....

PAGE 49 — SILENCE

The Realm Of Silence is in fact a deadly trap many Empyreans have fallen into. Instead of finding himself in the heavenly dimension described by Shaderon, anyone who actually performs the ritual becomes trapped in a hellish dimension ruled by a hideous and elementally evil astral creature known as *Astroth*. Astroth keeps these astral Empyreans prisoner so he can torture them with nightmarish visions and feed on their pure psychic agony.

Nobody know about this because Shaderon (along with the other Empyreans who joined him early and returned briefly) has been duped by Astroth's powerful illusions — Astroth can manipulate the very fabric of his dimension's reality. When Shaderon enters the Realm of Silence, he experiences it as an uplifting, transcendent experience. This makes him a perfect lure for bringing others to Astroth. The illusion also makes Shaderon believe he occasionally encounters the other Empyreans who've joined him there, and that they're enjoying their new existence and have no interest in returning to the tedious, limited existence of Earth. Thus, he unwittingly provides Astroth with a regular supply of powerful Empyrean minds to feed on. The demonic creature hasn't fed so well in countless eons.

This situation gives you a "hook" with which to connect the PCs to the Empyreans (if you don't have one already). Somebody among the PCs receives a terrible nightmare, a psychic "distress signal," from one of the Empyreans trapped in Astroth's web. The nightmare not only describes the Empyreans' current situation in horrific detail, but lets "whoever receives this sending" know the location of the Empyrean's physical body. Assuming the PCs are true heroes, they'll find a way to set the situation right. They can experience the sights and sounds of Arcadia before confronting the Empyreans with the news that their relatives are being tortured. All efforts to awaken any of the bodies to confirm the story will fail, until they try to wake Shaderon (who can be recalled by any powerful

mentalist). He'll deny the story, insisting he saw the Emphyrean who sent the warning just a few days ago, and that he was in high spirits and perfect health. If the heroes find a way to convince him, he'll be horrified and determined to do whatever he has to (even sacrifice his life) to free the others. If necessary, Shaderon can teach the PCs the mental disciplines required to reach Silence, and even accompany them "to prove them wrong." Once they arrive, of course, they face an entire demonic realm filled with various monstrous servants of Astroth (who feed off his psychic leftovers like remoras), and then must battle the nightmarish creature itself, who's loathe to lose its favorite toys....

In the official Champions Universe setting, this never happens. The Emphyreans remain locked in Silence as of the thirty-first century.

PAGE 58 — ARCHON

Here are three plot seeds for Archon:

Archon receives word from one of his friends about what he's convinced is a Lemurian plot. He wants to deal with it, but King Hazor, who has yet to see any evidence that the Lemurians are involved, has forbidden him to do so. Unwilling to let the Lemurian bastards get away with it, he calls on the PCs for some help.

While visiting the campaign city in disguise, Archon sees a supercrime in progress, tries to stop it, and gets hit so hard he develops amnesia! A supervillain of your choice finds him, convinces him he's a famous supercriminal, and recruits him to help with a crimewave. The PCs have to stop "Dark Warrior," figure out who he really is, and restore his memory.

Archon and a PC strike up a friendship. Archon decides the PC's spouse/fiance(e)/significant other is a Lemurian spy. Wackiness ensues... and the *real* Lemurians try to take advantage of it.

PAGE 60 — ENFORCER ASHIMA

Here are three plot seeds for Enforcer Ashima:

An Emphyrean criminal escapes to the campaign city. He stays in public so much that Ashima is concerned about exposing Emphyrean society if she takes a posse after them. Assuming she trusts the PCs, she contacts them to help her bring the criminal in. If she doesn't trust them, she tries to trick or manipulate them into doing the job.

A large group of Lemurians kidnaps the Enforcer. The Emphyreans appeal to the PCs to help rescue her, since the Lemurians have invented a device that emits an energy field that weakens them.

An enemy of the PCs who knows about the Emphyreans (perhaps a Lemurian, like Zorran) frames them for a crime against Arcadia. Now a group of Emphyreans, with Ashima at their head, has come to arrest and try the PCs.

PAGE 62 — DAVOS

Here are three plot seeds for Davos:

A hated rival accuses Davos of using superhuman powers to win a race. Davos knows he didn't do it, but he also knows he can't stand up to the intense investigation that the accusation might lead to. He appeals to his friends the PCs for help.

Davos has his heart set on winning a particular race. Unfortunately, a group of super-terrorists has threatened to attack the race. Racing officials are considering cancelling the event, because they don't think they have enough security to protect the crowd. Davos asks his friends, the PCs, to help out so he can drive to victory.

Davos's girlfriend Catherine disappears. He's looked for her, but hasn't found so much as a single clue regarding what happened. He asks the PCs to help him find her.

PAGE 64 — BRAX

One way you can threaten the Emphyrean facade is to have a Human legal expert note the remarkable number of times similar legal strategies and maneuvers have been used in the transfer of properties between apparently unrelated people in a certain area. Brax has handled cases through dozens of different law firms in many different countries, but somebody with a powerful computer might be able to trace the documents and papers to a specific law firm in Switzerland, and through them to a "courier" who's actually an Emphyrean periodically traveling back and forth from Brax's "office" in Arcadia.

PAGE 64 — THALYA

For more information about Thalya, see *Galactic Champions*. In the thirty-first century, Thalya is one of the handful of Emphyreans who hasn't embraced Silence, and helps form the new Champions when Istvatha V'Han returns to menace Earth's dimension anew.

HUNTER THAV				
Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
40	STR	30	17-	Lift 6,400 kg; 8d6 [4]
29	DEX	57	15-	OCV: 10 /DCV: 10
30	CON	40	15-	
18	BODY	16	13-	
20	INT	10	13-	PER Roll 13-
16	EGO	12	12-	ECV: 5
26	PRE	16	14-	PRE Attack: 5d6
18	COM	4	13-	
28	PD	20		Total: 28 PD (20 rPD)
28	ED	22		Total: 28 ED (20 rED)
6	SPD	21		Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12
14	REC	0		
60	END	0		
53	STUN	0	Total Characteristics Cost: 248	
Movement:		Running:	12"/24"	
		Flight:	15"/60"	
		Leaping:	8"/16"	
		Swimming:	5"/10"	
Cost	Powers			END
70	Assorted Hunting Weapons: Variable			
	Power Pool (Gadget Pool), 60 base +			
	30 control cost; all slots OAF (-1), Only			
	For Ranged Weapons (-1) var			
	Martial Arts: Barroom Brawling			
	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4	Martial Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
4	Martial Dodge	—	+5	Dodge, Affects
				All Attacks,
				Abort
4	Martial Strike	+0	+2	10d6 Strike
5	Offensive Strike	-2	+1	12d6 Strike
46	Empyrean Physiology: Life Support			
	(Diminished Eating: only has to eat once			
	a month; Immunity: all terrestrial diseases			
	and biowarfare agents, all terrestrial			
	poisons and chemical warfare agents;			
	Longevity: Immortal; Safe Environments:			
	High Pressure, High Radiation, Intense			
	Cold, Intense Heat, Low Pressure/Vacuum;			
	Self-Contained Breathing)			
20	Empyrean Toughness: Damage Resistance			
	(20 PD/20 ED) 0			
3	Empyrean Physiology: Lack Of Weakness			
	(-3) for Resistant Defenses 0			
10	Empyrean Physiology: Power Defense			
	(10 points) 0			
10	Empyrean Mental Shielding: Mental			
	Defense (13 points total) 0			
35	Graviton-Manipulating Flight: Flight 15",			
	x4 Noncombat 3			
12	Powerful Runner: Running +6" (12" total) 1			
3	Powerful Swimmer: Swimming +3"			
	(5" total) 1			
5	Trackless Stride: Gliding 6"; Ground			
	Gliding (-¼) 0			
18	Amazing Senses: +6 PER with all Sense			
	Groups 0			
9	Amazing Senses: +2 versus Range Modifier			
	for Sight, Hearing, and Smell/Taste Groups 0			
10	Following The Scent: Tracking with			
	Smell/Taste Group 0			

10	<i>Good Nose:</i> Discriminatory with	
	Smell/Taste Group	0
5	<i>Good Eyes:</i> Nightvision	0
Perks		
18	Contact: The Empyreans (very useful	
	Skills or resources, very good relationship,	
	organization) 11-	
Talents		
3	Absolute Time Sense	
42	Danger Sense (general area, any danger,	
	Discriminatory) 15-	
3	Lightsleep	
20	Universal Translator 12-	
Skills		
10	+1 Overall	
12	+4 with Shadowing, Stealth, and Tracking	
7	Animal Handler (Birds, Canines, Equines,	
	Raptors) 15-	
3	Breakfall 15-	
5	Climbing 16-	
4	AK: "Wild" Places Of Earth 14-	
10	KS: Big Game Hunting 20-	
3	Shadowing 13-	
3	Stealth 15-	
14	Survival (Arctic/Subarctic, Marine,	
	Temperate/Subtropical, Tropical, Desert,	
	Mountain, Urban) 13-	
11	Tracking 17-	
8	TF: Common Motorized Ground Vehicles,	
	Riding Animals, Large Wind-Powered Boats,	
	Sleds, Small Motorized Boats, Small Wind-	
	Powered Boats	
8	WF: Common Melee Weapons,	
	Common Missile Weapons, Small Arms,	
	Blowguns, Nets	

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 467

Total Cost: 715

200+ Disadvantages

15	Hunted: Empyreans 8- (Mo Pow, Harshly	
	Punish)	
10	Hunted: Dynamo 8- (As Pow, Harshly	
	Punish)	
20	Psychological Limitation: Obsessed With	
	Hunting, The More Dangerous The Prey The	
	Better (Common, Total)	
20	Psychological Limitation: Wants A "Fair"	
	Fight; Uses Minimal Force For A Challenge	
	(Common, Total)	
15	Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Travis	
	Breedlove) (Frequently, Major)	
435	Experience Points	

Total Disadvantage Points: 715

Background/History: Thav is a Fourth Generation Empyrean, born to an Empyrean father and Human mother in Denmark in the mid-1300s. Though he was properly inducted into Empyrean society, he was never interested in it, and has not participated in any gatherings or activities since. Instead, he threw himself into the pastime of big game hunting, traveling around the world in search of the greatest challenges and most dangerous prey.

HUNTER THAV PLOT SEEDS

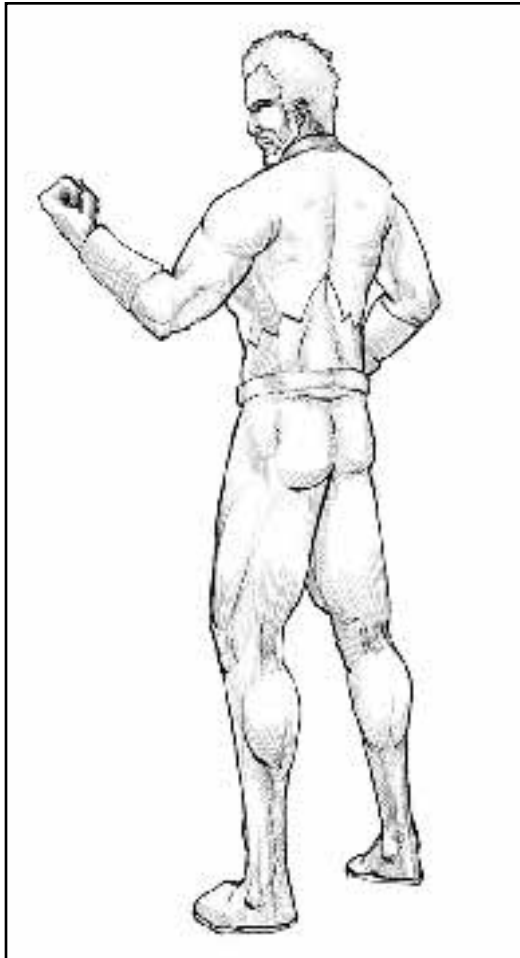
The classic Thav plot: Thav decides one of the PCs would make intriguing prey and goes on the Hunt. Alternately, someone hires him to Hunt one of them... or all of them.

Thav's Empyrean powers start to fade, and he has no idea why. Since he doesn't interact with his relatives (and doesn't want to), he has no idea if they're suffering for the same malady. He needs to trick, hire, or otherwise manipulate the PCs into finding out for him... and if possible, to stop whatever's causing it.

VIPER hires Thav to do a job, then stiffes him on the payment. Thav wants to get revenge on the organization in one fell swoop... and if possible, scare the Supreme Serpent out of hiding for a hunt. He creates a costumed hero identity, Nightarcher, and after he spends a few weeks establishing his "bona fides" he approaches the PCs with a scheme to strike a major blow against VIPER....

He has spent extensive periods of time in the wilds of Africa and Asia, pursuing everything from tigers and leopards to boar, Cape buffalo, and rhinos, and mastering a wide assortment of weapons, techniques, and skills.

In the last 30 years, as his favored types of prey have become extinct or increasingly well-protected, and mankind's progress has diminished the wild spaces he loves, Thav has expanded his repertoire of game to include humans. Beginning in the early-1970s, he adopted the costumed identity of the Pursuer, taking on various bounties both legal and illegal and reportedly never failing to capture his prey. (In some instances he delivered his quarry alive to appropriate authorities, but many of his employers were just as happy to see his targets dead.) In this identity he ran afoul of various superheroes, most frequently the masked martial artist called Black Mantis, who has long suspected that his opponent was far more than he seemed but was unable to prove anything. Most recently Thav has come into conflict several times with the young Canadian hero Dynamo. A secret cabal of industrialists hired Thav to "remove" Dynamo. As the Pursuer, Thav captured the superhero, but his employers tried to kill the Pursuer rather than pay him, so in retaliation Thav released Dynamo within their secret headquarters and escaped while the hero trashed the place and turned the criminals over to the law. Now Dynamo's following up leads on the Pursuer, but Thav remains a step ahead of him and is thoroughly enjoying the unusual challenge of himself being hunted.



Thav currently lives on a small ranch in Kenya that he's decorated with trophies from his favorite kills. Several underworld fixers around the globe have a special phone number they can use to hire him for jobs; though his rates are high, they aren't unreasonable for an assassin of his caliber, and he's usually willing to offer a discount for a truly interesting challenge.

Personality/Motivation: Thav has little use for Arcadia or Empyrean society; he's never accepted any assistance from his kinsfolk, and is sufficiently headstrong and perverse to reject the efforts they've made to "bring him into the fold." He has no desire to reveal any of their secrets or otherwise betray their existence to the world — in fact, he'd prefer to ignore them entirely. He regards his Empyrean birthright as simply another way in which he's superior to common humanity, most of whom he regards with disdain. In fact, he has much more regard for clever or dangerous animals than for most humans, who aren't even capable of giving him an entertaining hunt. Of course, he treats targets who give him a good chase with much more respect, and should one of them defeat him, he'll tip his hat and rededicate himself to learning enough to win the next time they meet. And there'll always be a next time: Thav has an immortal's patience.

Quote: "I suppose it was too much to hope for that you would provide me with some sort of challenge, wasn't it?"

Powers/Tactics: Apart from his natural Empyrean abilities, Thav had superhumanly-acute senses. He can recognize individuals simply by their scent, and can follow a trail for many hours based on his sense of smell alone. He can see further than the average human, both during the day and in the dark of night. He has even honed his senses to allow him to identify threats at a subconscious level. He's a master of a wide range of weapons, and usually carries at least two or three with him at all times.

Campaign Use: Thav works best in the campaign as a Hunter — either as a direct adversary of the PCs, or as an assassin one of their usual Hunters hires to go after them. Tenacious and cautious, he'll track the PCs for a long time before attacking them. He wants to learn as much as he can about them before he attacks... and if they run, the chase is on! He's prone to underestimating opponents the first time he encounters them, but learns from any setbacks and returns with new plans designed to counter his prey's abilities.

To make Thav more powerful, increase his STR and SPD a little, and perhaps give him some Find Weakness. To weaken him, reduce his Characteristics appropriately, and his Enhanced Perception to +4.

Appearance: Thav is a tall white man with blonde hair, icy blue eyes, and a short, meticulously-groomed beard. As the Pursuer he wears a brown bodysuit with black highlights and a full-head black hooded mask. In private he prefers loose, light-colored work shirts, canvas pants, and boots.

CHAPTER THREE

PAGE 66 — SHAMBALLAH AND AGHARTI

Shamballah and Agharti give you the chance to add a touch of wild martial arts action to your Champions campaign (see *The Ultimate Martial Artist* and *Ninja Hero* for lots of options, ideas, advice, and sample powers along these lines). Here are some plot seeds for using Shamballah and Agharti:

I Seek The Secrets Of The Splendid Dragon Fist: A PC or major NPC with a martial arts background learns of a new technique, style, or weapon long believed lost but that may be acquired in the fabled City of Lotuses... if only he could find it. This should lead to an extended quest to learn the location of Shamballah, as the PCs gather clues from various NPCs and ancient texts. In the process they may attract other seekers, ranging from useful allies, to selfish parasites who just want to take advantage of their hard work, to Agharti-trained villains who want to stop them. Alternately, a villain who's on the same type of quest crosses the PCs' path, in the process stealing something from the PC that contains the final clue to the puzzle.

Escape Of The Dark Ninjas: The residents of Agharti organize themselves long enough to either overwhelm the Shamballahs or find another way out of their dark prison. Perhaps one of them makes contact with an evil mage of the outside world, who offers his help in exchange for a few "favors" he needs done (like, for example, the removal of some superheroes who keep interfering with his plans...). Any number of Champions Universe masterminds could no doubt find a use for dozens of powerful evil ninjas...

Wrong Turn At Albuquerque: The PCs have long had a good relationship with the monks of Shamballah, and often visit to train, learn new skills, or debate philosophy. But this time the path through caves seems different, and when the heroes emerge they find themselves in a different world entirely. Perhaps they've arrived on a magical world of wuxia warriors and other elements of Asian High Fantasy, or maybe in a high-tech future....

SHATTER

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 [1]
23	DEX	39	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
20	CON	20	13-	
13	BODY	6	12-	
15	INT	5	12-	PER Roll 12-
18	EGO	16	13-	ECV: 6
18	PRE	8	13-	PRE Attack: 3½d6
16	COM	3	12-	
10	PD	7		Total: 21 PD (11 rPD)
9	ED	5		Total: 19 ED (10 rED)
6	SPD	27		Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12
7	REC	0		
40	END	0		
32	STUN	1		Total Characteristics Cost: 142

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
Leaping: 8"/16"
Teleportation: 5"/10"

Cost Powers

END

<i>Martial Arts: Hsing-I</i>				
	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
5	Defensive Block+1		+3	Block, Abort
5	Grappling Block+1		+1	Grab One Limb, Block
4	Hand Strike/Low Kick	+0	+2	7d6 Strike
5	Monkey Strike	-2	+1	9d6 Strike
4	Nerve Strike	-1	+1	3d6 NND
3	Throw	+0	+1	5d6 +vel/5, Target Falls
8	+2 Damage Classes (already added in)			
8	<i>Pi Chuan Fist:</i> Hand-To-Hand Attack +4d6; Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½), Increased Endurance Cost (x2 END; -½), Activation Roll 15- (-¼), Concentration (½ DCV; -¼)			
19	<i>Kusari Used With Sublime Skill:</i> Hand-To-Hand Attack +4d6; OAF (-1), Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½) plus Stretching 3", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OAF (-1)			
45	<i>See The Imperfection:</i> Find Weakness 16- with all Hsing-I Attacks			
9	<i>Padded Costume:</i> Armor (5 PD/4 ED); OIF (-½)			
30	<i>Uncanny Resistance:</i> Physical Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50%			
5	<i>Leap To The Heavens:</i> Leaping +5" (8" forward, 4" upward)			
9	<i>Slip Between The Weaknesses In Space:</i> Teleportation 5", Position Shift; Extra Time (Full Phase, -½), Activation Roll 15- (-¼)			

Perks

5 Money: Well Off

Talents

12 Combat Luck (6 PD/6 ED)
3 Lightsleep

SHATTER PLOT SEEDS

The classic Shatter plot: someone hires Shatter to kill or capture one of the PCs. The other heroes may find themselves trying to track down their friend after he mysteriously disappears....

After being humiliated fighting the PCs, Shatter looks for, finds, and studies in Agharti, then comes back more powerful than ever to prove who's the better warrior.

The PCs meet Shatter in Shamballah. She's obviously cold, even haughty, and clearly still very much in the grip of her selfish, evil tendencies. Can they get to know her and turn her to the side of light and truth?

Skills

- 15 +3 HTH
- 3 Acrobatics 14-
- 3 Analyze Style 12-
- 3 Breakfall 14-
- 2 AK: Tibet 11-
- 3 AK: Hong Kong 12-
- 3 KS: Agharti And Its Philosophies 12-
- 3 KS: Hong Kong's Underworld 12-
- 3 KS: Hsing-I 12-
- 1 Language: English (basic conversation; Cantonese is Native)
- 3 Shadowing 12-
- 3 Stealth 14-
- 3 Streetwise 13-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 227**Total Cost: 369****200+ Disadvantages**

- 20 DNPC: Yan Zhan (her father) 11- (Incompetent)
- 10 Distinctive Features: Style (Not Concealable, Noticed And Recognizable, Detectable By Large Group)
- 15 Enraged: when cheated or otherwise not paid (Uncommon), go 11-, recover 11-
- 10 Hunted: Whispering Dragon 8- (As Pow, Harshly Punish)
- 15 Hunted: UNTIL 8- (As Pow, NCI, Harshly Punish)
- 25 Psychological Limitation: Utterly Mercenary; Sees Wealth As A Measure Of Worth (Very Common, Total)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Intensely Curious About Advanced Martial Art Techniques (Common, Strong)
- 5 Rivalry: Professional (other Hong Kong mercenaries)
- 15 Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Yan Eu-Meh) (Frequently, Major)
- 39 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 369

Background/History: Yan Eu-Meh is the only daughter of Yan Zhan, a notorious mercenary Hong Kong supervillain known as Shatter during the 1970s and '80s. The first Shatter had a strong reputation as an assassin and bodyguard for various crimelords until he was beaten nearly to death by his rival, Iron Whirlwind, in 1987. Crippled and unable to walk unaided, Yan Zhan began to train his daughter in the secret techniques of Hsing-I that he himself had studied so many years ago. First among those techniques, of course, was the remarkable ability to focus his *ch'i* and use it to discover the weakest point in any structure whether steel, stone, or human flesh, and then deliver a crushing blow (the *Pi Chuan*, or "hand of metal" strike) with pinpoint accuracy.

Eu-Meh was an obedient and mindful student, though never able to satisfy her harsh and abusive father. By the time she turned eighteen she was nearly as strong a fighter as her father had ever been. She adopted the identity of Shatter in 1996 and began taking jobs and building up her reputation in Hong Kong's underworld. Soon she was known as a merciless and cold-hearted killer only interested in the money, and she had as much work as she could handle. She encountered the superhero Whispering Dragon on a few occasions when she was working for his arch-nemesis, the crime boss Mr. Peng, and they were so evenly matched in combat skill that neither could land a finishing blow.

While continuing to study with her father, Eu-Meh had a breakthrough. Her training had taught her to reach out with her *ch'i* and "feel" the objects around her, searching for their points of greatest stress and weakest structure. But there was no reason to restrict that ability to solid things. Why, if she concentrated *just so*, and opened her mind, she could feel the weaknesses in space as well. And upon feeling them, she could step through them, like... this! She opened her eyes, and found herself in the next room, though the door between remained closed.

Eu-Meh was fascinated by this new permutation of her abilities. Throwing herself even more into her studies, she learned of a fabulous place in the mountains of Tibet, where two hidden cities were the homes of some of the greatest masters of martial arts the world had ever known. Somewhere there were new teachers, masters who could show her even more secrets that could bring her more money, more power, more fame. She would find them, and force them to teach her.

And maybe then her father would be satisfied...

Personality/Motivation: Shatter is a complete professional. Cold and humorless, she provides outstanding service either as a bodyguard or assassin, for which she demands top dollar. Unfortunately, she still has to care for her father, a mean and unpleasant man who belittles and criticizes her constantly, and whose ever-increasing medical bills take a sizable chunk out of Shatter's earnings. She's ready to move up to the kind of high-paying international jobs that will really put her in the big leagues, and



Campaign Use: Shatter is a martial artist assassin with a few unusual twists based on her *ch'i* powers. She'd make a good adversary for a martial artist hero, and a good opponent for many PCs.

If you want to make Shatter tougher, give her more *ch'i* powers — see *The Ultimate Martial Artist* or *Ninja Hero* for dozens of abilities that can make her into something right out of a *wuxia* movie, if that's what you want. To weaken her, get rid of her Pi Chuan Fist.

Shatter's only devotion professionally is to the job — once she's filled a contract, she retains no particular emotions about the target, the employer, or anyone else she's encountered. Thus, she doesn't Hunt for revenge, but if hired she pursues a target to the ends of the earth. If possible, she observes the target in advance, using her *Analyze Style* Skill to get a feel for his abilities.

Appearance: Shatter is a Chinese woman in her mid-twenties in excellent physical shape, with black hair kept professionally short. She wears a purple and black mask with points that extend above her head, and a full-body costume in shades of light and dark blue and purple and strategically-placed points of padding and armor. Her kusari is worn at her broad black belt.

PAGE 70 — ULURU

take her out of Hong Kong to London, Paris, or New York, where she can really earn some money.

But to do that, she knows she needs to be even more powerful and skilled than she already is. Shatter has become obsessed with the idea that she can learn new *ch'i* powers from the hidden sages of Shamballah, and she won't rest until they give her what she wants. Of course, the monks of Shamballah won't care for her attitude, but maybe they'll see something redeemable in her. Or maybe Agharti will get hold of her first.

Quote: "There's a weakness in your armor, sir. I can see it. And weakness will get you killed."

Powers/Tactics: Shatter is a talented martial artist with great mastery of Hsing-I, an internal Chinese martial art (see page 28 of *The Ultimate Martial Artist* for more information). She's even learned how to use her ability to sense *ch'i* to find the weak spots in a target. She can also expend her energy in other ways, most notably to shrug off the effects of physical blows and to cause her hands to harden like metal to do maximum damage with her strikes. Most remarkably, she can "pass through weaknesses in the air," allowing her to Teleport for short distances.

Shatter has mastered the use of the *kusari*, an ancient weapon consisting of a fifteen-foot-long metal chain with a handle on one end and a weight on the other. She uses it like a whip, either striking powerful blows at range or using it to grab the weapons or legs of her opponents.

Here are three plot seeds for using Uluru, Wanambi Man, and the Dreamtime:

Dream A Little Dream Of Me: While sleeping one night, a PC dreams of Ayers Rock and the Well Of Worlds, though he may not know immediately what or where they are. In the dream, his animal totem tells him a terrible threat that only he can stop is breaking through into the waking world. The next day, the hero sees a television news report about a powerful earthquake deep in the Australian Outback...

I May Not Know Art, But...: An artist NPC friend of the heroes receives an invitation to participate in an arts festival in Melbourne. Unfortunately, the show is interrupted by Marmoo, who's determined to deface and destroy everything beautiful in the waking world. Time for the PCs to come to the rescue....

Legacy: After the PCs have interacted with the Dreamtime once or twice, a representative of the Anangu visits a mystically-inclined PC at his home. It seems the Wanambi Man has disappeared, the tribesmen don't know where he's gone, and the only thing he's left behind is a note saying that while he was away his replacement would be the PC! And by the way, strange bubbling noises and green lights have been coming out of the Well for the last few days. What's going on?

MARMOO

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
30	STR	20	15-	Lift 1,600 kg; 6d6 [3]
24	DEX	42	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
23	CON	26	14-	
16	BODY	12	12-	
23	INT	13	14-	PER Roll 14-
21	EGO	22	13-	ECV: 7
30	PRE	20	15-	PRE Attack: 6d6
20	COM	5	13-	
16	PD	10		Total: 16 PD (15 rPD)
17	ED	12		Total: 17 ED (15 rED)
5	SPD	16		Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
11	REC	0		
50	END	2		
43	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 200

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
 Leaping: 6"/12"
 Flight: 20"/80"

Cost	Powers	END
30	<i>Finger-Stingers:</i> HKA 1d6+1 (2½d6 w/STR), Armor Piercing (+½)	3
45	<i>Stinger Venom:</i> Drain CON 3d6, NND (defense is Life Support [appropriate Immunity]; +1), Delayed Return Rate (points return at the rate of 5 per 6 Hours; +1¼); Only If HKA Does Body (-½), Gradual Effect (1 Minute, 1d6/20 seconds; -½), 4 Charges (-1) plus RKA 1½d6, NND (defense is Life Support [appropriate Immunity]; +1), Does BODY (+1); Extra Time (1 Minute, -1½), Gradual Effect (5 Minutes, ½d6 per 1.5 minutes; -¾), No Range (-½), Only If HKA Does BODY (-½), Linked (-½), 4 Charges (-1)	[4]
97	<i>Lord Of Insects I:</i> Summon 32 insects/ insect swarms built on up to 90 points, Expanded Class (any type of insect; +¼), Slavishly Devoted (+1)	6
27	<i>Lord Of Insects II:</i> Mind Control 8d6 (Animal class of minds); Insects Only (-½)	4
37	<i>Insect Wings:</i> Flight 20", x4 Noncombat, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); Restrained (-½)	2
10	<i>Insect Walking:</i> Clinging (normal STR)	0
15	<i>Dark Spirit's Body:</i> Damage Resistance (15 PD/15 ED)	0
20	<i>Dark Spirit's Body:</i> Life Support (Immunity: Insect Venoms; Longevity: Immortal; Safe Environment: Intense Heat; Self-Contained Breathing)	0
5	<i>Dark-Adapted Eyes:</i> Nightvision	0
10	<i>Mystical Shields:</i> Mental Defense (14 points total)	0
15	<i>Mystical Shields:</i> Power Defense (15 points)	0
13	<i>Flee To The Dreaming:</i> Extra-Dimensional Movement (only to his home in the Dreaming); One Way Only (see text; -½)	2

Skills

16	+2 with All Combat
3	Acting 15-
3	Concealment 14-
3	Conversation 15-
3	AK: The Dreamtime 14-
3	AK: The Australian Outback 14-
3	KS: The Dreamtime And Its Inhabitants 14-
3	Persuasion 15-
3	Seduction 15-
3	Stealth 14-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 367

Total Cost: 567

200+ Disadvantages

10	Distinctive Features: Forked Tongue (Concealable With Effort; Noticed and Recognizable)
15	Hunted: Allies Of Baiaame 11- (As Pow, Harshly Punish)
15	Physical Limitation: Can Be Bound By Secret Rituals (Infrequently, Fully Impairing)
10	Physical Limitation: Unfamiliar With Modern Technology, Culture, And Society (Frequently, Slightly Impairing)
20	Psychological Limitation: Arrogant And Prideful (Common, Total)
20	Psychological Limitation: Devoted To Destroying Everything Beautiful (Common, Total)
15	Psychological Limitation: Vengeful (Common, Strong)
10	Vulnerability: 1½ x STUN from Fire attacks (Common)
10	Vulnerability: 1½ x BODY from Fire attacks (Common)
242	Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 567

Background/History: According to legends told by the Anangu, Marmoo was a minor god or demon of the Dreamtime when Baiaame decided to make the real world. After the job was finished, Marmoo was the only one who dismissed the work Baiaame had done, saying, "Anyone can create something out of nothing. I'll show that I'm better than Baiaame by destroying his "beautiful" creation." So he retired to his cave and created the first insects: hordes of locusts, mosquitoes, army ants, spiders, wasps. He released them into the world by the millions, and with nothing to stop them they began to eat their way across the landscape, destroying the beautiful flowers and plants while stinging and biting anyone who tried to stop them.

The Anangu turned to another goddess, Nungina, and said, "Come, see what Marmoo has done to our world. The insects move across the land like a river, destroying everything!" Nungina responded, taking up a small but lovely flower that had survived the onslaught since it grew in the shelter of a waterfall. She weaved the colorful stalks of the flower carefully and with great skill, and then she set the arrangement on the ground and breathed softly on it. The creation of flowers came to life, shaking its

head and experimentally flapping its beautiful wings, for Nungina had created the first lyrebird.

"It is lovely, indeed, Nungina, but how does it help us?" said the Anangu.

"Watch," said the goddess. And they watched, as the lyrebird lifted up into the sky, then landed again near the rear of the ever-advancing army of insects. It began to bob its head up and down at the ground, and with every bob its sharp little beak speared another of the insects.

"Aah!" said the Anangu. "Please, make more!" And Nungina did. She recruited her fellow spirits and they caught on to the game, designing their own birds and releasing them. Of course, most of them were not as skilled as Nungina, which is why not all of the birds we see today are as attractive as the lyrebird (and some, like magpies and butcher-birds, are downright ugly). But they still did the job, and soon the armies of insects were vanquished. Nungina said, "These creations are so beautiful, they should have songs and voices to match!" And it was so, and the Anangu have delighted in the presence of birds ever since.

But Marmoo slunk back to his cave, and there he plotted vengeance....

Personality/Motivation: Marmoo is a dark spirit of the Dreamtime who out of jealousy and spite has hated the "real world" since it was created. As the creator and lord of insects, he has plotted to destroy all of the natural beauty of Australia and its mortal inhabitants, preferably under an ever-advancing tide of bugs.

Perhaps he is simply a manifestation of the collective unconscious of the Anangu, feeding on the ambient mystical energy that surrounds Uluru, personifying a popular myth and therefore becoming a very real and solid menace to the people who live here. Or maybe he's simply a superhuman who has somehow manifested the power to summon and control insect life. Since Marmoo believes himself to be Marmoo, and behaves exactly as the myths say he should, the Anangu don't see a difference between these possibilities, or care.

Periodically Marmoo tries to enter Earth's reality, frequently through the Well Of Worlds but occasionally by other means, and unleash his hordes of ravenous, biting, stinging minions to destroy anything beautiful. He doesn't care if his targets are places of natural beauty (like Uluru itself or other natural wonders) or created (like attractive gardens or pieces of art); he wants to destroy them all. Fortunately, the Wanambi Man is usually on hand to stop him. Since Marmoo definitely knows how to hold a grudge, any hero who helps defeat him can expect the Lord of Insects to seek revenge when next he returns.

Quote: "Go, my clicking and crawling creations. Ravage everything in your path, for the spite of Marmoo!"

Powers/Tactics: Marmoo is the Dreamtime's master of insects and similar types of vermin, able to create swarms of mosquitoes, flies, ants, spiders, locusts, and the like out of dream-stuff. He can also create larger and more dangerous individual insects, like tarantulas, or command the allegiance of insects he did not personally create. He can even transform his body into a more insectile form: fly-like wings emerge from his back, small stingers armed with poisonous venom grow from his fingertips. Marmoo has the power to return to his home cave in the Dreamtime whenever he wants, but he won't do this unless he's facing complete defeat because he can't leave the Dreaming again under his own power.

Marmoo is a schemer, sometimes to the point of hampering himself with the Byzantine nature of his plots. Most of his plans center on destroying areas of natural beauty (like any of Australia's many parks and gardens) or major population centers — he's tried to flood Sydney and overwhelm Melbourne with a plague of locusts in the past. He normally lives in the Dreamtime, and can only leave with the help of others or via means he cannot control (like the Well Of Worlds). The Wanambi Man and his allies have foiled him enough times over the years that he generally prefers to take a less direct route than the Well. In recent years he has used a magical mirror (since destroyed) and the dreams of powerful but untrained psychics to enter Earth's dimension.



Campaign Use: Marmoo is a classic extradimensional menace with creepy powers. Make sure to play up the disgusting nature of his abilities — few people like bugs, and if you can get a shiver out of your players by describing how Marmoo’s powers work, so much the better.

To make Marmoo stronger, increase the size and scope of his Summon power so he can create larger, more monstrous insects and insect swarms (such as the Giant Insects in *The HERO System Bestiary*). You could also give him more PRE, to make him even creepier when he wants to be. To weaken him, reduce most or all of his Primary Characteristics other than PRE to no more than 20.

Marmoo doesn’t Hunt heroes — he doesn’t make it into Earth’s dimension often enough to be worth any points as a Hunted. But he definitely holds grudges, and won’t hesitate to try to get revenge on anyone who’s beaten or humiliated him in the past.

Appearance: Marmoo looks like an ordinary but well-muscled Aborigine male in his early thirties, with deep brown skin, black hair, and handsome features. He wears a long gray loincloth made from some sort of canvas-like material and a necklace woven from long brown reeds. Ordinarily, the only sign that he’s something more than human is his tongue, which is long and forked like a snake’s, but when he manifests one of his insectoid powers, he grows fly-like wings or finger-stingers.

PAGE 72 — SUNDAY POND AND THE WITNESS

Unknown to almost all who live near Sunday Pond, St. Julian’s Church is inhabited, at least part of the time, by a mysterious being who chose it as his home precisely because of the unusual events the area’s known for. The enigmatic Witness is a powerful mystic whose origins remain a mystery to even the wisest scholars and most puissant of sorcerers. Very, very few people, even among the Superhuman World or Mystic World, even know of his existence.

THE WITNESS

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 [1]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
25	CON	30	14-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
30	INT	20	15-	PER Roll 15-
30	EGO	40	15-	ECV: 10
40	PRE	30	17-	PRE Attack: 8d6
10	COM	0	11-	
8	PD	6		Total: 8 PD (8 rPD)
8	ED	3		Total: 8 ED (8 rED)
6	SPD	32		Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12
7	REC	0		
50	END	0		
33	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 195

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
Leaping: 2"/4"
Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost	Powers	END
198	<i>Mystical Might:</i> Variable Power Pool, 90 base + 45 control cost, Cosmic (+2); No Technology-Based Powers (-¼)	var.
25	<i>Viewing The Myriad Futures:</i> Precognitive Clairsentience (Sight and Hearing Groups), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); Precognition Only (-1), Vague and Unclear (-½)	2
20	<i>Beast Speech:</i> Telepathy 6d6 (Animal class of minds), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); No Range (-½), Communication Only (-¼), Incanatations (throughout; -¼), Visible (-¼)	0
8	<i>Mystic Defenses:</i> Damage Resistance (8 PD/8 ED)	0
40	<i>Stepping Sideways To Reality:</i> Desolidification (affected by Magic)	4
120	<i>Remarkably Sturdy:</i> Physical and Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 75%	0
10	<i>Sees Without Sight:</i> Sight Group Flash Defense (10 points)	0
15	<i>Tower Of Will:</i> Mental Defense (21 points total)	0
15	<i>Difficult To Enchant:</i> Power Defense (15 points)	0
50	<i>Mystical Nature:</i> Life Support (Total, including Longevity: Immortality)	0
40	<i>Walking The Secret Paths:</i> Multipower, 40-point reserve	
4u	1) <i>Walking Within Reality:</i> Teleportation 20"	4
4u	2) <i>Walking Across The World:</i> Teleportation 8", MegaScale (1" = 10,000 km, can be scaled down to 1" = 1 km; +1½)	4
4u	3) <i>Walking Between Worlds:</i> Extra-Dimensional Movement (any physical location within the Inner Planes), x2 Increased Mass	4

Perks

- 15 Contact: 15 points' worth of people and beings he's helped or advised
- 20 Followers: Peale and Hardy (see text)
- 3 Reputation: keeper of the Maine dimensional convergence and defender of earth's realm (among certain mystics and dimensional beings, a small to medium sized group) 14-, +3/+3d6

Talents

- 42 Danger Sense (any area, any danger, Sense) 15-

Skills

- 9 +3 with Mystical Might VPP
- 2 Animal Handler (Equines) 17-
- 3 Concealment 15-
- 3 Conversation 17-
- 3 Disguise 15-
- 3 AK: The Higher Planes 15-
- 3 AK: Earth's Dimension 15-
- 3 AK: Western Maine 15-
- 7 KS: The Mystic World 19-
- 3 KS: Mystical Beings 15-
- 3 KS: The "True" History of the World 15-
- 3 KS: Dimensional Convergences 15-
- 3 Oratory 17-
- 3 Shadowing 15-
- 3 Stealth 13-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 687

Total Cost: 882

200+ Disadvantages

- 15 Hunted: Circle Of The Scarlet Moon 11- (Less Pow, NCI, Harshly Punish)
- 10 Hunted: various demons outside the Convergence 11- (Less Pow, Harshly Punish)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Tries To Preserve Life And Freedom Wherever Possible (Common, Total)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Rarely Gives A Straight, Unambiguous Answer (Common, Strong)
- 20 Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (he's charged with various responsibilities by the higher powers) (Frequently, Severe)
- 602 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 882

Background/History: The Witness's actual origin is lost in the mists of history. It's known that he's over 100,000 years old, since some Empyreans recall meeting him around that time, and he may be considerably older than that. He seems to be a force for good, as he has provided both information and even mystical aid to Earth's superhuman defenders over the years. However, sometimes he seems reluctant to participate, preferring to remain merely an impartial observer of events. On still other occasions, he's seemed to remain aloof and neutral, but mystics on the side of good have received surreptitious assistance from him, as if he were under orders not to interfere but was secretly disobeying.

At various times the Witness has appeared all over the globe, though he seems to show up most frequently in the United States, the British Isles, and Russia (perhaps simply because of the proportionally-higher number of mystical events in those places). He's known to have worked with superheroes like Witchcraft, Eldritch, and Gyeroy Vedun, and has contacted members of the Trismegistus Council on several occasions to offer them some information or material assistance. The Circle of the Scarlet Moon has targeted him for death due to his interference in its affairs, though it has no idea where to find him. DEMON has taken no special notice of him despite his presence at several of their worst setbacks.

The Witness spends most of his time at Sunday Pond. The supernatural has such a strong presence in the town because there's a "dimensional convergence," a nexus between different worlds and a "weak point" in the structure of the Multiverse, in the cemetery behind St. Julian's Church. The Convergence only becomes visible when someone (or something) passes through it. At these times, it looks like a swirling blue disk of light and energy. But even when it's dormant it exudes powerful mystic energies, which affect every nearby sensitive and attract countless inhuman beings to the area. Those who are simply lost travelers receive the Witness's assistance and guidance; those of malign intent he contains, banishes, or destroys as best he may.



THE WITNESS PLOT SEEDS

The “cosmic balance” has been upset and only a group of superheroes can set it right, with the Witness acting as gatherer and mentor. He provides the heroes with information and maybe the odd powerful artifact. Once you’ve established a relationship between the Witness and your PCs, you can run several entertaining variations on this basic theme. For example, perhaps one time the team needs the Witness instead of vice-versa, and he’s particularly difficult to find or recruit; or maybe an extradimensional bad guy gets the drop on the Witness and uses his shape and seeming to recruit the well-meaning heroes to the wrong side of a mystical conflict.

The Witness can serve as a guide for characters in quest-style stories, taking them through mysterious lands or extradimensional worlds, such as those described in *The Mystic World*.

One of the PCs must undergo a test to prove his worthiness for a particular responsibility, role, or boon. The Witness serves as a sort of cosmic referee, making sure the hero doesn’t cheat during the test and that his enemies or rivals don’t interfere.

The Witness has two assistants — the ghosts of Peale and Hardy, the church’s former caretakers (each is built on 75 Base Points). Peale is tall, thin, and supercilious, while Hardy is chubby and good-humored but a bit dimwitted. Their bodies are buried in the cemetery, and they spend most of their time sleeping in their coffins. They arise only when the Witness calls on them for assistance or information. Though they spend much of their time bickering, the two are genuinely helpful and supportive, especially when dealing with innocents accidentally transported by the Convergence or otherwise in need of the Witness’s aid.

Personality/Motivation: The Witness helps defend Humanity and existence from “inhuman” forces, but he won’t get involved when the threat is from a human (or “mortal” alien). Humanity must survive its own natural impulse to self-destruction as part of its spiritual growth into its next form — the Witness has said he’s only here to make sure the “test” is fair and free from outside interference.

The Witness’s motivations are as mysterious as his origins. He seems to be a servant of some higher powers, and the tasks they set him sometimes seem to frustrate and anger him... but though he may question them, he always follows his orders and for the most part accepts the “natural order of things.” But on other occasions he seems to take pride in subtly influencing the actions of others with hints and behind-the-scenes assistance while directly proclaiming his inability to help. He generally has a warm and comforting presence most of the time, and can easily win the trust of complete strangers... but when something arouses his wrath, he becomes cold and frightening.

The Witness rarely answers questions directly and unambiguously, even when he’s permitted to help. His every statement is cryptic and strange.

Quote: “Don’t worry, little one. I have seen your plight, and am here to help you.”

Powers/Tactics: The Witness is a powerful mystic whose talents primarily run to movement powers, visions of the future, and protective spells. He’s capable of more offensive spells, but always uses the least amount of force necessary to handle a situation and generally prefers to work through agents. He has earned the trust of several superheroes and hero teams, and recruits them to help him based on their particular talents and abilities. Wherever possible the Witness remains behind the scenes, arriving at the last minute with some crucial piece of information.

For dozens of example powers for the Witness’s *Mystical Might* Power Pool, see *The Mystic World*, *The Ultimate Mystic*, and *Arcane Adversaries*.

Campaign Use: The Witness is a “ringer” you can pull out whenever you need him in scenarios involving mystic or inhuman menaces. He may show up to offer help, or at least an enigmatic word or three of advice. He could even end up opposing the heroes, if they’re somehow made to seem to be a mystic menace.

It’s unlikely the PCs will face the Witness in combat, so you probably don’t need to make him more or less powerful. But if you do, just adjust the Pool of his VPP up or down until it’s more appropriate for the campaign. You could even remove the *Cosmic Advantage*, or take part of it away, if that makes him fit your campaign better.

The Witness doesn’t Hunt people. He’ll pursue mystic menaces as his orders require, but he doesn’t maintain extended vendettas.

Appearance: The Witness wears a black men’s suit over a dark green collarless shirt. He frequently wears a heavy overcoat as well, with the collar turned up against the wind, and a weathered-looking, wide-brimmed hat. He always wears dark leather gloves. His hair is silver-grey but thick, and just slightly longer than is fashionable. His eyes are apparently pupilless.

PAGE 74 — BEAST MOUNTAIN

Here are two plot seeds for using Beast Mountain in your campaign:

How Ya Gonna Keep ‘Em Down On The Farm, After They’ve Seen Millennium City?: Sister Vixen, an agile teenager with superhuman senses, remarkable agility, and claws, moves to the PCs’ campaign city and starts working as a street-level superheroine. When interviewed by the press, she nearly gives away the existence of Beast Mountain by accident. Doctor Moreau also reads the interview, realizes who she is, and decides he’ll send a VIPER team to retrieve her for some follow-up experiments.

What’s In The Basement?: Young Brother Ferret, newly assigned to assist Sister Armadillo in the hospital, goes exploring in a sub-basement of the lab and finds a previously undiscovered trove of Moreau’s equipment and supplies. What could a madman like Moreau have wanted to hide away so thoroughly? Perhaps something in one of the test tubes has been growing and mutating for all these years....

PAGE 77 — FATHER ELK

Here are three plot seeds for Father Elk:

Father Elk falls sick and desperately needs a rare medicine that’s available only from a lab in Millennium City. Knowing they can never afford to buy it, some of his younger, more rash followers decide to go there and steal it.

VIPER and Dr. Moreau kidnap Father Elk. They intend to experiment upon him to find a way to bring the beast-men back under Moreau’s absolute control. The villagers appeal to the PCs for help.

Father Elk believes the Ukrainian military has discovered Beast Mountain. He appeals to the PCs to help keep the village secret through subterfuge, misdirection, or whatever other means they can come up with.

chapter five:



THE DYING KINGDOM

LEMURIA

THE HISTORY OF LEMURIA



FOR THE GM'S EYES ONLY

The Lemurians, as presented here, are intended as villains for Champions campaigns. As such, the information in this chapter, like that presented in the previous chapter, is for GMs only. In other words, if you're playing in, or plan to play in, a game featuring Lemuria, you shouldn't read this chapter.

In the distant past, during a time which occult scholars who study the forgotten history of mankind call the late Valdorian and Atlantean Ages, Lemuria was a powerful kingdom. In its cities, magnificent palaces sprawled across vast estates and magically-powered ornithopters soared between sparkling adamantine towers. Beyond its shores, pisciremes prowled the ocean depths protecting its merchant fleets, and at the far reaches of the kingdom, quattropedes patrolled the borders and repelled all invaders. Few could challenge Lemuria's power — even proud Atlantis found the task of conquering it daunting. This was Lemuria's golden age. Since then the kingdom has been a long time dying.

65,000 TO 36,694 BC: IN A TIME BEFORE HISTORY

The Turakian Age came to an fiery end with the fall of the Undying Lord Takofanes. The epic battle against the immortal evil left the world in ruins — continents torn asunder, seas roiled with unending storms, fires crackling across the heavens — and from this wreckage arose new lands, new forms of life. One of the new races that survived was a reptilian race of shape-changers that in later millennia men would know as the Lemurians.

In the aftermath of these cataclysms, when the turmoil ended and civilization once again flourished, mankind ruled a world he had once had to share with Dwarves, Elves, and Orcs. One of his kingdoms, the Empire of Valdoria, lent its name to the age. Mankind's dominance and xenophobia during the Valdorian Age forced the Lemurians to conceal themselves. They assumed the shape of men and women and hid among mankind, dwelling in isolation from others of their own species.

But late in the Valdorian Age, one of these ur-Lemurians, the sorcerer Faltrah Lem, made a discovery that would set the future course of his race and lead to the founding of Lemuria.

37,566 BC: THE DISCOVERY OF IGNAETIUM

In a place beyond the edge of civilization, in a tower where cold winds moaned and the stark white ice rose like jagged-peaked mountains, Faltrah Lem worked in his arcane laboratory. He performed a simple preparatory task, hammering and chipping coal into smaller pieces for the brass brazier he used to heat his alchemical fluids. Spar-

ling on the surface of the broken pieces of coal were slender chips of some crystalline substance. The chips were dull orange, yellow, or blue in color and seemingly unremarkable. He paid these impurities no mind — he had much more important sorcerous matters to consider.

Faltrah Lem scraped the broken coal into his brazier and set it alight. But rather than glowing dimly with a ruddy light, a fire exploded from the brazier and raged in a whooshing pillar, the color of which changed freely and quickly, flashing from cool blue to blood red to hot white and back again. In the depths of this fire, Faltrah Lem could see with his sorcerous sight an elemental lurking. It was a brutish, primeval consciousness far less intelligent and cunning than the fire elementals he summoned from the Scorched Lands — and, he quickly realized, one far easier to manipulate toward his own ends.

In the preceding millennia magic had been at lower ebb than in Turakian times (though neither Faltrah Lem nor anyone else realized that). Sorcerers had to rely on other-dimensional beings for their powers. At that moment Faltrah Lem was one of the first to witness the rise of magic in the world — one of the first to receive concrete proof that magic was increasing in power. He gathered a handful of coal and scrutinized the multicolored chips more closely. Somehow lurking in the crystal was the spirit of fire. Faltrah Lem named this new substance *ignatium*.

37,523 BC: LEMURIA'S FOUNDING

Faltrah Lem stood at the bow of the ship. With a hand shielding his eyes from the Sun, he studied the long line of mountainous islands that rose just over the horizon. A new magic fueled the bronze-hulled ship that plowed through the tranquil blue waters of the Shining Sea. Wheel-like paddles filled the crisp salty air with a rhythmic thumping, and smoke rose from copper stacks that towered above the ship, taller than any masts. Below the copper stacks burned arcane furnaces where *ignatium* powered the paddles that propelled the ship. Gathered behind Faltrah Lem were his fellow Lemurians — his sorcerous peers and their bodyguards of able-bodied warriors.

For over forty years Faltrah Lem had studied the properties of *ignatium*, and during his studies he had gathered a cabal of other Lemurian sorcerers. Together they explored the possibilities of this new substance, and as they experimented, they debated their future course. Eventually they decided to seize the land from where *ignae-*

tium came and establish a kingdom, one that would in turn become an empire when it conquered the world. The first step was conquering the sparsely-populated archipelago and subjugating the primitive humans who resided there.

Standing amidships, Faltrah Lem gathered his sorcerous cabal around him. First they raised the spirits of the water, and roaring waves crashed on the rocky beaches of the islands, sweeping away the huts of the inhabitants. Then the sorcerers raised the spirits of the wind, and howling gales blew before them, heralding their coming. Finally the ship made landfall and Lemurian warriors poured over the side.

In seven days they conquered the archipelago, rounding up the natives to work as slaves in the *ignaetium* mines. On the eighth day Faltrah Lem crowned himself king and named his new kingdom Lemuria.

37,018 BC: THE NEW GODS

The Priest-King Faltrah Lem lay on his death bed, his new priesthood attending him. He instructed the priests on the proper rites to perform over his body when he was dead.

In recent decades Faltrah Lem had left the study of the arcane to his fellow sorcerers and turned his attention to the study of the gods. Lemurians had spent millennia isolated from each other, lurking among humanity, and they held few beliefs in common. But they all still believed in their old gods — ancient monstrous beings of inchoate evil called the *Rastrinfhar*, meaning in their ancient tongue “The Bleak Ones.”

Faltrah Lem wished to create a cult of worship around himself, but these ancient deities failed to serve his purpose. The Bleak Ones were grim gods who cared nothing for mortals and their desires. They laid rightful claim to the Lemurians because the spark for the Lemurians’ life had come from their divine essence — the cold fire that served as the stuff for a Lemurian’s soul that had seeped down from the heavens in the days when the world convulsed in the aftermath of the Turakian Age — but the only reward the Bleak Ones gave for faithful service was oblivion after death.

Faltrah Lem gave his new kingdom new gods to worship. He gave his people gods of smoke and fire, crystal and lightning. He made these new gods the bringers of gifts to the Lemurians, the source of *ignaetium* and the more recently discovered mystical substances of *corusqua*, *crystallos*, and *fulminor*. Faltrah Lem made himself the most holy of the gods’ servants, crowning himself the Priest-King and ensuring that future generations would venerate his memory and worship him and his descendants as nearly divine.

The new gods were false — pure fabrications created by Faltrah Lem — and he swore his new priesthood to secrecy. Faltrah Lem taught his priests how to draw voices from the fires of *ignaetium* and to pull ghostly faces from the smoke of *fulminor*, and how to make these phantasms speak the words of the so-called divine. In short, he

showed them how to deceive the faithful. Faltrah Lem’s peers, those sorcerers who had helped him study *ignaetium* and first conquer the islands, knew these gods as fabrications — but none of them were willing to challenge the Priest-King, for he was the discoverer of *ignaetium* and founder of the kingdom — and among the warriors and other Lemurians newly come to the kingdom to join with their kin, the new gods found fervent worshippers.

Finally Faltrah Lem died, once again repeating his instructions about his funerary arrangements to the priesthood, his last breath a rattling wheeze. The priests did as they were told. They embalmed the priest-king’s body with arcane fluids, distillations of *corusqua* and *ignaetium* dissolved in solution, and let the mingled smoke of *fulminor* and burning cedar dry the body’s skin to leathery toughness while preserving its appearance. The next day they led the procession to the newly constructed mausoleum, a ziggurat of gleaming brass that would serve future generations as a shrine where they could venerate the first Priest-King’s memory... and then the ancient, cast-off gods of the Lemurians let their curse fall upon the one who denied their claim on Lemuria and its nobility.

As the solemn procession wended its way from palace to mausoleum, the sky above Lemuria opened up. From out of the unnatural rent in the heavens reached a dark mass of clawed hands and barbed tentacles. They seized Faltrah Lem’s body and took it elsewhere, the sky closing behind them.

The Lemurians fell to their knees and trembled with fear. The message was clear — though the new gods might receive the Lemurians’ worship and prayers, the Bleak Ones still claimed the souls of departed Lemurians as their own.

So began the Lemurians’ obsession with immortality.

36,854 BC: A SPELL GONE AWRY

Andrith the Golden stood on a balcony overlooking the Plaza of Crystal Leaves, where *crystallos* was cultivated in the shapes of trees whose leaves tinkled quietly in the breeze. Assembled before him in the Plaza was the nobility of Lemuria; arrayed behind him on the balcony was the priesthood with Andrith’s father, the Priest-King Tyrann Lem, son of Faltrah Lem, in the place of honor. Andrith gave the sign for the slaves to feed the furnaces newly erected in subterranean chambers under the Plaza, and a brass horn called the slaves to their work. Arcane energies puffed from the stacks that rose at the edges of the Plaza, and like a heavy fog gathered in the Plaza, engulfing the assembly.

Everyone in the Plaza of Crystal Leaves stood in hushed anticipation. Could this young sorcerer truly extend their lifespan — truly put off the Bleak Ones’ punishment, if not forever, then at least for several centuries, long enough to discover the secrets of immortality?

The Bleak Ones’ seizure of Faltrah Lem’s mummified body had sent ripples of fear through the Lemurian nobility. Unlike the subjugated humans who served them, each Lemurian owed the debt of

THERE’S LEMURIANS, AND THEN THERE’S LEMURIANS...

Outsiders refer to everyone who inhabits submerged Lemuria, both noble and Mole-Man, as Lemurians. This only reveals how little they know about the hidden land. A Lemurian noble would never call a Mole-Man a Lemurian — only the human-seeming nobles are true Lemurians. The Mole-Men are slaves, undeserving of such an honor, quite literally nothing more than a House’s property and a form of currency among the nobility. In other words, to a noble, calling a Mole-Man a Lemurian is about the same as calling cattle rancher’s livestock his brothers and sisters — it’s a grave insult.

his soul to the ancient gods, and what punishment awaited them after death for forsaking the Bleak Ones was unknown. Did their souls simply disappear into oblivion as those of deceased Lemurians had for countless millennia? Or were they punished for the blasphemy of their new gods? Because the afterlife was so uncertain, the Lemurians obsessed over the secrets of immortality.

The first sorcerer to have any notable success was Faltrah Lem's grandson, Andrith the Golden, but his arcane workings had an unintended side effect. By his father's decree, Andrith performed a ritual over the gathered Lemurian nobles. He made no false promises. He only guaranteed his spell would extend the life of the Lemurians so they could number their years in centuries rather than decades and put off the punishment of the Bleak Ones for a short while longer. Andrith called it the first step to immortality. What he didn't say, and didn't know, was that the spell would strip the Lemurians of their shape-changing ability.

Over a century ago Faltrah Lem had decreed that the Lemurians must remain in human form. Soon after Lemuria's founding rumors spread through the realms of man about a new kingdom possessing war machines that were nigh-unstoppable. Faltrah Lem believed if mankind also learned an inhuman race ruled Lemuria, the kingdom's neighbors would unite against his people. Despite their power the Lemurians were few and a united mankind would prove too grave a threat for the young kingdom to overcome, so the Lemurians hid

their true nature, as they always had, by masquerading as men and women. To the eyes of outsiders, Lemuria was simply one more human kingdom struggling for dominance in a war-torn and chaotic world. And thanks to Andrith's spell, they would remain in human form forever more.

Andrith completed his ritual. For his success later generations revered his name as one of Lemuria's greatest sorcerers. For his failure his own father crucified him on one of the trees in the Plaza of Crystal Leaves. The Priest-King ordered Andrith's bones left on the tree to be engulfed into its trunk, so later generations could peer into the transparent crystal and see Andrith's body preserved in the tree's depths.

36,742 BC:

WAR WITH THE EMPYREANS

Despite centuries of sorcerous study, immortality eluded the Lemurians. But in their mad, desperate quest they discovered a race that seemed to know the answer to the riddle of immortality. These undying men and women were the Empyreans, cousins of humanity gifted with eternal life by the experiments of the mysterious Progenitors. The Lemurians were determined to have the secret of immortality from the Empyreans and declared war on them. They pursued the war with a will, but despite their magical might, the Lemurians were still mortal and the Empyreans far beyond mortal ken.

TO ASSAULT THE WALLS OF ARCADIA

The *Mandragalore* was not the first weapon the Lemurians brought to bear against the Empyreans. (Nor would it be the last....) It was just the height of the Lemurians' escalating attempts to batter down the gates of Arcadia and steal the Empyreans' secret of immortality. Here are three other attempts involving "super-weapons" the Lemurians have long since lost the secrets of creating. While King Arvad focuses his efforts on making the *Mandragalore* function once more, there's no reason he wouldn't be interested in the ones described below if he learned something of their current whereabouts.

The Ultra-Coruscator: The Ultra-Coruscator was a gleaming copper orb, three hundred feet across. From its surface protruded narrow thirty-foot-long pipes that sprayed a fine sheet of sparking *corusqua*. The magical liquid drew storm clouds around the orb, and like some immense lightning rod, the orb called the lightning to its surface. The Ultra-Coruscator rode the lightning into the sky, gathering energy in its depths... and when it held sufficient power, it unleashed the furious blast on whatever lay below it. The Lemurians set the Ultra-Coruscator to float above Arcadia and inflict destruction on the impregnable city of the Empyreans. For two days the city's defenses withstood the Ultra-Coruscator's attacks as impossibly large bolts of lightning crackled from the orb and flashed with a roar like thunder against Arcadia's defenses. But finally a handful of Empyreans wrapped chains of stone around the Ultra-Coruscator, dragged it over the sea, and submerged it in the water, where it exploded in a brilliant flash of light. (Or did it...?)

The Aeroreme Armada: Aeroremes were flying ships intended to bombard Arcadia from above while the

Lemurian army laid siege to its walls. Shaped like spindles with thin hulls of beaten bronze, the aeroremes were filled with *fulminor* to make them lighter than air. Wide triangular sails extended in all directions from the hull to allow the aeroreme to maneuver. Though the airships were truly a magical marvel, they were slow and clumsy — and since Empyreans can fly under their own power, the aeroremes were easy targets. Empyrean warriors quickly tore holes in the hulls, releasing the *fulminor*. The wounded aeroremes fell to earth in the midst of the Lemurian hordes. The crashing airships panicked the Lemurian soldiers, who retreated in a rout. Because the defeat was so embarrassing, the Priest-King executed the sorcerer who first suggested the use of aeroremes.

The Solar Tormentia: The Solar Tormentia were large frameworks supporting huge lenses of perfectly transparent *crystallos* that captured the Sun's light, amplified it, and fired it as a destructive beam of terrible heat. The Lemurians constructed an earthwork some distance away from the walls of Arcadia. Mole-Men strained to roll the Solar Tormentia into place. When the Sun rose, the Lemurians fired on the Arcadia — only to have the destructive beams reflected back at their army when the Empyreans captured the beams in huge mirrors and turned them on the Lemurians. The beams cut burning swathes through the Lemurian army, taking the lives of thousands, because the Lemurian commanders foolishly attempted to redirect the cannons rather than immediately covering the lenses and ceasing fire. The sorcerer who invented the Solar Tormentia took his own life before the Priest-King could order his execution.

36,694 BC:**“DELIVER OUR FOES”**

A sorcerer whose name would later be expunged from the histories of the kingdom invented a weapon to bring low the Empyreans. It possessed power enough to boil the oceans, to bring the Moon down from the sky, to sink continents — all this and more the sorcerer promised the Priest-King. He gave it a simple name: *Mandragalore*. The word was a prayer to the Bleak Ones, those forsaken gods of the ancient Lemurians. In the old tongue it meant: “Deliver our foes.”

Perhaps the gods heard the prayer and decided to punish their scornful worshippers. Perhaps the sorcerer made some small but crucial error in his calculations and schematics. Perhaps the hated Empyreans learned of the *Mandragalore* and somehow sabotaged it. Or perhaps no mortal could safely wield the power of such a terrible weapon. For when it was at last turned on the Empyreans, when the Lemurians gathered to celebrate their imminent victory, energy exploded from the *Mandragalore*. A rippling wave of coruscating power leveled the capital city and outlying areas; the resulting shock waves cracked the island as if it had been struck by a titanic hammer flung from the heavens.

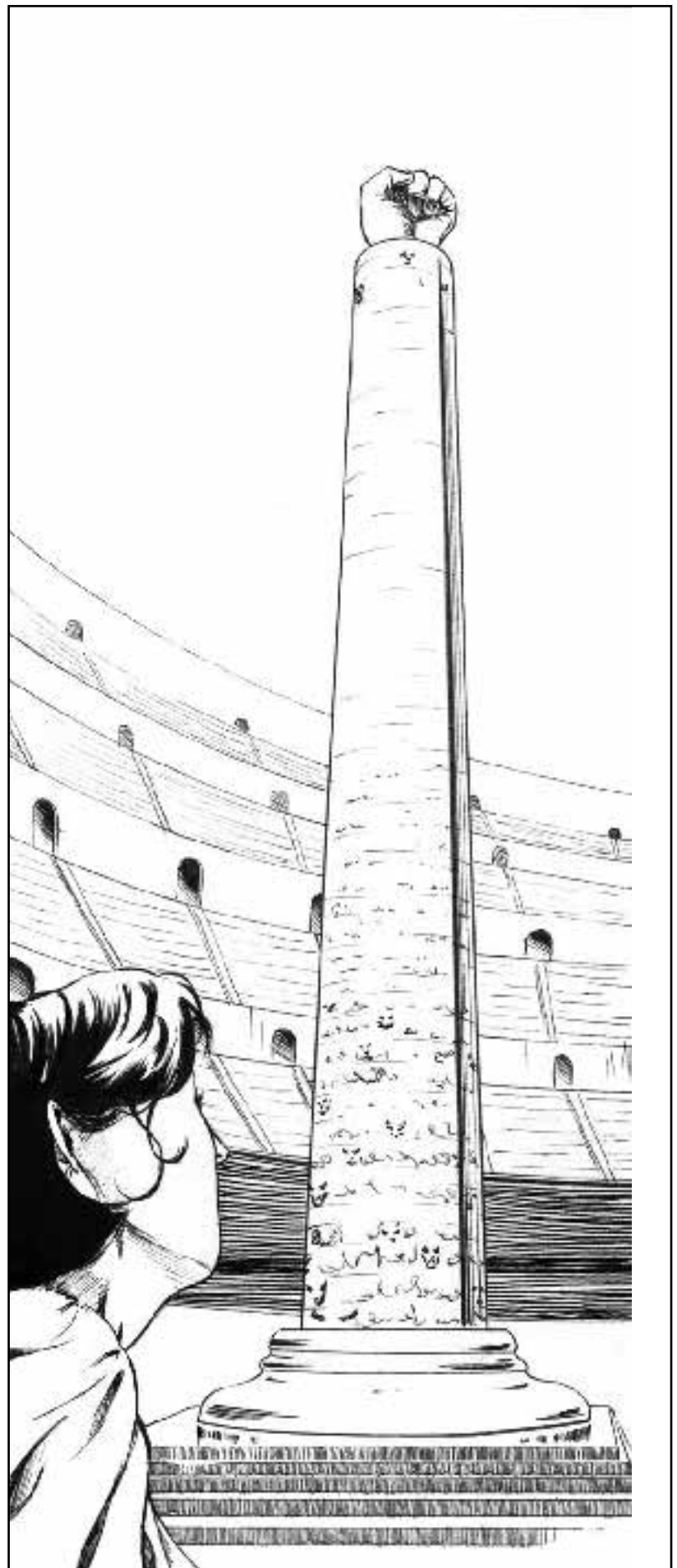
Lemuria, broken and burning, sank beneath the waves.

**36,694 TO 32,000 BC:
AFTER THE FALL**

Over the next few months, all of Lemuria sank to the ocean’s bottom, the whole of the archipelago following the descent of its main island. During that time earthquakes shook the land incessantly and volcanoes arose, only to collapse in explosions of lava and ash mere days later — but despite these calamities the Lemurians who survived the *Mandragalore* worked day and night to preserve the remaining portions of their kingdom.

The sorcerers knew they did not possess the power to halt Lemuria’s descent, and they did not waste their precious time attempting to keep the islands above the waves. Instead they adapted their remaining habitations to life below the waters. They erected high-arching domes of *crystallos* and sealed the *ignaetium* mines. In the domes they placed arcane condensers, thick shafts of bronze that protruded from the dome into the ocean. Powered by arcane furnaces, the condensers sucked in water, boiled it, separated it into its elemental constituents, and released the resulting oxygen into the dome to provide it with an atmosphere. This atmosphere was further supplemented by the fungus that grew in the cool ashes of *ignaetium*. This fungus also glowed with a dim rose and orange radiation, providing a source of light for the underwater land.

Lemuria spent several centuries recovering from the calamity of the *Mandragalore*, but eventually her people rebuilt and resettled their capital city, placing the largest and strongest dome over it



to protect it from the sea. Then they retooled their war machines, engineering them to prowl on the surface, under the waves, and even through the earth. Though they still lacked the secret of immortality, they emerged from near extinction to once again rise to dominance in the world.

For a time they abandoned their war with the Empyreans. Though the Lemurians still hungered for immortality, the Priest-King commanded that Lemuria wait before attacking again. The kingdom had lost many of its best and brightest to the war. It had thrown incredible marvels against the walls of Arcadia — marvels no other human kingdom could have resisted. If they had turned these energies to the conquest of lesser races, Lemuria would rule the world. The Priest-King stated that first Lemuria should establish an empire, then besiege Arcadia's walls with an army tens of millions strong. Though in later years some individuals and small groups defied his orders, most Lemurians obeyed the Priest-King.

Lemuria started by establishing small outposts on nearby coasts, then moved to conquer surrounding kingdoms. Some of these kingdoms came into the empire by truce, others by the sword... but no matter whether the victory was diplomatic or martial, they all served the Priest-King of Lemuria, who ruled them with an iron fist.

It was an empire that would span the millennia, its borders ever-increasing until finally it encountered another empire, one that rivaled Lemuria's sorcerous might — the Dominion of Atlantis.

32,000 TO 30,600 BC: ENEMIES OF ATLANTIS

During the time later known as the Atlantean Age, few nations could withstand the armies of Atlantis, let alone challenge them for dominance of the world — but one of the kingdoms that never bent the knee to immortal Vondarien, ruler of Atlantis, was Lemuria. In fact just the opposite was true, at least in the early years of the Atlantean Age: few were sure Atlantis would prove the superior kingdom.

Despite the ferocity of the battles fought between the two lands, Lemuria's eventual defeat was undramatic — a slow and subtle decline noticed too late. Each decade one or two client states left the Lemurian Empire to join the Dominion. Sometimes the Lemurians took back these lands, at least in part, but usually they were unable to defeat the land's army, supported as it was by its newfound Atlantean allies. After nearly a thousand years of conflict, Lemuria found itself driven back to its undersea lands, which remained unassailable because of their inimical environment and sorcerous defenses. But Atlantis found another way to strike at its enemy: it cut the Lemurians off economically, making it illegal for Lemurian piskeres to dock in the ports of Atlantis or its allies.

It was a dark time for Lemuria. It was locked out of the world's affairs, able to resort only to guerrilla raids and other small assaults to strike at its enemy. The once-proud Lemurian realm was

now little more than a nuisance to the great empire Atlantis had become. But then the Priest-King received a visitor. An emissary came from Sharna-Gorak the Destroyer, formerly Dalsith the Orphan before the Shining Darkness transformed him into a creature of monstrous aspect and granted him godlike power in return for his soul. This dark emissary called on the Priest-King of Lemuria in search of allies.

Sharna-Gorak's rage, unbridled power, and thirst for vengeance would shape the future of the Earth. The Lemurians were his willing allies in this world-shattering conflict.

30,599 TO 30,598 BC: THE CLOCKWORK ENGINE

The war soon became an increasingly personal battle between the two nearly divine beings, Vondarien and Sharna-Gorak. It could only end in destruction — a destruction so great as to rival the cataclysm that ended the Turakian Age. Lemuria had little interest in losing not only the war but its very civilization, and the Priest-King began to prepare his people for the end. He did not intend to go morosely and resigned into oblivion — he planned for Lemuria to survive the coming furor.

He secretly called the cream of Lemurian nobility, both sorcerers and warriors, back to the capital city. In their place he sent those he deemed incompetent and his political rivals to take command of the Lemurian armies fighting with Sharna-Gorak and his allies. Then the Priest-King set the assembled sorcerers to the task of saving Lemuria. The result of their arcane studies was the Clockwork Engine.

The machine's workings — its gigantic gears and rods, its vast springs, its engines that sparked the *corusqua* in its vats and drove the tidal mills — occupied a vast substratum directly below the capital city. Along the inner edge of the city's *crystallos* dome ran three circular tracks. Protruding from the tracks were curving armatures topped by orbs of various materials that represented the movement of the universe through time: the innermost track represented the Sun and Moon, the middle one the planets, and the third the stars.

When the sorcerers first set the Clockwork Engine into motion, it mimicked the movements of the heavens — mimicked the passing of time itself. The armatures moved along the three concentric rings, and as they traveled around the rings, the armatures traced the path of the heavenly bodies they represented on the inside of the city's dome, ascending and descending along the curve of the dome, and then disappearing below the surface entirely. When the final battle between Vondarien and Sharna-Gorak began and the Earth itself trembled seemingly fearful for its fate, the Priest-King of Lemuria stood before a vast control panel with a dizzying array of levers and dials. Feverishly he struggled to work the control panel — it seemed as if all the forces of nature resisted his efforts. Then, slowly but surely, the Clockwork Engine's armatures slowed, almost grinding to halt... and with it, so did time for Lemuria and its inhabitants.

30,597 BC TO 10,000 BC: FROM OUT OF THE ANCIENT PAST

The Clockwork Engine slowed time so that while ten thousand years passed in the outside world, only seconds passed for the Lemurians. While the Earth shattered around them, and then recovered from the Cataclysm, and civilizations arose once more, Lemuria and its inhabitants remained out of synch with time, temporal ghosts invulnerable to physical harm.

When they finally returned to the world, the Lemurians had not forgotten anything — neither their old vendettas against Atlantis and Arcadia, nor their obsession with the secrets of immortality — but their numbers were decimated and this new world was unfamiliar to them. Despite their best efforts, they could find no evidence of Atlantis (now sunk beneath the waves like their own land) or Arcadia (now removed to the icy wastes of Antarctica).

Instead of establishing an empire, an impossible task given their decimated population, the Lemurians attempted to secretly influence the societies around them. They infiltrated nascent cultures in what would later be known as Africa, India, and the Middle East, and eventually even ranged as far as Southeast Asia and South America. But two things stopped the Lemurians from exerting a greater influence.

First, soon after emerging from stasis, Lemurian agents in the surface world encountered wandering Emphyreans. The immortal Emphyreans

quickly recognized the mechano-mysticism of the Lemurians and sought to limit the harm they could cause in the newborn world. The two races waged a war in the shadows, the battles often fought between their minions, servants, and disciples among mankind and only hazily recalled in the surviving legends of these early human cultures.

Second, Lemuria itself was paralyzed by a civil war that broke out between a cabal of sorcerers and the Priest-King and his priests. The war eventually led to the creation of the Bronze King.

17,698 BC:

THE BRONZE KING

A sorcerer ordered the last descendent of Faltrah Lem, the current Priest-King Clymkris Lem, to join the rest of the priesthood in death. The execution took place in the new throne room. In this immense chamber, sitting on a throne of obsidian, was the gigantic construct of bronze and brass that would soon become Lemuria's Bronze King. Screaming with fear, Clymkris Lem dangled in a harness above the headless construct, the top of its neck open to reveal a cavity of bubbling green ooze inside its chest.

In the years before, civil war had broken out between the priesthood and a cabal of sorcerers. The magi had proven beyond a shadow of a doubt that the gods of Faltrah Lem were false, and these rebellious sorcerers blamed the calamities that had befallen Lemuria since its founding on the worship of these false gods. In the end the sorcerers won the civil war and implemented their plan to create a new king for Lemuria. No longer would Lemuria be a theocracy. Instead a magiconstruct of the sorcerers' crafting would rule over the land. Coldly



rational, the Bronze King could draw upon the collective knowledge of the Lemurians sacrificed to it whose memories were bound to its service.

Slaves worked the crane's winch, lowering Clymkris Lem into the ooze. As his feet slipped into the bubbling stuff, he screamed in agony — he could feel his flesh and bone disintegrating. Finally the ooze engulfed his whole body, burning everything away until only his brain remained. While his soul departed into the care of the Bleak Ones, his intellect was preserved in the heart of the Bronze King along with the brains of the other executed priests and the allies of the Priest-King in the civil war. The enslaved brains provided the Bronze King with its intellect — its knowledge of Lemurian affairs and history, of war and strategy, of magic.

The sorcerers lowered the final piece of their construct into place, placing the Bronze King's head on its neck. The head had three faces, one for each of its duties: the face of a *tallar*-falcon for magical matters; the face of a *chala*-lion for martial matters; and the face of a beatific child for civic matters. With a sharp grinding sound the head turned to show its beatific face. A hollow gurgling echoed from its chest cavity as its thoughts bubbled up from the minds preserved in the ooze. Plumes of smoke billowed from its nostrils and streamers slipped from between its lips as the smoke from its arcane furnaces filled the pipes, like those of an organ, that served as its larynx. In a voice like rumbling thunder that shook the halls of the throne room, the Bronze King spoke its first words and commanded the assembled sorcerers to kneel.

10,000 BC TO 1800 AD: THE SENILITY OF THE BRONZE KING

For over seven thousand years, the Bronze King led the Lemurians with a firm hand, but as the years passed and the Age of Legends became the Classical Age, the world's magic began to wane — and because of the decreasing magic, the Bronze King sank into senility.

It made pronouncements increasingly less often, and on those rare occasions when it spoke, it counseled an overly-cautious course for Lemuria. At the height of what the surface world called the Age of Reason, the Bronze King's commands became entirely senseless. It was wont to recite children's rhymes from the ancient past — songs remembered from Clymkris Lem's childhood in the Atlantean Age — in a voice that sounded like a god's.

With the decline of their leader, the Lemurians, already badly inbred, sank further into degeneracy and decadence. They only began to recover when an outsider came to rule over them.

1800 TO THE PRESENT: THE NEW KING

Two hundred years ago Arvad the Empyrean gained the epithet Betrayer and departed his birthplace of Arcadia. He had attempted to seize the throne and failed. To him, if no one else, the situation was obvious. The king, his brother Hazor, was unfit to rule — or at least not so fit as Arvad himself. Arvad was superior in every way except in the love of the populace. And what matter that?

Arvad departed with a purpose and destination in mind. He would go to subterranean Lemuria, where the furnaces burned hot night and day, illuminating the caverns with blood red light. He would leave behind the paradisiacal gardens and plazas of Arcadia and descend into the underground pits of Lemuria.

He recognized the parallel between himself and the Satan of John Milton's epic. He quipped to King Hazor as he stepped out of Arcadia: "Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heav'n." *But*, he thought to himself, *unlike Satan I will return... and when I do, I will rule both Heaven and Hell.*

Arvad knew the Lemurians, long-standing enemies of his race, had created a weapon not even the mighty Empyreans could have withstood — the terrible *Mandragalore*. Arvad would forge the Lemurians' hatred into a sharp blade, a sword worthy of battle with the Empyreans. Then he would use the *Mandragalore* to force open the gates of Arcadia, batter his way through the protections of Master Builder Zadin. It would take time, perhaps even centuries, but as an immortal Arvad had time aplenty.

And so it came to pass. Arvad journeyed to Lemuria and set about making himself king.

1854 AD: THE BRONZE KING KNEELS

A loud wrenching noise filled the Hall of the Bronze King as the construct stood up for the first time in all the millennia of its existence. The long-dead sorcerers who built the Bronze King had designed it for movement, so that it might fight if battle ever reached Lemuria, but never in its existence had it risen from its throne.

Standing before the Bronze King, gasping with astonishment as their ruler rose from his throne, were the assembled nobles of Lemuria. At their forefront was the Betrayer Arvad.

Arvad had promised the Lemurians the secret of immortality, which he claimed lay locked away in the Temple of Silence at the center of Arcadia... but only if the Lemurians named him their king. The Lemurian nobles would have dismissed the matter out of hand, but Khusor the Crooked, a young warrior of a prestigious House and respected by his peers, supported Arvad's proposal. He argued that Lemuria had sunk into degeneracy and decadence, and that Arvad's proposal was the only chance they had of regaining their former might. Though his words bordered on treachery because

they were contrary to the dictates of the Bronze King, Khusr found enough supporters to bring the issue before the ruler of the Lemurians.

The nobles who stood most vehemently against Arvad's proposal had few worries. All of them knew of the Bronze King's senility; they fully expected their ruler to speak some sing-song verse that they'd interpret as a refusal of Arvad's proposal... and then they would drag the impertinent Empyrean to their labs for dissection and further study.

But after Arvad explained his proposal to the Bronze King, events took an unexpected turn. Rising to its full fifty-foot height, the Bronze King walked with gigantic strides to where Arvad stood, the ground trembling with each of the construct's steps. All three of its faces speaking at once, the Bronze King proclaimed the worthiness of Arvad's plans. Then it knelt on one knee and bowed to the Empyrean. Its head turning so each face could speak in turn, it swore fealty to the new ruler of the Lemurians, naming him King Arvad the First.

The assembled Lemurians stood shocked, but they quickly recovered their senses — they knew that those slow to swear fealty to the new king would be marked as potential traitors. Following the lead of the former ruler, they knelt to Arvad and swore him their allegiance. None of them knew Arvad had used the vast powers of his Empyrean mind to enslave the Bronze King to his will.

1939 AD:

IN LEAGUE WITH THE AXIS

In a small reception room illuminated with a blue-white light emitted from globes of *corusqua* that hung from the ceiling, Arvad sat at a long table of ebony decorated with inset ivory. To his left and right, sitting in the chairs nearest him, were the members of his cabinet. Directly opposite Arvad sat Oberfuehrer Gunter Gottschalk, SS colonel and member of the RSvKg; to his left and right were Gottschalk's officers and the U-boat captain, Friedrich Jaeger.

For a moment Arvad studied the haughty surface dwellers in their primitive wool uniforms with gaudy decorations on their chest. Then he took up the quill and signed the parchment before him, allying Lemuria with the Reich. The agreement granted Lemuria the coasts of Eastern Africa and the Persian Gulf, and all of India. It also arranged for an exchange of emissaries — who, in truth, would serve as both hostages and spies. Several Nazis, including Oberfuehrer Gottschalk, would remain in Lemuria to study mechano-mysticism, while a small group of Lemurians would journey to Berlin to study the science and industrial factories of the Reich.

Arvad had spent almost a century attempting to revitalize Lemuria. Not only had its magical knowledge become a shadow of its former self — most importantly to Arvad, no sorcerer still

LEMURIAN PLOTS DURING THE GOLDEN AGE

Lemuria's entry into World War II had little effect on the outcome, but its psciremes largely controlled the Persian Gulf until its retreat in 1943, making crude oil even more scarce than it already was.

The Ace Of Spades And His Cards: When hostilities started, expatriate American aviator Mickey "Ace of Spades" Spader departed Southeast Asia, intending to offer his services to the RAF, but he didn't get any further than the British Raj. Assigned to the air defense of Bombay, he reassembled his old company from World War I, popularly known as The Cards, and for five years, flying Sopwith Camels dragged out of mothballs because of the sudden threat, the daring pilots engaged Lemurian ornithopters in dogfights and kept the ports open for the duration of the war. The Sopwith Camels were able to challenge the Lemurian ornithopters for air superiority only because of the assistance of a mysterious monkey who had the intelligence of a man (if not more intelligence than a man...). Nicknamed Monkey Wrench by the pilots, the ape served the Cards as a mechanic, making many modifications to the Camels. Though Spader never learned Monkey Wrench's true origins, he reported in his memoirs that the "Hindoos" revered Monkey Wrench and called him Hanuman.

In The Deserts Of Arabia: In early 1940 Commander Nyl, the Lemurian in charge of taking control of the Tigris for the Axis, wrote to his House's patriarch: "I have encountered a wonderful enemy, as if they rode their horses out of the ancient histories. They call themselves the Bedouins, but in truth they in all ways resemble the savage Barluthans, those horsemen our ancestor so famously conquered over thirty millennia ago. I feel that this is a sign, some sort of portent, and I intend to repeat the deed of our ancestor to our House's everlasting glory..." The Bed-

ouins resembled those ancient enemies of the Lemurians in all ways except ease of conquest. Commander Nyl lost his life in 1941, and his demise was followed by the death of his two successors. The heroic efforts of the Bedouins kept a trickle of oil flowing to the British Empire during desperate times.

Professor Weird And The Golem Gang: After the surrender of Madagascar in 1940, the Lemurians occupied the ports of the island nation, and there they learned of a French archaeological expedition led by Professor Hugo DeWird, an instructor at the Sorbonne, that left for the interior only days before their attack. The destination for the expedition was a lost city reportedly located in the mountains at the center of the island. After some discussion the Lemurian nobles came to the conclusion that it was Sykrin-Pir, once an important port in the Lemurian Empire. The commander in charge of Madagascar organized his own expedition and raced Professor DeWird to the site. The Lemurians arrived a few days later, and a battle began between the two groups. DeWird's team was quickly forced back to the temple at the center of the city — and there took place a startling event. As explosion after explosion shook the temple, DeWird and his assistants retreated further into the depths of the shrine until they arrived in a central chamber. Here five statues stood at the points of a five-pointed star. While DeWird bravely kept guard near the entrance, the other five huddled together at the center of the star — then found their consciousness pulled free of their bodies and placed in the statues, which were actually magiconstructs. Taking control of the golems, they defeated the Lemurians, then escaped to Great Britain where they became the freedom fighters called Professor Weird and the Golem Gang.

LEMURIAN PLOTS IN THE SILVER AND BRONZE AGES

Lemuria had limited contact with surface world during the 1960s, '70s, and early '80s — with the exception of the seizure of the Lunal-Kinesis Projector, its military never fully mobilized against the surface world — but it did confront superheroes on several occasions. Here are a few of the Lemurian-related plots that occurred during the 1960s and 1970s.

Presto Change-o And The Abracadabra Wand: Presto Change-o was a supervillain active in the mid-to-late 1960s who possessed the Abracadabra Wand. With the wand he could change objects from one material to another. His typical *modus operandi* was to turn the doors of bank vaults into paper and then steal the contents; in encounters with superheroes his usual tactic was to change a hero's costume to stone. Presto Change-o retired from supervillainy after his third prison sentence, then published his memoir, *Presto-Change-o And Now It's Gone!* In his book he recounts how throughout his career he was pursued by strangely-garbed men — his exact words are “dressed like they'd stepped out of an Edgar Rice Burroughs novel or Alex Raymond comic strip” — who sought to steal his Abracadabra Wand. Most critics thought this was mere paranoid raving, but Presto Change-o's parole officer found the former supervillain dead soon after the memoir was published. Since then, the Abracadabra Wand has turned up in the hands of several supervillains, but is currently missing. Like Zorran the Artificer's Philosopher's Stone, the Abracadabra Wand is a piece of the *Mandragalore's* missing fuel core, and Arvad has tried to track it down on several occasions without success.

alive understood the workings of the *Mandragalore* — but Arvad had failed at every turn to pull the Lemurian nobility from its lethargy. After long consultations with the Bronze King and a careful studying of the kingdom's long history, Arvad decided what Lemuria needed was a war.

When reports arrived that a primitive human ship was prowling the area, passing through the underwater depths in a search grid in an obvious effort to find Lemuria, Arvad ordered the ship's crew brought to him. Oberfurher Gottschalk explained current affairs and proposed the two nations become allies. Arvad had found his war.

Pisciremes set sail *en masse* from Lemuria and surfaced at strategic ports on the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean. From their decks ornithopters took to the air, and from their bowels hordes of Mole-Men under the command of Lemurian nobles made landfall. For the first time since the Atlantean Age, Lemuria announced its presence to the surface world. Although many mundane historians would later claim Lemurian technology was the result of Nazi super-science, a few with deeper knowledge of history — scholars who studied the forgotten ages of mankind — realized Lemuria had somehow survived the changes and upheavals of countless millennia. Her ancient people had returned to the world, still harboring imperial ambitions.

The Disappearance Of Trailblazer: Trailblazer was a superhero active on the West Coast for a short period during the 1970s. Possessed of incredible superspeed, Trailblazer was just becoming famous when he disappeared one night while racing from San Francisco to Los Angeles along the Pacific Coast Highway. The authorities never determined what happened to him. Lemurian forces ambushed and captured him. Secretly Trailblazer was a young Empyrean named Merkyr, and Arvad recognized him soon after he became active as a superhero. Lemurian sorcerers placed Merkyr in a coma in which he remains to this day. Arvad whiles away his free time invading Merkyr's subconscious and has brainwashed the hapless Empyrean. The king plans to use him against the Empyreans someday, but is still waiting for the right moment.

Lemurians In Space: In 1982, a piscireme breached off the Florida coast and proceeded to assault Cape Canaveral just before the space shuttle *Challenger* launched. Lemurians from the House of Urog quickly fought their way to the shuttle and hijacked it. Disobeying Arvad's command, they sought to reach an unidentified object in Earth's orbit. They believed the object was an ancient Lemurian outpost created by one of their ancestors. The rogue Lemurians reached the object to discover it was indeed an ancient space station. The US government enlisted the aid of the Justice Squadron, who reached the station soon after the Lemurians. After a pitched battle, the object was inadvertently launched into deep space. The Justice Squadron escaped, but the Lemurians were lost. NASA scientists have continued to track the object since then and place it near the asteroid belt.

1971 AD: THE LUNAL-KINESIS PROJECTOR

At the end of World War II, Lemurian forces retreated to their undersea domes. Though the Axis had lost the war, Arvad still achieved his primary goal: the Lemurian nobility had begun to regain its martial spirit. Arvad knew that to keep that spirit high, he had to continue to keep his subjects busy. When he received news that Lemurian sorcerers had located a device from Lemuria's past, he immediately set his Warlord to the task of securing the ancient super-weapon.

Called the Lunal-Kinesis Projector, the very top of the immense weapon had stood off the coast of Derbent, a city on the Caspian Sea, for time immemorial. It was corroded beyond recognition and eroded after millennia; the locals considered it nothing more than an unusual rocky outcropping, a part of the seascape they'd known since childhood... just as their parents, grandparents, and the generations before them had. In truth it was a Lemurian machine designed to move the Moon (and thus affect the world's oceans by disrupting the natural movements of the tides) — sorcerers had built it millennia ago in one of Lemuria's many attempts to defeat the Empyreans.

The problem with securing the immovable weapon was that Lemuria's main strength lay in its naval power, and the land bound by the Caspian Sea was inaccessible to Lemurian pisciremes. None of the commanders wanted to confront the Soviet military without naval support, so they decided to dig a tunnel from the Indian Ocean, under Iran, that

would allow the pisciremes to move unseen into the waters of the Caspian. It was a monumental task, but not an insurmountable one — the Earth's crust was already shot-through with tunnels and caverns, and it was only a matter of connecting these so they led where the Lemurians wanted to go.

Upon hearing this plan Arvad knew the effort was likely not worth the outcome. The sorcerers predicted digging the tunnel would require at least a decade, and as far as Arvad could tell, the Lunal-Kinesis Projector was unlikely to help him conquer Arcadia unless the sorcerers could redesign the weapon to pull the Moon from the heavens and put it on a collision course for Arcadia. But Arvad also knew the effort would keep his subjects engaged in the task of restoring Lemuria to greatness, so he gave his approval.

In the fall of 1971, the Lemurian military once again moved *en masse* against a surface world enemy, its pisciremes breaching off the coast of Derbent and its infantry moving to secure the city. Soon after, sorcerers began to test the Lunal-Kinesis Projector to make sure it was still operational.

When reports of events in Derbent began to trickle into Moscow, the Soviets lowered a ironclad veil of secrecy over the area, forcibly relocating all foreigners and noisily threatening retaliation if they caught Western spy planes violating their airspace. They did not want Western powers to know they faced an unknown enemy with an unknown purpose, who may or may not possess superior might to the Soviet military. Though Western intelligence agencies noted the massive troop movements to the

area and were able to report on some of the fighting, few in the West knew what was going on. (Even today most of the information about the Lemurian attack at Derbent is unknown, and those who do know consider it a conspiracy theory — just one more instance of a Soviet cover-up, perhaps an effort to hide a military coup attempt from Western eyes.)

The situation became even more grave several days later when NASA astronomers noted, much to their shock, that the Moon had shifted its course and position. This caused catastrophic flooding and weather phenomena, and most analysts quickly tied together the two events. The Soviet government refused all offers of assistance and still wouldn't tell the world what was going on. The situation soon caused a flare-up in already tense international relations, and the President even assembled a strike team of American superheroes with the intention of having them violate Soviet airspace in a desperate attempt to stop whatever villain was causing the catastrophe.

In the end the Soviet Union didn't need the help. The Soviet Army, with the assistance of the People's Legion, forced the Lemurian invaders to retreat and took back the city of Derbent. But after the bloody battle, the rocky outcropping so familiar to the Derbentans was gone. The Lemurians, seeing the end to their occupation and discovering the Lunal-Kinesis Projector still functioned, disassembled the super-weapon and took it back to Lemuria for further study. Arvad and his commanders declared the military excursion to seize the weapon a success.

LEMURIA TODAY



Lemuria has experienced a steady decline since the end of the Atlantean Age. Over the course of forty thousand years (although ten thousand of those passed in the blink of an eye), it has lost its empire, its martial spirit, and its magical knowledge. Perhaps most disturbing to the Lemurians, at least to those who rouse themselves from apathy long enough to consider the matter, is its lost arcane lore. With the coming of King Arvad, the Lemurians have learned more and more of the outside world, and they have recognized that the nature of magic has changed — its power has grown stronger, though in different shapes and ways than when their empire was at its height. The Lemurians have a detailed written history dating back to the days of Faltrah Lem and know more than most about the nature of the world's magic. But what they do not understand is why Lemurian magic has remained stagnant while magic elsewhere has grown more powerful. Arvad's reversed this decline to some extent, but all he's really done is motivate the Lemurians to repair ancient devices and build new ones following instructions written down millennia ago.

The last truly impressive feat of Lemurian mechano-mystical engineering was the creation of Shirak the Destructor several thousand years ago — and even this, though impressive in a brutish

way, is a pale shadow of such devices as the Bronze King, the Clockwork Engine, and the *Mandragalore*. When a Lemurian sorcerer considers the matter honestly, he realizes Shirak is little more than over-sized golem (although he would never admit that to an outsider). The Bronze King is an artificially created intellect; the Clockwork Engine can manipulate time itself, and the *Mandragalore* can conceivably destroy entire continents, maybe the entire world — but the wrecking power of the Destructor doesn't extend beyond its gigantic fists and the range of its blazing eye-beams. Compared to the magnificent accomplishments of ancient Lemurian sorcerers, Shirak seems shabby indeed.

However, despite the antiquity of these devices, Lemuria is still a power to be reckoned with. If Arvad ever achieves his goal of reactivating the *Mandragalore*, he will possess one of the most powerful weapons to ever exist in all the ages of the world.

GEOGRAPHY

Modern Lemuria consists of four domed locations and a seemingly endless warren of underground tunnels on a craggy shelf midway down a deep sea trench. The trench is located in the Indian Ocean approximately equidistant between the small island nations of Seychelles and Maldives. Over

four thousand fathoms deep, the Lemurian trench is currently uncharted and unexplored. Lemuria itself is a little under two thousand fathoms (3.6 kilometers, or 1800") below the surface of the ocean, and though the four domes glow with a faint light from their illuminated interiors, the chthonic depths of the ocean quickly squelch the illumination and the light is only visible once a person is almost on top of the domes themselves.

Outside of the domes the area is entirely inimical to human life. No normal human can survive the depths without a great deal of protection, and even most submarines can't go that deep — for example, even the impressive UNTIL submersible, the *Aegir* (page 128-130 of UNTIL: *Defenders Of Freedom*), can only reach depths of 650 meters (325") before being crushed by the high pressure. Furthermore, no sensory or detection devices utilized by the outside world (even most, if not all, of the ones used by superhumans) can penetrate such stygian depths.



All of this has kept the surface world from discovering the exact location of Lemuria. Even if an organization like UNTIL uncovered Lemuria's location, mounting an attack on the Lemurians would require building a fleet of highly-specialized and very expensive submarines.

THE DOMES

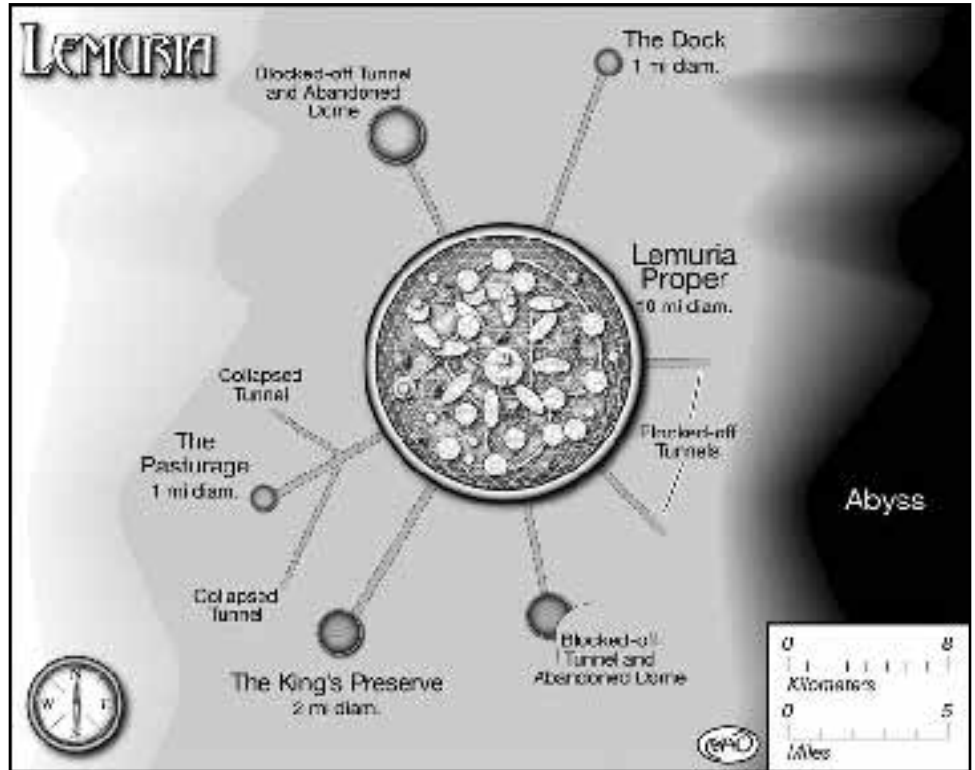
Nestled in rocky crags are the four domes of mystically-hardened *crystallos* that make up modern Lemuria. The domes are geodesic, twenty feet thick, and of a milky white color. Once Lemuria occupied many other domes, all clustered in the same general area, but over the millennia some of these were crushed by the ocean depths as the shifting continents carried Lemuria deeper below the waves, while others were simply abandoned by the dwindling population. Arvad has dispatched sorcerers to investigate the feasibility of making the abandoned domes habitable, but for the time being he has no use for them and they remain empty.

The largest of the domes, where the Lemurians live, is ten miles across and a mile high at its highest point — this dome is simply referred to as Lemuria. The other three are smaller and serve specific functions in Lemurian society. One is a port for the Lemurian's fleet of pisciremes and is a mile across; it's called the Dock. Similar in size to the Dock, the second dome is a farm where Mole-Men cultivate and gather food for their masters; it's called the Pasturage. The third dome, two miles in diameter, is the King's Preserve, where Lemurians can hunt the magiconstructs that are the place's fauna.

The Dock

This dome serves as a port for pisciremes, a dry dock for building new pisciremes or repairing old ones, and provides the sole means of access to Lemuria from the outside world. Halfway up the outside of the dome are 200 ports (though the entire Lemurian fleet is only fifty pisciremes). Each port consists of an extensible boarding tube that attaches to the starboard side of a piscireme and leads to an airlock for entering and exiting the dome. Arranged in a circle at the top of the dome are five large portals, each closed by planes of *crystallos* that iris open and closed, which allow the Lemurians to bring pisciremes (or similarly large objects) inside the dome.

The inside of the dome from fifty feet above the ground to the very top is crowded with large ramps, walkways, and risers; large cables and chains attached to pulleys and winches stretch from top to bottom, left to right. Golems perform the heavy lifting in the docks, and when not in use they stand motionless on square platforms located throughout the levels of the



dome. On the ground level are the workshops and foundries where the Lemurians oversee Mole-Men manufacturing their engines of war. Although an ingenious system of vents and locks allows smoke to escape from the dome, the whole place is murky and gloomy with gusts and whirls of ash-laden smoke rising from the stacks on the ground.

THE CONNECTING TUNNELS

At the outer edge of the dome just underground — almost deep enough to insult a Lemurian's dignity by treating him as a Mole-Man traveling the subterranean depths — is the tunnel that runs from the Dock to Lemuria. Slender tubes of transparent *crystallos* run along either side of the tunnel, bolted to the stone walls with brackets, and inside the tubes is sparking *corusqua*. A platform decorated at its front and back with the head of a demonic ram provides transportation to and from Lemuria. Lightning discharges from the tubes of *corusqua* on either side of the tunnel cause the platform to hover above the ground and provide its motive force. The platform can reach a top speed of a hundred miles per hour, but usually travels at half that; it's 9 meters long and 6 meters wide (30 feet x 20 feet, or 4.5" x 3"). At 30 meters (100 feet, or 15") in diameter, the tunnel has plenty of room for both the platform and ornithopters flying between domes. (Similar tunnels connect all the domes of Lemuria.)

Lemuria Proper

The inside of the largest dome holds an ancient and glorious city, a testament to the former greatness of Lemuria. The city consists of majestic palaces of bronze and stone standing on large estates filled with cultivated gardens and statuary of marble, bronze, or adamantine. From the center

PROPERTIES OF THE DOMES

Unless you want to see Lemuria removed from the face of the Earth, you should consider the domes, especially the one protecting Lemuria proper, indestructible. Even a single small breach in a dome would bring the ocean crashing in to pulp the inhabitants. For game purposes, each dome has the following properties:

—Provides Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing; Safe Environments: Intense Cold, High Pressure).

—Lemuria's dome is DEF 30, BODY 30, Hardened (x3). The other three are DEF 25, BODY 25, Hardened (x2).

—Each dome has 15 points Power Defense, and everyone inside the dome have 15 points Mental Defense against Mental Powers used by people outside the dome.

—Attempts to detect the domes suffer a -10 penalty to PER Rolls (in addition to any Range Modifiers or conditional penalties).

of each estate, towering above the sprawling palace, rises a tower of silvery adamantine which serves as landing deck for the ornithopters that provide transportation from one side of the city to the other. Here and there stand ziggurats — meeting halls, temples, shrines. Running between estates are broad plazas and boulevards cobbled with blocks of gleaming *crystallos*, oftentimes colored sapphire, ruby, or emerald. Filling these wide open spaces are fountains that gurggle with sparkling waters or roar with fires that flow like liquid.

The architecture of the place is alien to human eyes. Its closest cousin would be a combination of Baroque and Art Deco. Numerous onion-like domes top the palaces, and between the domes are flat stretches of roof decorated with mosaics of intricate geometric patterns. The stone used in construction, typically marble or limestone, is always adorned with bas reliefs showing demonic faces, elemental beings, and similar subjects. The palaces' outside walls are frequently sheathed in bronze, brass, and copper plating, and these are fluted with shallow runnels or molded with narrow streamers that gracefully run the plating's length.

The interior of the dome glows with a soft rose, orange, and purple light as if existing in a perpetual twilight. Its illumination comes from long gardens of a fungus that grows in the ashes of inert *ignaetium*, and gutters of viscous purple slime, the byproduct of fermented *corusqua*, that line the place's streets.

Heat rises up from the ground in Lemuria, generated by the arcane furnaces below the surface. The temperature ranges between 21 and 27 degrees Celsius (70 and 80 degrees Fahrenheit).

GENERAL FEATURES

Several features of Lemuria proper stand out among the general splendor.

The Palaces

The palaces — one for each House of Lemuria (see below) — are vast and consist mostly of large, mostly empty rooms. A Lemurian noble considers a six by six meter room with a nine-meter tall ceiling (20 x 20 feet, with a 30 foot ceiling, or 3" x 3" x 4.5") just barely large enough for a small sitting room containing two or three chairs clustered together, each with a small table. Any more furniture is claustrophobic and gauche, too similar to how a Mole-Man lives to be respectable.

Crystal globes filled with agitated *corusqua* light the rooms. The light is typically a glaring blue-white, but some more audacious and daring Houses use globes of colored crystal to create illumination of different shades. The floors are stone or tiled, and never carpeted. The walls are either ornamented stone or metal. No part of a wall is left unadorned; it's all covered with demonic shapes in interlocking, stomach-churning patterns that can occupy a person's eye indefinitely as he tries to find the beginning or end of the pattern. The ceilings are decorated with gemstone or colored *crystallos* mosaics that show scenes from the House's past.

Most palaces are only one story, plus subterranean levels and secret servant passages for Mole-Man servants. (It's an offense punishable by death for a Mole-Man to travel hallways intended for the palace's residents and guests.) Once Lemurians used human slaves captured from subjugated kingdoms as household servants, but those days are long passed — now they must make do with clumsy Mole-Men who look very out of place in their livery. At isolated locations on the estate are numerous three- or four-story towers that serve as workshops for the House's sorcerers. Some of these towers have stood locked since the earliest days of the Age of Legends, the contents of their labs and storerooms left untouched since their last occupant died millennia ago.

At the kingdom's height there were sixty noble Houses of Lemuria, each of whom maintained a palace in the capital city. Now there are only twelve Houses, each with barely enough members to fill half a palace, so much of the capital consists of abandoned palaces and estates. Arvad's own Mole-Men servants keep the uninhabited palaces from falling into disrepair and prevent their estates from becoming overgrown — but despite this, walking the boulevards of Lemuria is like making one's way through the ghost of a city.

Ornithopter Ports

Ornithopters are the primary means of transport in the city, and though streets connect all the locations, only a noble taking an idle stroll uses them. (It's illegal for Mole-Men to travel the streets of Lemuria, and they only do so when a Lemurian noble uses them to carry something to a palace and accompanies them; for other purposes, the Mole-Men must descend into the underground pits and travel the tunnels.) Each palace has a single port tower of adamantine, two hundred feet high, where ornithopters land.

A port is narrow, six meters (twenty feet, or 3") in diameter, from base to top. A lift operated by a large magiconstruct — a golem with only a torso who resides in a subterranean chamber and uses his large arms and hands pulls a chain to raise or lower the lift — carries nobles from the surface to a round platform, fifty feet in diameter, at the very top of the tower. Decorating the edge of the platform are large demonic faces made from gleaming silver and bronze; the faces are in the shape of whatever magical creature or demon serves as the Lemurian House's patron and allow easy identification of which port belongs to which House.

Ziggurats

Ziggurats — stair-stepped metal pyramids ranging from fifty to a hundred feet tall — stand at various locations in Lemuria. Most of these are temples and shrines to the gods of Faltrah Lem built according to the occult geometries he dictated to his priesthood long ago. Since the crowning of the Bronze King, they have stood abandoned. Faltrah Lem gave the Lemurians four gods, one for each of the alchemical marvels that form the backbone of Lemurian mechano-mysticism: Nolor-Khan, Dweller in Smoke; Rareesha the Scorched

Goddess; Manteen, Lord of the Shard; and Og-Slyntal, the Voice of Lightning. Though speaking their names is forbidden by dictate of the Bronze King, all Lemurians know of the four gods and their purpose.

UNIQUE LOCATIONS

Some special locations of note in Lemuria proper include:

The Amphitheater Of The *Mandragalore*

Standing to the west of Lemuria's center is the site of the Empire's greatest failure: a large circular amphitheater from the center of which rises the infamous engine of destruction, the *Mandragalore*.

The amphitheater was the only building to survive the destruction unleashed by the malfunctioning super-weapon. Made of marble, it has five levels; seated on those levels are the fossilized skeletons of the Lemurian nobles who lost their lives when the *Mandragalore* exploded and sank the island. The arcane radiation released on that cursed day burned away the nobles' flesh, but left their skeletons and finery strangely changed, making them harder than adamantine, even as hard as the treated *crystallos* of Lemuria's dome.

The explosion of arcane energy was so sudden the spectators had not time to cringe — the skeletons sit with their backs rigidly straight, their skulls tilted up so their eyeless sockets can stare at the heights of the *Mandragalore* for eternity. The surviving Lemurians only removed one skeleton from the place, that of the sorcerer who built the engine of destruction. Tradition dictates those other skeletons must remain in the amphitheater until they

THE MANDRAGALORE DEFINED

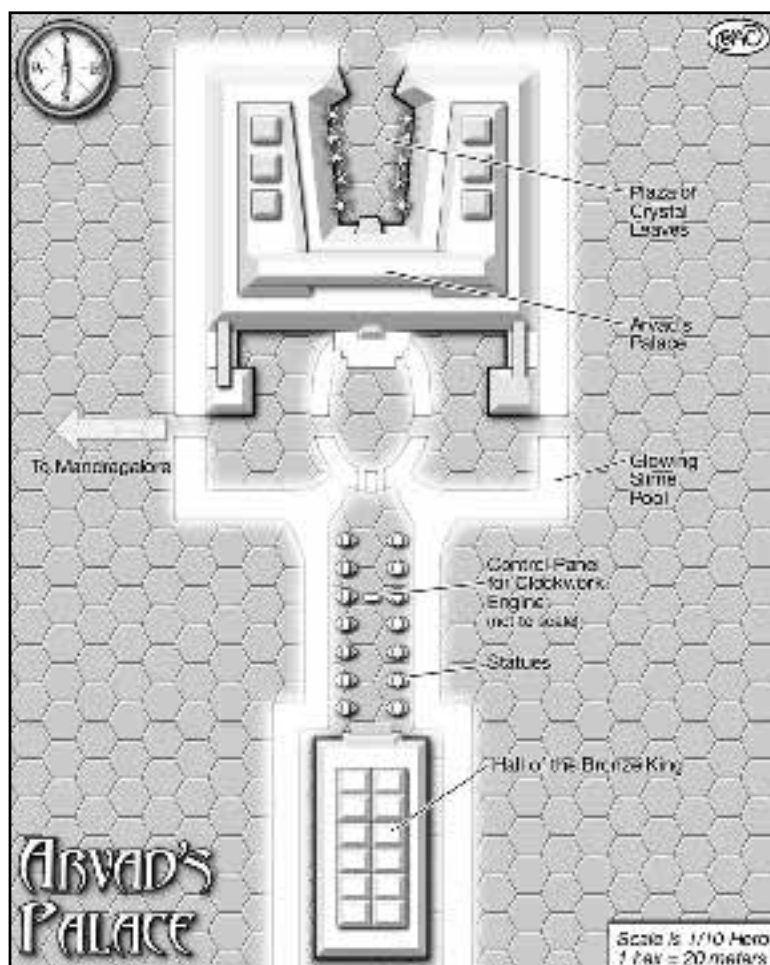
The *Mandragalore* is a doomsday device... and more to the point, a plot device. As such, it should do whatever you need it to do to suit the plot of an adventure.

However, as shown in the history of Lemuria, the *Mandragalore* has a single purpose: to cause catastrophe and calamity to strike over a large area. In game terms:

Major Transform 55d6 (normal land mass into catastrophe-ravaged land mass, heals gradually over decades), MegaRange (1" = 1,000 km; +1) (1,650 Active Points); OAF Immobility (-2), Extra Time (1 Hour; -3), Activation Roll 11- (-1), Side Effect (on failed Activation Roll Mandragalore fires with No Range; -1). Total cost: 206 points.

For ease of adjudication, consider a continent to have 82 BODY; smaller landmasses have less.

The catastrophes caused by the *Mandragalore* can be any natural phenomena — earthquakes, floods, fires, tempests, tsunamis, blizzards, tornadoes, and more — but their occurrence is decidedly unnatural in frequency and savagery, and the *Mandragalore* produces multiple phenomena, not a single phenomenon. The unnatural phenomena usually end after no more than a month (plenty of time to wipe out any Earthly civilization), but the effects of the attack may take decades or centuries to rebuild, repair, or otherwise fix (if they can be fixed at all).



witness the *Mandragalore* successfully used against the Emphyreans.

The *Mandragalore* itself is a tall column, 120 meters (393 feet, or 60") high with a diameter of fifteen meters (fifty feet, or 7.5"). Its body is constructed of sixty two meter (six feet, or 1") wide brass rings. On opposite sides of each ring are demonic faces representing each of the sixty noble Houses, with the four-horned sneering face of the House of Lem on the very top ring. Topping the column is a clawed hand closed in a tight fist. Ancient texts report that when a sorcerer activates the *Mandragalore*, the sixty brass rings whirl at dizzying speeds, energy crackling and dancing on their surface; when the *Mandragalore* is ready to fire, the clawed hand opens its fingers to unleash the destructive energy at its target.

Arvad's Palace

Arvad's palace is the one formerly used by the ancient Priest-Kings. It's an immense place, the largest of the sixty palaces in Lemuria, located at the precise center of the city. It's decorated to Arvad's tastes, which reflect his fondness for humanity and its customs and cultures. (He thinks the Lemurian style is inexcusably bleak.) Each of the rooms' decor is in a style from a different era in human history; these range from a room dedicated to playing *weiqi* and decorated in the style of China's Han Dynasty, to a Roman bathing chamber, to a fully-modern recreation room that would suit the tastes of any wealthy American. The decor of some

THE LAST NAZI

Besides Arvad, only two people inhabit the King's palace. The first is Arvad's major domo, Khusor the Crooked. The second is Oberfurhrer Gunter Gottschalk. Gottschalk is ninety-five years old — and looks every year of it. He claims the magics and exotic cuisine of the Lemurians keep him alive and healthy. Arvad believes the man is too evil to die easily.

Gottschalk has a single large room in the palace. It's decorated with Nazi regalia: long red flags decorated with swastikas hang from the ceiling; poles topped with golden eagles stand at various points through the room.

Arvad long ago killed the other Nazis in Lemuria (telling Gottschalk they chose to return to Berlin), but he keeps Gottschalk around for two reasons. First, he's only person in all of Lemuria who can play chess at an acceptable level of skill. Second, in some ways — in cruel, barbaric ways native to humanity, but difficult for an Empyrean, even one as twisted as Arvad, to understand — Gottschalk is more cunning than Arvad, and over the decades he has become a valued advisor. Arvad has often thought about adding Gottschalk's brain to the Bronze King, and someday soon he plans to investigate the possibility.

of the chambers is taken from lost ages of mankind (including one chamber decorated in the Atlantean style, complete with ancient furnishings from the period, that never fails to unsettle Arvad's subjects).

The only room still decorated in the Lemurian style is the throne room itself. It's entirely devoid of furnishings except for the throne, an enormous chair made of a stone that shines like mother-of-pearl, which stands on a dais, and the Oraculus.

The Oraculus is a rectangular screen, three meters tall by nine meters wide (10 feet tall and 30 feet wide, or 1.5" x 4.5"), made from two panes of *crystallos*. When not in use it rests flat against the ceiling nine meters (30 feet, or 4.5") above the floor. Three pipes run from the top of the Oraculus to containers of liquid pigments of red, blue, and green in the ceiling. The Oraculus allows Arvad to view any location in Lemuria and its immediate vicinity. When activated, the screen slowly descends from the ceiling, swinging to a vertical position. The pigments rush through the pipes, flooding the space between the two panes of *crystallos* with swirls of color. The colors coalesce until an image forms on the screen. The controls for the Oraculus are located on the right arm of the throne. Ancient texts state that once the Oraculus could also look into the past, allowing the viewer to witness scenes of Lemuria from out of antiquity. Arvad, who wants to see the *Mandragalore* in action, has assigned a team of sorcerers the task of repairing the choral function of the Oraculus.

Hall Of The Bronze King

To the north of Arvad's palace, connected by a rectangular plaza where towering statues of shining adamantine stand at attention and the vast control panel for the Clockwork Engine has stood non-functional for nearly twenty thousand years, is the Hall of the Bronze King.

Three broad steps lead up from the plaza to the great bronze doors of the Hall, and from the doors a broad path made of crushed rubies runs to a throne of obsidian at the far northern end of the immense room. Lining the path are columns of *crystallos*, curving and twisting like thick plumes of smoke turned to stone.

The Bronze King has proven invaluable to Arvad. He's spent countless hours in conversation with the construct, its voice booming out answers to Arvad's questions about the history of Lemuria. But over the past several decades, the Bronze King has become harder for Arvad to keep enslaved to his will. The Empyrean knows that some day he'll have to destroy the Bronze King, but he continues to hope that day is some time off yet — the Bronze King holds vast stores of information about the history of Lemuria, and Arvad feels he must only ask the correct question to unlock the secrets of the *Mandragalore*.

The Temple Of The Bleak Ones

One crude and primitive building strikes a jarring chord, since it stands in stark contrast to the overwrought grandeur of the rest of Lemuria. It's a square, squat building made from unmortared blocks of clumsily-cut obsidian, the scrapes and scratches from the chisels still visible on the glassy black stone. The temple stands alone, surrounded

THE BRONZE KING DEFINED

80 STR	21 DEX	10 CON
40 BODY	30 INT	20 EGO
50 PRE	6 COM	
30 PD	30 ED	4 SPD
20 REC	0 END	— STUN

Abilities: Does Not Bleed; Takes No Stun; Alien Class of Mind; Reduced Endurance on 80 STR, Running, Leaping, and Swimming; Damage Resistance (30 PD/30 ED); Life Support (Total, including Longevity: Immortality); Knockback Resistance -10"; Running +12" (18" total); KS: All Things Lemurian 40-

200+ Disadvantages: Physical Limitation: Huge (8m tall; -6 DCV, +6 to PER Rolls to perceive); Psychological Limitation: Devoted To Arvad (Common, Total)

by high-grown trees with gray bark and leaves of green so dark to be almost black. Despite the structure's small size, it seems to suck all the light from its environs.

This is the Temple of the Bleak Ones, those ancient gods of the Lemurians. It was built immediately after the crowning of the Bronze King, when the Lemurians forsook the worship of Faltrah Lem's false gods.

No priest tends to the temple — in fact, the Bleak Ones have no priests at all — and Lemurians only visit it when a sacrifice is due to their gods on the rare occasions of a solar eclipse. Long-dead sorcerers recorded the time of each eclipse until the Moon's predicted fall from the sky in 3085 AD. During an eclipse all of the House's patriarchs and matriarchs make their way to the temple, where they join together in the sacrifice of a sentient being, Mole-Men being the usual victims. Whether their sacrifice is received, whether it is approved, or whether the Bleak Ones even want a sacrifice — a Lemurian never knows. It's simply a tradition from the days when the reptilian Lemurians pulled themselves from the muck.

The Clockwork Engine

The Clockwork Engine still tracks the course of the heavens. Though its ability to manipulate time is gone (or so the Lemurians believe...), it still keeps accurate time — at least as far as the Sun, Moon, and planets are concerned. (One of the problems with the Clockwork Engine is that the stars have changed since it was first created, a fact identifiable to anyone who learns the device's purpose and succeeds with a Astrology or Astronomy roll.)

The Engine's three circular tracks run along the inner edge of the dome, the armatures lifting and lowering the representations of heavenly bodies. On the first track, a hundred-foot-diameter disk of beaten gold represents the Sun, and a fifty-foot-diameter disk of silver, the Moon. On the second track, twenty-foot-diameter spheres represent each planet from Mercury to Saturn, the materials as follows: iron, quicksilver caught in an orb of transparent *crystallos*, copper, tin, and lead. On the third track are the stars, each represented by a ten-foot-diameter artificial diamond.

The Pasturage

The ground inside this dome is uneven and swampy. Trees grow everywhere, rising crookedly from the dirty waters, and the whole place is filled with strange fungi and mosses. The condensers not only release oxygen into the dome, but also a fine spray of desalinated water, so a damp, humid mist always envelopes the place. Furnaces below the surface keep the temperature of the place between 32 and 38 degrees Celsius (90 and 100 degrees Fahrenheit).

The sole purpose of this dome is to provide sustenance for Lemuria's nobility. It's a pasturage for large slugs, with the secondary purpose of growing fungus, molds, and lichens. The main staple of the Lemurian diet is ten species of slug, from the foot-long *kreely* that Lemurians serve raw, to the miniscule *slemthi* which they dry over burning coals until they're crunchy. They also consume over a hundred types of fungus (ranging from large mushrooms, the flesh of which has the texture of meat; to spherical pustules, which have a surprisingly delicate flavor), five types of moss (from a long-bladed green one used in salads; to a fuzzy red one used as a spice), and several types of lichen. For fertilizer the Lemurians use the bodies of dead Mole-Men; one area of the Pasturage is always covered with shallowly-dug mass graves. During the day thirteen Mole-Men, one from each noble House and one from Arvad's palace, can be found in the Pasturage foraging for food.

The King's Preserve

The interior of this dome contains trees and undergrowth made from bronze and brass. Wandering through the dome are all sorts of wildlife now extinct in the surface world — but each of them, from the lowly *snik*-rat to the fearsome *chala*-lion, is a magiconstruct. Generations of Lemurian nobility have used this dome as a hunting preserve. Armed with specially adapted coruscators which, rather than unleashing a lethal blast of lightning, fire a beam that freezes a magiconstruct in its tracks, the nobles wander through the forest of artificial trees in groups of three or four. They use packs of Mole-Men as their hounds to chase down large game and flush smaller animals. During times of war the Lemurians “capture” the larger magiconstructs, especially the *chala*-lions, and use them in battle, so in a way the King's Preserve also serves as an armory. In ancient times, the Lemurians would release human prisoners into the King's Preserve and hunt them down; Arvad has done this several times during his reign, much to the delight of his subjects.

BELOW LEMURIA

Each palace has a spiral stairway that leads into the depths below Lemuria, and in some of the plazas throughout the city circular plates are set in the ground. When activated by touching a sequence of stones around its rim, a plate rises from the ground to reveal a spiral stairway going down.

The first underground level below Lemuria contains the gears and machines that operate the Clockwork Engine. Next comes a level filled with arcane furnaces where burning *ignaetium* supplies power to the city above. Then, at a depth where no Lemurian noble has gone in many millennia, are the mines and Mole-Men communities.

Countless miles of tunnels stretch in a bewildering tangle below the domes of Lemuria, and in this labyrinth of underground passages and caverns live the Mole-Men. The tunnels, which are usually no more than two meters (six feet, or 1”) high and wide, began as simple *ignaetium* mines, but over the course of forty thousand years they've become far more complex. They include living spaces called warrens and even farms for the tubers Mole-Men eat.

GENERAL FEATURES

The primary features of the Lemurian underground include:

Atmosphere Evokers

Atmosphere Evokers help provide the tunnels with a breathable atmosphere. Resembling fat bronze cylinder topped by a stubby cone, standing on three legs, and constantly emitting a rumbling, clanking noise, an Evoker extends a hollow tube with a drill bit from its bottom. The tube digs deep into the earth, searching for pockets of trapped atmosphere caught thousands of years ago during one of Earth's cataclysmic periods. When it finds one of these bubbles, it draws out the gases, separates them into their constituent elements, purifies them, and then with a screeching hiss releases the processed gases into the tunnel. When it's done, an Evoker shambles away, moving clumsily through the tunnels in search of fresh pockets of oxygen. While these devices were vital in the days immediately after Lemuria sank, they have become less so because of the tuber gardens. (The tunnels also receive atmosphere from the domes above them.)

Furnaces

Below each of the domes are deep pits where arcane furnaces burn *ignaetium*, creating a blood-red light and generating energy for the surface community. Between 15 and 30 meters high (50-100 feet, or 7.5”-15”), the furnaces are made from mortared brick stained black by soot and ash built up through millennia of use. They're shaped like gigantic upside-down bowls, gigantic square blocks, and tall urns. The inner surface of each is plated with magically-treated copper that draws the mystical energy out of the burning *ignaetium*. On the outside are bronze doors that allow Mole-Men to access the furnace. There are doors all along the length of the furnace; the Mole-Men use their Bat-Wings to fly up to the ones they can't reach from the ground. From the tops of the furnaces run copper wires and pipes, which form a bewildering tangle near the ceiling before disappearing into the stone. These are conduits for the energy that carry it to various locations in the city. Piled around the furnaces are high heaps of ore, typically coal, that sparkle with flakes of *ignae-tium*. At all hours there are Mole-Men stationed



around the furnaces. They take temperature readings, shovel ore into the furnaces, and use their Stoking Staves to increase the temperature of the fires. The whole place bustles with activity day and night, as the Mole-Men move efficiently and uncomplainingly to keep the furnaces operating.

Warrens

Warrens serve as the residences for Mole-Men. At random locations a tunnel widens to six meters (20 feet, or 3") and the ceiling rises to between 15 and 30 meters high (50-100 feet, or 7.5"-15"). On one of a widened tunnel's sides (but never both) is a honeycomb of caves. Ladders made from spare parts — bronze rods, copper pipes, even the occasional shaft of adamantite — lead to these caves. Inside the caves reside Mole-Men families. Each warren serves as a home for five hundred to a thousand Mole-Men, and all the caves connect in a bewildering tangle of living spaces, primitive kitchens, and communal sleeping areas. Anyone other than a Mole-Man is likely to get lost down there very quickly.

Tuber Farms And Grottos

Mole-Men subsist on seafood and tubers. Scattered around the warrens are tuber farms — low caves filled with soil taken from the domes and fertilized with ash from the furnaces. The tubers are brownish-black and about the size of a sweet potato. The leaves of the plants glow with a dim red radiation that looks decidedly unhealthy to normal human eyes.

Unbeknownst to the Lemurians, Mole-Men have dug tunnels away from the domed city of Lemuria. These serve as locations for their grottos. To create a grotto the Mole-Men dig near the sea, and then expand the cavern, digging a deep pit. When they have completed the pit, they break through the ceiling, letting the water come crashing in — and with the water comes a variety of marine life, kelp, and silt. Once the pit is filled with water, the Mole-Men collapse the tunnel and fuse the fallen rocks with their Stoking Staves. The Mole-Men eat the marine life and kelp, and use the silt as soil to establish new tuber farms. Creating grottos is a dangerous activity, and each time a new one is created, or an old one refreshed, a few Mole-Men invariably lose their lives.

SOCIETY

Lemurian society consists of two groups: the Lemurian nobles and the Mole-Men. These two populations live very different lives. Lemurian nobles devote themselves entirely to whatever pursuit they choose — sorcery or warfare. Mole-Men only stop toiling to eat and sleep. In normal human terms, the Mole-Men are an urban underclass taken to the Nth degree, their living conditions terrible enough to shock even the most jaded person.

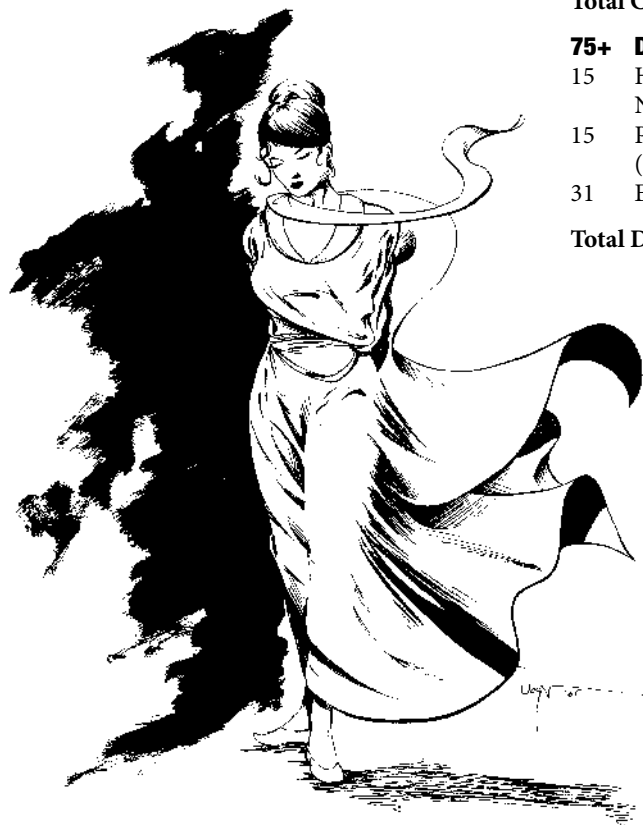
To a Lemurian, a Mole-Man is *not* a sentient being. He is a thing, a golem of flesh and blood, and possesses much less value than a magiconstruct (after all, a Mole-Man is ugly and not the creation

of Lemurian sorcery). Any behavior that hints of a Mole-Man's conduct, even minor things such as traveling underground, is below a Lemurian noble — he would rather die than act in such a way.

The Nobles

In modern Lemuria, there are a little under a thousand nobles in twelve Houses. For game purposes, a noble falls into one of three categories: warrior, sorcerer, or decadent. The warrior dedicates his life to studying the arts of war — though Lemuria is best known for its wizardry, its martial traditions after millennia of conflict are extensive and well-developed. The sorcerer dedicates his life to the study of sorcery, especially the properties of the four elemental substances that are the backbone of Lemurian alchemy and mechano-mysticism. The decadent spends his life in idle pleasures while waiting for the day when the Bleak Ones consign his soul to oblivion. There are approximately five hundred warriors, a hundred and fifty sorcerers, and three hundred and fifty decadents in modern Lemuria. The Lemurian birthrate is unnaturally low (ancient histories show it was once much higher) — a woman gives birth to one, maybe two children over three centuries of life, and many women never give birth at all — so the Lemurians population is unlikely to increase any time soon.

The accompanying character sheet is for the average Lemurian noble. You should apply the Package Deals in this section, *Lemurian Warrior* and *Lemurian Sorcerer*, to this character sheet.



LEMURIAN NOBLE

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 [1]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
15	CON	10	12-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
20	INT	10	13-	PER Roll 13-
15	EGO	10	12-	ECV: 5
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
14	COM	2	12-	
6	PD	3		Total: 6 PD (0 rPD)
8	ED	5		Total: 8 ED (0 rED)
4	SPD	12		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
8	REC	4		
40	END	5		
40	STUN	12		Total Characteristics Cost: 116

Movement: Running: 6"/12"

Cost	Powers	END
2	<i>Long Life:</i> Life Support (Longevity: lifespan 300 years)	0

Perks

5	Fringe Benefit: Member Of Lemurian Nobility
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Skills

3	High Society 13-
4	AK: Lemuria 14-
2	Language: English (fluent conversation; Lemurian is Native)
2	Mechanics 11-; Lemurian Magic Only (-½)
2	PS: Noble 11-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 20

Total Cost: 136

75+ Disadvantages

15	Hunted: Lemurian nobility 14- (Mo Pow, NCI, Limited Geographical Area, Watching)
15	Psychological Limitation: Noble Arrogance (Common, Strong)
31	Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 136

Description: A Lemurian resembles a human. Leanly muscled with narrow waists and broad shoulders, males stand between 6'0" and 6'3" tall; women are of the same height and usually slender. Both genders typically have black hair, but it's sometimes a dark chestnut or a rusty red color. Lemurians have skin that's pale, almost ghostly white; their complexions are pristine.

Nothing in a Lemurian's outward appearance indicates that he's not human. In general Lemurians are more beautiful/handsome than humans, though not unnaturally so, and there's usually a saturnine cast to their features. But even a simple medical exam tells another tale. Their temperature usually runs between 38 and 43 Celsius (100 to 110 degrees Fahrenheit), and

their heart rate is ten to fifteen beats per minute faster than a human's.

The Lemurians speak a guttural language, with hard Ks and Hs pronounced at the back of the throat, and rolling, growling Rs. Since the earliest part of the twentieth century, Arvad has commanded his subjects to learn English; the average Lemurian speaks it with a distinct accent that seems strange even to cosmopolitan humans who have traveled widely.

Lemurians qualify as the *Alien* class of minds for the purposes of Mental Powers.

Lemurian Warriors

In the terminology of surface world militaries, each Lemurian warrior is an officer. In large-scale assaults, his function is either to command hordes of Mole-Men or to pilot one of the Lemurian war machines. Despite this the Lemurian martial tradition demands a warrior be skilled in personal combat, so each warrior trains daily with his weapons: the *ignaetior*, a long-bladed sword-like weapon, and the *coruscator*, a short-bladed dirk-like weapon (see *Lemurian Equipment*, below).

There are only three ranks among Lemurian warriors: captain, who either commands Mole-

Man infantry (typically from the back of a *Gullop-steed*) or pilots an ornithopter; commander, who either leads a group of captains or commands a piscireme; and warlord, who commands the entire Lemurian military and answers to King Arvad.

Over the years the warriors have developed *bellascra*, a unique martial art for use with their weapons. While some of the maneuvers like Lunge and Slash are straightforward, others involve specialized blows with Lemurian weapons. For instance, the Disarm involves using a *coruscator* to deliver a shock to the opponent's hand that paralyzes the muscles long enough for a rapid, riposte-like follow-up strike to knock the weapon away. The Thrust does increased damage by heating the blade of the *ignaetior* to infernally hot temperatures. The DCV bonus from Dodge is due as much to the small amount of dark smoke released from the *ignaetior*, which obscures the wielder's position, as any evasive movement on the character's part.

Lemurian Sorcerers

The Lemurian sorcerer is one of the most respected members of his society and the repository for the ancient lore of his people. Sorcerers are divided into two types: true sorcerers and sorcerer-scientists.

The vast majority of Lemurian sorcerers, 96 altogether, are true sorcerers. These can cast Thaumaturgy spells like their surface world counterparts (see page 73-84 of *The Mystic World*). The average Lemurian sorcerer has a 50-60 point *Sorcery* Multipower with eight to ten slots for spells; the most powerful sorcerers in the modern age have an 80-90 point Multipower with twelve to sixteen slots for spells. This is but a shadow of the power Lemurian sorcerers of the Atlantean Age possessed. There have been five sorcerers in the last century with power that even approaches that of their ancestors. One of those is the exile Zorran the Artificer, described on page 220 of *Conquerors, Killers, And Crooks*. Another is Besheeva the Veiled, an ancient crone who lies on her deathbed. The other three — Unctor the Black-Handed, Petrys Baz, and Jalra the Scold — work on various tasks Arvad has assigned to them.

Sorcerer-scientists possess no personal magical abilities. They are in truth scholars who have dedicated their lives to the study of the elemental substances that are the basis for Lemurian alchemy

LEMURIAN WARRIOR PACKAGE DEAL

Cost	Characteristic			
5	+5 STR			
18	+6 DEX			
1	+2 PD			
14	+2 SPD			
0	+1 REC			
5	+10 END			
7	+10 STUN			
Power				
30	<i>Ignatior</i> : see page 127			
29	<i>Coruscator</i> : see page 128			
30	<i>Caraprix</i> : see page 128			
<i>Martial Arts: Bellascra</i>				
	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4	Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
4	Disarm	-1	+1	Disarm, +10 STR to Disarm roll
4	Dodge	—	+5	Dodge, Affects All Attacks, Abort
4	Thrust	+2	+0	3d6+1 KA Strike
5	Lunge	+1	+0	Weapon +v/5; FMove
5	Slash	-2	+1	4d6 KA Strike
0	Use Art With <i>Ignatior</i>			
Skill				
10	+2 with Hand-To-Hand Combat			
3	Combat Piloting 14-			
3	Fast Draw (Lemurian Weapons) 14-			
3	KS: <i>Bellascra</i> 13-			
3	Riding 14-			
3	Sleight Of Hand 14-			
10	Two-Weapon Fighting (HTH)			
2	WF: Lemurian Weapons			
0	TF: Ornithopter			

Total Cost Of Package: 202 points.

LEMURIAN SORCERER-SCIENTIST PACKAGE DEAL

Cost	Characteristic
3	+3 INT
Skill	
7	Inventor +2
3	KS: Lemurian History And Culture (INT)
5	KS: Lemurian Arcane And Occult Lore (INT+2)
7	Mechanics +2
3	PS: Sorcerer-Scientist (INT-based)

Total Cost Of Package: 28 points.

and mechano-mysticism. Just like their true sorcerer peers, they can create and repair Lemurian equipment, and because of this, they perform a valuable function in society. Most Lemurians treat sorcerer-scientists with respect (some true sorcerers view them with contempt), but their numbers are few simply because it's frustrating to study magic for a lifetime and never gain the ability to use it fully. The most notable of the sorcerer-scientists is Baelrath the Blasphemer (see page 138).

Decadent Lemurians

The decadents are a group that sprang up near the end of the Age Of Legends. Their numbers grew larger and larger until finally Arvad arrived. Consumed by apathy because of Lemuria's long history of failure and all-too-apparent decline in both world affairs and sorcery, the decadents have chosen to live in dreams of Lemuria's past glories. Their sole contribution to Lemurian knowledge is the creation of two drugs: the Kiss of Sleeping

Excitement and the Comforts of Days Fargone. The Kiss is a distillate of *corusqua* sublimated through the smoke of the *narcolepy*, a narcotic grown in the Pasturage. The Kiss raises the user's heart rate while allowing him to drowse, thus providing a false sense of an exciting life without any urge to rise from bed. The Comforts is a mix of *fulminor* and poppies grown in gardens fertilized with *ignaetium* ash. It draws upon the memories of the user and induces hallucinations of a nostalgic golden age. The visions are, of course, false and everything is much better than it ever truly was.

The decadents contribute nothing at all to society. Arvad has consulted extensively with the Bronze King and his cabinet on how to pull them from their lethargy. Some of the king's actions have worked — without a doubt involving the Lemurians in World War II significantly increased the warrior population — but he will not rest until no decadents remain.

For a decadent, use the character sheet for an average Lemurian with the Disadvantage *Dependence*: *must take drug once per day or suffer Incompetence (Common, Addiction)*.

The Noble Houses

The Lemurian noble population is split between twelve Houses, each named for one of the founders of Lemuria. A patriarch (or matriarch) leads each House, and only he can take the name of the house as his surname (all other members take a diminutive or altered form as their surname). For instance, Faltrah Lem was the patriarch of the House of Lem, and no other member of the House could use the name, Lem, in his own name until Faltrah was no longer the patriarch.

The patriarch is often the oldest member of the family, but sometimes he is simply one of the elder members with the most prestige, influence, or power. King Arvad must approve all appointments to patriarch, but the actual decision is made by vote of the adult members of the family. Tens of thousands of years ago the patriarchs helped to rule the Empire; today, it's an empty position with little power outside of choosing the decor of a palace room or what refreshments to serve if King Arvad comes to visit.

A family usually only has five or six traditional given names for its children. Since a House consists of between sixty and eighty individuals, the members use epithets (either one of their own choosing or given to them by others) to differentiate themselves from others of their House with the same name. A House raises children communally — the idea of a discrete set of parents raising a child is alien to the Lemurian; a child is the son or daughter of the House as a whole, not two individuals.

Each House has a reputation among its fellows, both for the great feats of their ancestors and more often for the infamous ones. The names of the twelve Houses are: Aar, Baz, Dwer, Hyrg, Jyln, Krax, Og, Qwer, Sron, Urog, Yrin, and Zur. The most important of them are:

REPTILIAN THROWBACKS

Whether because of the arcane radiations emitted by burning *ignaetium* and permeating all of Lemuria, Andriht's spell beginning to lose its hold with the passage of millennia, or some other reason entirely, on rare occasions a child is born reptilian, a throwback to the time before Lemurians lost the ability to change shape. Usually these throwbacks can't change shape — they remain in reptilian form for life — but before Arvad's arrival they were considered a blessing and respected for the physical abilities. They often possess unique powers and great strength. Typically they were groomed to assume leadership positions in the Lemurian military. But times have changed.

Though attractive by human standards, Lemurians are plain-looking compared to Emphyreans — a fact Arvad never fails to point out when unhappy with his followers. Though the king deals with his exile stoically, he cannot abide the hideous reptilian appearance of the throwbacks. He has decreed that all such throwbacks are to be evacuated into the depths of the ocean at birth and thus crushed to death.

The supervillain Leviathan, described briefly in *Champions Universe* on page 94, is one of these throwbacks, and though he refuses to tell this part of the tale, one of his reasons for leaving Lemuria is that he feared for his life. It's possible that other Houses have secretly kept some of their reptilian children.

LEMURIAN TRUE SORCERER PACKAGE DEAL

Cost Characteristic

- 9 +3 DEX
- 3 +3 INT
- 10 +5 EGO

Power

- 60 *Lemurian Sorcery*: Multipower, 60-point reserve
- 6u 1) *Bolt Of Power*: Energy Blast 12d6
- 6u 2) *Iskari's Invoked Iridescence*: Sight And Hearing Group Flash 7d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)
- 6u 3) *Choknaren's Mental Chains*: Mind Control 12d6
- 5u 4) *Sharnel's Mechano-Mystic Enhancer*: Aid Lemurian Mechano-Mysticism 4d6, any piece of Lemurian equipment one at a time (+¼)
- 5u 5) *Baudlier's Warrior's Boon*: Aid STR, DEX, or CON 4d6, any one of three Characteristics one at a time (+¼)
- 6u 6) *Najirm's Blithering Idiocy*: Suppress INT 9d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)
- 4u 7) *Iskari's Mantle Of Concealment*: Invisibility to Sight Group, No Fringe, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)
- 6u 8) *The Mageroad*: Teleportation 20", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)
- 30 *Winds Of The Zephirim*: Flight 12", Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)
- 30 *Mantle Of Mastery*: Multipower, 30-point reserve
- 3u 1) *Mantle Of Mastery I*: Force Field (10 PD/10 ED), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)
- 3u 2) *Mantle Of Mastery II*: Force Field (5 PD/5 ED/10 Mental Defense/10 Power Defense)

Skill

- 3 +1 with Lemurian Sorcery
- 3 Inventor
- 3 KS: Lemurian History And Culture (INT)
- 3 KS: Lemurian Arcane And Occult Lore (INT)
- 3 Mechanics
- 3 Power: Mystic Powers

Total Cost of Package: 210 points.

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

Lemuria has no legal code. The only crimes are embarrassing one's House or king, and usually this embarrassment results from failure. The only punishments are ostracism, exile, and execution. A House patriarch sentences a noble to ostracism, and he lets the family know of his judgment at the House dinners. The patriarch always sits at the head of the table; a Lemurian's status dictates how near he sits to the patriarch. And ostracized House member sits alone at the very end of the table. To further embarrass a member of his House, a patriarch can give the noble a epithet that serves as a reminder of his shame.

Only the king can sentence a Lemurian to exile or execution, and he does so at his discretion (or whim, as the case may be).

House Of Baz: Until the coming of Arvad, the House of Baz was the first among equals, for its ancestor was the leader of the cabal of sorcerers who deposed the Priest-King and installed the Bronze King. It resents Arvad's leadership, since it's lost much of its status, but has yet to take action against him. The patriarch has intimated that the members should search for a way to depose Arvad. One of them, the sorcerer Hyvren the Keeper, has discovered an ancient tome that describes a spell of transport that takes the caster to the realm of the Bleak Ones. A debate has raged for nearly five years on whether to approach the ancient gods of Lemuria about the Emyrean interloper. The House of Baz's demonic patron has two long curling horns.

House Of Hyrg: No member of the House of Hyrg has born a child since the early part of the twentieth century, and the other Houses believe Hyrg will soon die out. The truth of the matter is that every child born in the last hundred-plus years has been a reptilian throwback. The sorcerer Vikorin the Blind modified the spell of Andrith the Golden in an attempt to regain the race's shape-changing abilities — and in this he partly succeeded. Hyrg children are born reptilian, and seem to still possess their long life, but for whatever reason they cannot hold the shape of a man for as long as the ancient texts say they should. Soon after Vikorin cast his spell, Arvad proclaimed all throwbacks were to be executed. Hyrg has secretly defied his order — dwelling below their palace, in places formerly reserved for Mole-Men, are five reptilian Lemurians. When they emerge they take the shape of one of the human-appearing House members. Because of this secret, the House of Hyrg is one of the most vocal of Arvad's supporters, for it wishes to avoid the King's scrutiny. Its demonic patron has broad fins on either side of its head.

House Of Jyln: The House of Jyln is the most traditional of the twelve Houses, and the only one without decadents among its members — the matriarch, Karessa Jyln, has little use for idlers. Jylns are famous for being staid and dull, and while members often claim they're the only House without some black mark on its past, others quickly point out it's the only House without a notable ancestor. Jyln is divided between a desire to serve the king (as is right and proper), and the desire to reject him due to his constant questioning of tradition and Lemurian culture in his attempt to revitalize Lemuria. Its demonic patron is four-eyed; masks of this House have two stylized eyes in addition to the eye-holes for the wearer.

House Of Krax: Zorran the Artificer belongs to the House of Krax, and since his exile Krax has dwelt under the stigma of Zorran's treachery. Most of Zorran's supporters came from this House, and few of Arvad's followers trust Krax even to this day. The House secretly stays in touch with Zorran and keeps him supplied with materials only found in Lemuria. Unbeknownst to its members, the House works toward Arvad's ends (see page 124 below), and the king has used his mental powers to instill an urgent devotion in the House patriarch (who is also

the noble that betrayed Arvad in his original coup attempt). Its demonic patron has two ram's horns.

House Of Og: Commander Zarn, Warlord of Lemuria, comes from this House. Despite his loyalty to Arvad and devotion to the king's cause, the rest of his House is rife with decadents, making it the least vital of all the noble Houses. Lately the decadents have begun to experience an ongoing shared dream. In the dream they find themselves in a luxuriant garden on the surface thousands years in the future. With them is a strange, shapeless being, neither man nor god but who somehow embodies the qualities of both. Commander Zarn, like most of the other members of his House, treats this shared dream with contempt and has yet to mention it to anyone outside his House, but the dream is shocking, if only for one reason: it takes place in the future and not the past. The House's demonic patron is a fiendish *chala*-lion.

House Of Yrin: Every Lemurian knows a fact he would never speak: the House of Yrin is responsible for the sorcerer who created the *Mandragalore*. Even millennia later members of this House are treated poorly because of that ancestor. Whenever a sorcerer of Yrin mentions his experiments, some nobles roll their eyes, while others look on in fear. The Yrin have labored to accomplish some great deed that would restore them in the eyes of their fellows. They view

ARVAD'S CABINET

In the days of the Priest-Kings, the House patriarchs served as a council that advised the ruler. With the creation of the Bronze King, Lemurians abandoned that tradition; they did not restore it upon the crowning of King Arvad. Instead Arvad has hand-picked his advisors, calling them his cabinet.

There are six members of Arvad's cabinet. Three of these are Khusor the Crooked, Baelrath the Blasphemer, and Commander Zarn (see below). The others are:

Qaylan the Furnace-Tender: A talented sorcerer, Qaylan has the unenviable responsibility of inspecting the underground furnaces — a job no Lemurian finds agreeable. He performs the task stoically, even though it makes him the object of ridicule among his fellows, because he's a staunch believer in tradition. As a member of Arvad's cabinet, he balances Baelrath the Blasphemer's iconoclastic tendencies when it comes to magic.

Karessa Jyln: Karessa is the matriarch of the House of Jyln, and Arvad looks to her to help him understand the daily goings-on in Lemuria. Serious and humorless, Karessa is a fair warrior, but prefers administrative matters to martial ones.

Virleen the False-Dreamer: Virleen is a decadent, and warriors under the command of Commander Zarn frequently must drag her from her bedchamber to attend cabinet meetings. Arvad keeps her around for two reasons. First, the sorcerers say that Virleen once possessed the ability to see the future, and though she has corrupted this power by using drugs, she still occasionally recalls her past visions and recites them in a sleepy voice. Second, Arvad dispatches Virleen to deliver bad news to the Lemurians — he feels this way the Lemurian population associate grim tidings with the decadent Virleen rather than himself.

Arvad's coming as a great boon and are among his staunchest supporters, since he doesn't hold them in contempt (or, at least, no greater contempt than any other Lemurians). They feel they have the best chance of successfully restoring the *Mandragalore*, thus making right the great folly of their ancestor. Yrin's demonic patron has two mouths, and members of this House always wear a full-face mask with a stylized mouth under the real one.

STYLES OF DRESS

Both male and female Lemurian warriors, when not wearing armor, dress in breeches decorated with gold or silver thread and loose-fitting shirts of dark silk (often daringly or revealingly cut). When outside of his palaces, a warrior wears the weapons of his trade, an *ignaetior* and *corusca-tor*, at his hip in a matched pair. Sorcerers and sorcerer-scientists wear the robes of their profession, usually decorated with Lemurian alchemical symbols stitched in gold thread. Decadents rarely dress at all, since they rarely rise from their beds or leave their palaces. When they do, they don billowing silk robes of muted hues, belted loosely at the waist.

Masks

When outside their palace or receiving guests, all Lemurian nobles wear masks — either a half-mask covering the upper part of his face or a full one covering his entire face. Each House has a Lemurian heraldic demon or creature for its symbol, and the mask is typically a stylized representation of that symbol. The masks are always fierce in appearance, with sharp fangs, horns, or like attributes. The most ancient masks possess mystical properties. Materials vary greatly, but the oldest are often of materials Lemurians rarely use in their metalworking, such as black iron and steel.

DAILY LIFE

A Lemurian either pursues the arts of war or sorcery, and typically he devotes every day to the task of perfecting these skills. A Lemurian creates no art, writes no plays or poetry, has no hobbies (perhaps with the exception of writing histories and manuals or some other scholarly text that relates to his profession). Only two fields of activity — sorcery and war — are worthy of a Lemurian's time, and if he chooses not to pursue one of these, the only activity remaining to him that won't disgrace his name and House is to do nothing at all. When the Lemurians ruled an empire they would employ human slaves to create art or perform plays, but in these days they have no slaves but Mole-Men... and to the mind of a Lemurian, Mole-Men can barely perform as household servants, let alone create things of beauty.

The warrior spends his day drilling, observing the construction and repair of war machines, and reading the histories of past military campaigns. (Most Lemurian warriors read accounts of surface world battles with disgust at humanity's primitive ways and crude technology, reading them only because Arvad orders that he do so.) Occasionally warriors go hunting in the King's Preserve or hold war games, usually recreations of historical battles

the Lemurians won, using Mole-Men as troops, but this is done more for enjoyment than anything else.

A sorcerer's day is much more bookish — he spends most of his time in a library, either his House's or that of another. Other days he spends in his estate's workshops, conducting experiments. Arvad makes sure every sorcerer, both true sorcerer and sorcerer-scientist, is assigned to a specific task. Typically these tasks involve teams of sorcerers, so the sorcerer also meets with his fellows to discuss their progress and the direction of their future researches. Unlike the stereotype of a surface world wizard — that he prefers to hoard his knowledge and guards it jealously from his own kind, whether out of pure spite or fear of dangerous knowledge falling into the wrong hands — the typical Lemurian sorcerer delights in discussing magic with his fellow Lemurians. Even Faltrah Lem worked with others of his own kind to discover the properties of *ignaetium* in the early days before Lemuria's founding. However, the communal nature of Lemurian sorcery gives rise to the cabals and conspiracies that arise frequently in Lemuria's history.

The decadent Lemurian spends his days in bed, lingering half-awake, half-asleep in a drug-induced stupor.

All of a House's members gather for dinner in the palace's grand hall at six o'clock, where they discuss the day's doings and goings-on. If a House member misses the dinner he must explain why and make apologies to the House's patriarch as soon as possible — missing dinner is considered disgraceful, even by decadents. The only reasonable excuses for missing dinner are serious illness and being outside Lemuria entirely. A dinner is solely for House members; other Lemurians and the King are never invited.

The Mole-Men

Arvad has repeatedly tried to conduct a census of the Mole-Man population (after all, the Mole-Men are the ground troops in the Lemurian army). He has failed utterly every time, since no noble will visit the Mole-Man caverns. While technically each Mole-Man is the possession of a House, no House can keep track of how many Mole-Men it owns. Outside of the palace slaves and those who work in the foundries, Mole-Men live almost entirely unsupervised and breed as they will. No House has never experienced a shortage of them, so there's never been a reason to worry about the matter. And besides, as Arvad's advisors frequently point out, who can tell one Mole-Man from another, so how could anyone possibly count them?

Arvad's best guess is that ten thousand Mole-Men reside under Lemuria, but the number may be as high as three times that. Arvad worries sometimes about these numbers — he estimates that Lemuria need only eight to nine thousand Mole-Men to keep itself operating smoothly, and he often wonders what the remaining Mole-Men do.

Using his mental powers on his palace servants, Arvad has already discovered that the Lemurians hold several misconceptions about the Mole-Men; he wonders if this is only the tip of the iceberg. First,

Lemurians believe Mole-Men cannot communicate with one another — that like magiconstructs they only understand the commands of their masters. In truth the Mole-Men have their own sophisticated language consisting mainly of hand-signs. Second, Lemurians believe Mole-Men have no families — like animals they mate, the father leaves the mother to raise the children, and when the children reach adulthood, the mother abandons them. Again not true — Mole-Men have extensive families that live together in large enclaves (a custom that seems to mimic the Lemurian Houses to some extent). Third, Lemurians believe Mole-Men have no names, but in truth they have names consisting of a rapid series of three or four hand-gestures. On and on these misconceptions go, and they only make Arvad wonder what goes on below Lemuria. He would like to learn more, but the Mole-Men can't provide all the answers he seeks (for example, if he telepathically probes a Mole-Man's mind to find out how many Mole-Men there really are, all he can learn is "lots and lots," since the Mole-Men themselves don't keep any records).

KING MOLE AND SPELUNKER SMITH

In 2003, the world-famous explorer, Sebastian "Spelunker" Smith, and the crew of the *Pellucidar Express* disappeared without a trace. Spelunker Smith had spent nearly a decade delighting the world with his underground exploits — as one reporter put it, "Spelunker Smith is the Jacques Cousteau of the subterranean world." He and his crew used the *Pellucidar Express*, a unique vehicle capable of drilling through the earth that Smith called a "subterrenne," to delve deep into the Earth's crust and uncover many a lost civilization or strange artifact.

What the world didn't know — and still doesn't — is that Spelunker Smith stumbled upon an enclave of Mole-Men who had thrown off millennia of conditioning and rejected the rule of the Lemurians. Their fellows had ostracized them for their lazy ways, and they chose to live in the furthest tunnels of Lemuria. Here they lived a peaceful existence, for though they had rejected the rulership of Lemuria, they could not conceive of true rebellion. Only one of their number entertained such daring and impossible dreams: their leader, King Mole.

Spelunker Smith and his crew stumbled upon King Mole's people quite by accident and struck up a friendship with their leader — though it took some convincing to make the Mole-Men believe Smith and his human crew were not Lemurian nobles. They taught each other about their respective cultures, becoming fast friends. When Smith heard the plight of the Mole-Men, he could not abandon them to their terrible masters.

Since then Smith has tried to instill in the Mole-Men an understanding of human rights, democracy, and other surface world concepts. The Mole-Men under King Mole's leadership have come to comprehend what he's talking about. In recent months they elected King Mole their leader, and now they spread the seeds of freedom among their more submissive fellows. Sadly, the revolution is slow-going, but King Mole's group has doubled in size over the past year (it numbers 150 Mole-Men as of early 2005). Both he and Spelunker Smith hope the Mole-Men have turned the corner.

MOLE-MAN

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 [1]
12	DEX	6	11-	OCV: 4/DCV: 4
15	CON	10	12-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
8	INT	-2	11-	PER Roll 11-
6	EGO	-8	10-	ECV: 2
10	PRE	0	11-	PRE Attack: 2d6
4	COM	-3	10-	
6	PD	3		Total: 6 PD (0 rPD)
10	ED	7		Total: 10 ED (0 rED)
3	SPD	8		Phases: 4, 8, 12
6	REC	0		
50	END	10		
30	STUN	2		Total Characteristics Cost: 42

Movement: Running: 4"/8"
Swimming: 2"/4"

Cost Powers END

30	<i>Stoking Staff:</i> Multipower, 60-point reserve; all slots OAF (-1)	
3u	1) <i>Fiery Blast:</i> Energy Blast 8d6, 64 Charges (+½); OAF (-1), Limited Range (15"; -¼)	[64]
1u	2) <i>Shovel End:</i> HA +5d6; OAF (-1), Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½)	2
8	<i>Bat-Wings:</i> Flight 6"; OIF (-½), 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (easily-obtained fuel; 1 Hour; -0)	[1cc]
5	<i>Smoky-Lensed Goggles:</i> Sight Group Flash Defense (10 points); OAF (-1)	0
3	<i>Smoky-Lensed Goggles:</i> +4 to Sight PER Rolls; OAF (-1), Only To Counteract Penalties From Bright Light (-½)	0
2	<i>Resistant To Heat:</i> Life Support (Safe Environment: Intense Heat)	0
5	<i>Adapted To Underground:</i> Nightvision	0
-4	<i>Short Legs:</i> Running -2" (4" total)	

Talents

3 Bump Of Direction

Skills

6	+2 with Stoking Staff
10	<i>Small:</i> +2 DCV
3	<i>Small:</i> +2 to Concealment; Self Only (-½)
7	AK: The Tunnels Under Lemuria 15-
7	CK: Lemuria 15-
1	Language: Lemurian (basic conversation; Mole-Man Sign Language is Native)
7	Mechanics 13-
2	PS: Lemurian Slave 11-
7	Stealth 13-
6	Survival (Underground) 13-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 112

Total Cost: 154

75+ Disadvantages

15	Physical Limitation: Poor Vision In Bright Light, suffers -4 to Sight PER Rolls in bright light (Frequently, Greatly Impairing)
5	Physical Limitation: Small (about half human size; takes +3" Knockback) (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)

- 25 Psychological Limitation: Slavishly Devoted To Lemurian Nobles (Very Common, Total)
- 15 Social Limitation: Treated As A Sub-Species (Frequently, Severe, Only In Lemuria)
- 20 Vulnerability: 2 x Effect from Light-based Flash Attacks (Common)

Total Disadvantage Points: 155

Description: Mole-Men are the descendants of the original human population that inhabited the rocky archipelago the Lemurians conquered forty thousand years ago. They've spent much of those millennia underground — first simply as miners, then living entirely underground when Lemuria sunk below the ocean. After all that time they've changed radically, whether because of simple evolution, the incessant arcane energies they are exposed to as they stoke the furnaces of burning *ignaetium*, or some combination of both. Without scientific study no one would guess a Mole-Man is a close cousin of humanity — far closer, in fact, than the Lemurians who rule over them.

A Mole-Man is short, standing between three to four feet tall. Hairless pink skin hangs in loose folds from his gawky limbs. Burns, scabs, and oozing blisters from constant exposure to the blazing heat of the arcane furnaces cover his entire body, but are most prominent on his over-sized hands and round face. His lips are blubbery, and his mouth filled with rotting black teeth that grow crookedly with wide gaps between them. His nose is small, almost vestigial, and barely protrudes from his bald head. His eyes are large and round, almost all milky-blue iris, and adapted to darkness.

The only clothing a Mole-Man typically wears is a loincloth, dusty from coal and stained with soot. Around his neck dangle crude goggles with lenses of smoky glass to protect him from the glare of the furnaces, and he also wears the goggles when outside the caverns where he lives. His only other equipment is a Stoking Staff and his Bat-Wings. A Stoking Staff is three-foot-long tube of bronze with a flat blade for shoveling on one end. The other end can unleash a fiery blast for blazing through rock, increasing the heat of an arcane furnace, or fighting in battle. Mole-Men use Bat-Wings to fly up to the tops of arcane furnaces and traverse vertical underground passages. Two two foot-long “wings” unfurl from the back of the harness, providing the wearer with limited maneuverability, and the whole apparatus rattles and smokes with *fulminor*.

DAILY LIFE

Mole-Men spend their days working impossibly hard, toiling at the behest of their masters or to ensure their continued existence in their harsh environment. They never complain — not even to themselves.

Mole-Men are conditioned from the day they're born to obey each and every command of a Lemurian, and if they can be said to have gods, those deities are the Lemurian nobles. This devotion to the Lemurian nobility is a deep-rooted compulsion, reinforced by a culture that has developed over forty millennia. A Mole-Man finds the idea of disobeying a Lemurian noble impossible — it's not an idea that would even occur to him.

The Mole-Men have developed a culture of their own, although not a sophisticated one. They live in family enclaves, each family occupying one underground warren. Though they're devoted to their families, life is cheap to a Mole-Man and they consider death a matter-of-fact occurrence, certainly nothing worth mourning. They spend what little free time they have painting the walls of their homes and telling the children in the enclaves fantastic stories. They paint with pigments made from the earth, the ashes of *ignaetium*, and fungus taken from the Pasturage. The scenes mainly depict daily life and are used to educate the young in their duties. The stories they tell in their unique sign language are of a different sort entirely. These are incredible tales of the surface world, impossibly handed down through the millennia from the days before the Lemurians came and made the Mole-Men slaves.

What Lemurians would find most surprising is how well the Mole-Men understand the mechanomystical workings of Lemurian magic — they actually require no supervision to construct ornithopters, pisciremes, magiconstructs, and the like. Their language includes terms to describe such activities, and these terms are so fundamental to the language that Mole-Men frequently employ them in metaphors and similes. This knowledge allows the Mole-Men to keep their Tunnelers and the Atmosphere Evokers in good repair, and to make their Stoking Staves and Bat-Wings. (Lemurians just assume, on the rare occasions when they consider the matter, that their ancestors



built these devices so well that they never break down, and that Stoking Staves and Bat-Wings are handed down from one generation to the next.)

ECONOMY

Exchange between Lemurian nobles is rare, and traditional currency unknown. Most possessions are considered a House legacy, and as such, cannot be traded to another House. (Lemurians have a great respect for their glorious past and do not willingly part with even the most niggling possession if it has some history.)

If necessary to his cause, the king can order one noble to give over an item to another, but such exchanges are usually temporary — even Arvad is unwilling to risk alienating an entire House over such dealings. Sorcerers typically request invitations to study the tomes and manuals in the libraries of other Houses; denial of these requests can quickly become grounds for accusing a House of treason. If in need of ornithopter repairs or the like, the Lemurian simply visits the foundries and tells the noble in charge of his need. The noble then schedules the necessary repairs. The same goes for most other household needs.

A House's Mole-Men act as a sort of *ad hoc* currency, used most frequently in gambling, but the exchange of Mole-Men is mostly symbolic since to a Lemurian noble Mole-Men have no value at all.

Arvad controls all exchange with the outside the world, and by royal decree, only he is able to negotiate deals with the surface world. The section below, *Current Plots*, discusses some of his current dealings.

CURRENT PLOTS

Even after a hundred and fifty years, Arvad has a great many things to do if he is to accomplish his goals. The main ones, and his current plans, are summarized below.

TRADE WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD

Since the early part of the twentieth century, Arvad has secretly carried on trade with the outside world. The first of his trading partners were the Axis nations, primarily Nazi Germany. Since then Arvad has searched for a partner as good as the Axis, but without success.

Lemuria's primary exports are precious metals. For countless years Lemuria disposed of gold and silver, as well as more common materials, because it had no use for them. Mole-Men excavated many more materials than *ignaetium*, and Arvad was shocked to discover heaps of valuable ore laying around in out-of-the-way places.

Much of what Arvad trades for are simple things for his own entertainment. He also maintains an impressive library of histories of the surface world for his Lemurians to study, and trades for military ordnance for the sorcerers to study (but never to use in their own armies, since Lemurians disdain surface world technology).

Some of Arvad's current plots involving trade with the outside world include:

ARGENT

Two years ago the criminal organization ARGENT contacted Arvad by descending into the ocean depths in an advanced mini-submarine of its own devising. Since then the organization has become one of the most useful trading partners Lemuria has had since World War II. It supplies Arvad with all the high-tech toys he could possibly ever want.

ARGENT wants two things from Lemuria. First, it wants to purchase some of the abandoned Lemurian domes for use as underwater research facilities. Arvad has yet to hear an offer for them he finds even slightly enticing. Second, it wants to send observers to work with Lemurian sorcerers, just as the Nazis did decades ago. Despite frequently being told Lemurian "technology" is magical, ARGENT researchers refuse to believe it, since what little they know of the principles make it seem almost scientific. They've filed several reports with their leaders stating that Lemuria possesses a previously unknown science which it disguises with mystical trappings. (Given the ultra-advanced nature of ARGENT's technology, which in some respects brushes up against the boundaries of Clarke's Law, they may be right — or it may be that Clarke's Law can work in reverse as well, so that Lemurian magic is sufficiently "flavored" that it's indistinguishable from advanced science.)

Baelrath the Blasphemer supports allowing ARGENT scientists into Lemuria as observers. He argues the strengths of surface world science, and the potential for revitalizing Lemurian magic by blending it with that science, make the risk acceptable. Arvad remains skeptical — he knows that if ARGENT discovers anything, it will sell the information to whoever's willing to pay the price.

A representative from ARGENT visits Lemuria once every six months as a part of his normal duties.

Enriched Uranium

Not all of the metals Mole-Men excavate are gold and silver. They also dig up some uranium, so Arvad has assigned a team of sorcerer-scientists to investigate the possibility of refining it to create weapons-grade uranium. While most of the surface world's military technology is useless for Arvad's purposes, nuclear weapons are destructive enough to have some use against the defenses of Arcadia. So far experiments in this direction have proven fruitless. If Arvad were to ever strike a deal with ARGENT, it would probably involve supplying him with working nuclear missiles, but for the time being Arvad feels the *Mandragalore* is a superior weapon. Arvad has declined to sell the uranium, for fear of bringing down the wrath of the surface world's superheroes on Lemuria.

REVITALIZING LEMURIAN CULTURE

In addition to simply extolling the Lemurians to involve themselves in work or some other useful activity, Arvad has three plans to revitalize Lemuria. He hesitates to initiate these plans because of the drastic ways they might change Lemurian society.

Return Of The New Gods

After consultation with the Bronze King, Arvad has decided the main cause of Lemurian decadence is that oblivion awaits them after death. He's thought of orchestrating a return of the new gods — those fictitious beings of smoke and fire, crystal and lightning Faltrah Lem created millennia ago. His current thought is to abduct four super-humans with powers corresponding to the gods, brainwash them into believing they are the gods, and install them as his divine pawns to inspire the Lemurian population. The problems with this are: what if the Bleak Ones decide to make their ire known as they did with Faltrah Lem? And how does Arvad make sure the Lemurians don't venerate the gods more than they fear him?

Reversing Andrith The Golden's Spell

The Lemurians are inbred, and Arvad feels this contributes to the problem of the decadents. (It definitely contributes to a lack of sanity among the population, but for the most part this exhibits itself in an arrogance and depravity Arvad approves of.) Unbeknownst to the Lemurians, he has commissioned ARGENT to study the genetic material of his subjects. He feels that one way of correcting the problems of Lemurian inbreeding is to reverse Andrith the Golden's spell. This would hopefully alter their genes, as well as restore the Lemurian's shape-changing powers (since Arvad detests their reptilian appearance, he'll simply decree that Lemurians must maintain a pleasing human form), take away their longevity, and hopefully increase the birthrate.

A Large Human Slave Population

Arvad dearly loves humans (although for different reasons entirely than his Empyrean brethren) and holds them in high regard. He feels that if Lemurians could interact with humans on a daily basis, it would bring some spark of life to them. Of course, human could never live with Lemurians as equals, so this plan involves abducting a large human population, maybe four or five thousand men and women, and making them slaves in the palaces of the Houses. Unlike the blindly obedient Mole-Men, human slaves would serve as a constant challenge to their Lemurian masters. Thus, rather than going about their days absorbed in their work, Lemurians would have to struggle to keep the human slaves under their thumb.

Arvad feels this is definitely the best way to abolish the decadents — no House would allow any of its members to spend their days in bed if keeping control of the slaves required so much effort. Arvad also knows the Lemurians would wholly approve of this plan — they never cease to complain about the Mole-Men palace slaves and long for the days when humans performed those functions (a sentiment Arvad shares). On the other hand, Arvad wonders if his Lemurians would actually keep the humans from rebelling.

LEMURIA IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

Lemurian plots tend to fall into one of the following categories.

Seize An Ancient Weapon: The history of ancient Lemuria is filled with accounts of the super-weapons they used against their enemies. Many scenarios could involve either securing existing weapons (which turn up in strange places after millennia have passed) or securing the materials necessary to rebuild these ancient devices (anything from ancient substances with mystic properties, to the latest inventions of high technology, to a hero's Focus). Plots involving the *Mandragalore* fall into this category, but it isn't limited to that device.

Secure An Ancient Outpost: Lemuria was once a vast empire, and the world has changed much since then. Its ancient, abandoned outposts can turn up anywhere and everywhere — including deep in the earth below your campaign city. The reasons for securing these outposts can range from wanting to seize whatever's inside to attempting to extend Lemuria's sphere of influence.

Attacks Against The Empyreans: Though he pins his true hopes of conquering Arcadia on the *Mandragalore*, Arvad doesn't need much excuse to attack an Empyrean. His attacks can range from assassinating an Empyrean at large in the world, to more insidious schemes like mind controlling an Empyrean and attempting to pit the heroes of the surface world against Arcadia.

Keeping Lemuria's Location A Secret: Though a handful of surface worlders know the general location of Lemuria, to most of the world it's a secret, and Arvad wants to keep it that way. Example plots include a rash of disappearance of experimental submarines that can dive deep enough to find Lemuria, attacks on deep sea installations located too close to Lemuria for comfort, and so forth. Keeping Lemuria's location a secret from do-gooders is all the excuse you need to involve Lemuria in an underwater adventure.

The Rogue Noble House: The noble House gone rogue allows you to involve Lemurians in plots that don't suit Arvad's plans. Typically a rogue House wants to depose Arvad, or Arvad has forbidden some plot or plan and the House goes ahead with it anyway (either because it's important to the members of the House, or simply out of sheer stubbornness).

Mole-Man Rampage: The Mole-Men have spent tens of thousands of years living underground, and during those millennia the world has undergone many changes. There's no reason why all Mole-Men warrens must reside directly under Lemuria proper. With the shifting of continents or other catastrophes, some Mole-Men might have become separated from their brethren.

Typical plots using independent Mole-Men as antagonists involve mankind exploring deep underground — searching for oil, mining for valuable minerals, and so on. The Mole-Men, their communities threatened by these explorations, lash out at the men. Normally the humans involved know nothing of the dwellers in the chthonic depths... but sometimes they, or at least the people in charge, are fully aware of the Mole-Men communities their actions threaten and have some hidden motive.

Other plots featuring independent Mole-Men involve them becoming the minions of villains. Because of their years living under the tyranny of Lemuria, Mole-Men easily fall under the sway of villains with great power and charisma — they make a good source of blindly obedient servants.

RE-ESTABLISHING ANCIENT OUTPOSTS

Arvad has sent pisciremes to the locations of ancient Lemurian outposts (some near Lemuria proper, some as far as the Philippines and the Cape of Good Hope). Their first task was mapping — though Lemurian libraries hold many undersea charts, few of them are up-to-date and accurate. He has further plans for these outposts, including spreading Lemuria's influence, but currently lacks the population to make these plans a reality.

Not all ancient Lemurian outposts and settlements were located underwater. Arvad has assigned a handful of Lemurian sorcerer-scientists to infiltrate the archaeology departments in surface world universities. These Lemurian spies have the task of sorting through recent findings and journal articles to find signs of their lost heritage. One of his spies is Doctor Lawrence Klinger (the sorcerer-scientist, Lyrence the Blue-Masked), a tenured professor at Millennium City University; another is Professor Alysha Murrow (Lyesha the Strong, a sorcerer), who teaches at Sinclair University in Vibora Bay.

In recent years Arvad has also dispatched teams of Mole-Men under the command of sorcerers to repair the domes and explore their confines, hoping to find clues vital to rebuilding the *Mandragalore*.

THE MANDRAGALORE

Despite all these plans, Arvad's primary goal remains the same as it was when he first arrived in Lemuria: to repair the *Mandragalore* and turn it against Arcadia.

He has had limited success. No matter how many sorcerers he assigns to the task, none of them can riddle out the secrets of the super-weapon's operation. The theory currently popular is that the world's ambient magic simply isn't strong enough to support such a destructive device as the *Mandragalore*. These theorists predict it will be several more decades before magic levels have risen sufficiently to make the engine of destruction operational. Arvad considers this nothing more than a excuse for failure and has decreed that any sorcerer spouting such nonsense shall be executed by disembowelment.

The Fuel Core

Arvad has learned one important thing about the *Mandragalore*: when it exploded, it shattered its fuel core and scattered the broken pieces across the world. Arvad has commanded his sorcerers to create a new fuel core, but his true hopes lie with the agent he dispatched to the surface world to search out the pieces and reassemble them. That agent is Zorran the Artificer.

Zorran's Philosopher Stone is one piece of the *Mandragalore*'s fuel core. Arvad had dispatched Zorran to explore abandoned domes and other areas untouched since the Sinking. While performing this task, Zorran found a core fragment. He became convinced the power of the so-called Philosopher's Stone would allow him to take the throne from Arvad — Zorran's House, the House of Krax, had long searched for a means of returning Lemuria to Lemurian rule. What Zorran didn't count on was betrayal from within. When Commander Zarn and company of warriors turned up in Zorran's workshop, he knew one of his cabal was a traitor.

But Arvad didn't kill Zorran. Instead he pretended to show mercy and exiled the treacherous noble, even allowing him to keep the Philosopher's Stone. But Arvad had one of his sorcerers cast a spell of detection of the Philosopher's Stone so that Arvad can view the holder of the Stone in the Oraculus. In essence, Arvad sent Zorran to the surface world to find other fragments of the *Mandragalore*'s fuel core.

Zorran knows nothing of his true purpose, though he's not so great a fool as to think Arvad spared his life out of mercy — he knows the king's up to *something*, but he has no idea what. He believes he works toward his own ends, but for the most part he's nothing more than Arvad's pawn. Arvad even used Psionic Surgery to place an aversion to hurting him in Zorran's mind... an aversion Zorran won't even realize he has until it's too late. If Zorran ever found out about, or even strongly suspected, any of this, he would devote all his resources and efforts to destroying the Emyrean usurper.

LEMURIA 3000

You can use the following information to bring Lemuria into your Galactic Champions game, if desired.

After Tyrannon's defeat in 2020, Arvad's sorcerers informed him that all signs pointed to a catastrophic disruption in the Earth's ambient magic. They described previous times when this happened and claimed that if they could not discover the means of working the *Mandragalore* soon, they could never do so (or at least, not until magic "revived"). No longer able to wait for centuries, Arvad accelerated his plans, and because of his recklessness the Emyreans discovered his intentions.

In 2021 the Emyreans, with UNTIL's aid and the help of several superheroes, made a guerilla strike on Lemuria. They had a single purpose: steal the *Mandragalore*. The Emyreans refused to be swayed from this single purpose despite UNTIL's desire to remove Arvad from power, in large part because the more war-like Emyreans had either fallen into Silence or were still recovering from the battle with Tyrannon. The Emyreans who orchestrated the attack on Lemuria felt they only had a right to protect

themselves from the grave threat of the *Mandragalore*, and no right to interfere with the affairs of another kingdom, especially one that would hardly pose a credible threat after it was disarmed.

A ferocious battle was waged across the city of Lemuria, during which the Bronze King even rose from his throne to take part in the fight. Despite this, the Emyreans stole the engine of destruction, shattering it and removing the pieces from Lemuria. They hid the pieces at a remote location where they lay undiscovered for a thousand years. The new Champions, desperate to repel the invasion of Istvatha V'han, found the device and used it to defeat her.

Although beaten, Arvad had not yet given up on his plans to use Lemuria to conquer Arcadia. He turned his attention to the Clockwork Engine. Surprisingly, Arvad's sorcerers quickly repaired it... and in 2022, Lemuria once again fell out of step with the rest of the world, becoming ghosts in time.

And in early 3000 Lemuria returned to the world....

LEMURIAN EQUIPMENT



Lemurian mechano-mysticism is responsible for the wonders Lemurian sorcerers have created over the millennia. Everything from magiconstructs, to war machines, to the personal weapons of its warriors have their power because of the four elemental substances discovered in the days of Faltrah Lem:

Ignaetium: The first element discovered, it's also the most important — it provides the fuel for the arcane furnaces that power Lemurian devices, and plays a role in the creation of the three other elements. *Ignaetium* looks like chips of quartz or some other crystal found in coal; it's usually pale blue, dull orange, or blood red in color. A chip of *ignaetium* somehow contains the spirit of fire.

Corusqua: Sorcerer-scientists create this element by running a copper wire through salt water. The wire serves as a conduit for the energy released from burning *ignaetium* and sets the water to boil. As it bubbles and steams, the water takes on a pale blue color; suspended in the liquid are crystals of incandescent blue. *Corusqua* traps the spirit of lightning in its substance and has myriad uses involving electricity, from creating the blasts a coruscator unleashes, to serving as a light source in the palaces. *Corusqua* is inert until agitated via mystic energy, generally produced by an arcane furnace.

Crystallos: This element is a substance similar in many ways to quartz, but it grows like a plant. By constraining it, the Lemurians can force it to grow into various shapes, usually flat panes. By soaking it in pigments, they can dye it various colors. Sorcerer-scientists can graft two separate pieces of *crystallos* together simply by allowing them to set side-by-side for several hours. Once the shape is finished, *crystallos* is then baked in specialized arcane furnaces, similar in shape and function to kilns. The process halts its growth and makes it one of the hardest substances known to man. Though the art of making *crystallos* as hard as the dome of Lemuria is lost, Lemurian sorcerers can still create substances ranging from DEF 10 to 20, depending on the thickness. *Crystallos* is transparent unless colored, and much lighter than steel.

Fulminor: This element is a bluish-black smoke that lends its lighter-than-air properties to any substance it remains in extended contact with. Its primary use is in ornithopters (which are held aloft by the *fulminor* trapped in their fuselages) and Bat-Wings. Lemurians create *fulminor* with a specially prepared liquid, two parts quicksilver mixed with one part *aqua regia*, thrown on smoldering coals of *ignaetium*.

The materials typically used for Lemurian metalworking are bronze, brass, and copper. The Lemurians employ these materials partly because of availability, but mainly because these metals interact best with the four mystic elements. Metals such as unalloyed iron and steel either crumple or grow brittle from long exposure to the arcane radiations of burning *ignaetium*. More alchemically significant substances (such as gold and silver) tend to interfere with the magics of Lemurian mechano-mysticism when present in large quantities, so Lemurians only make limited use of them for decorative purposes.

LEMURIAN WARRIOR EQUIPMENT

IGNAETIOR

Effect:	HKA 1½d6; RKA 1d6, Armor Piercing, Penetrating, Linked to HKA; Darkness to Sight Group; Sight Group Flash 5d6
Target/Area Affected:	One character/one character/3" Radius/one character
Duration:	Instant/Instant/1 Turn/Instant
Range:	Touch/Touch/2"/Touch
Charges:	2 END/16 Charges/4 Continuing Charges/16 Charges
Breakability:	6 DEF

Description: This sword-like weapon is a three-foot-long blade of *crystallos* attached to a long hilt. In the hilt and pommel is a small arcane furnace. The blade, scorched-black in color, is shot through with small holes. When the warrior depresses a stud on the hilt, he can make the furnace emit flames, smoke, or a blinding flash through the holes.

Game Information:

Cost Power

12	<i>Ignaetior Blade:</i> HKA 1½d6; OAF (-1)
15	<i>Ignaetior Powers:</i> Multipower, 30-point reserve; all slots OAF (-1)
1u	1) <i>Flaming Blade:</i> RKA 1d6, Armor Piercing (+½), Penetrating (+½); OAF (-1), No Range (-½), Linked (to Blade; -¼), 16 Charges (-0)
1u	2) <i>Smoke Cloud:</i> Darkness to Sight Group 3" radius; OAF (-1), Limited Range (2"; -¼), 4 Charges lasting 1 Turn each (removed by wind; -½)
1u	3) <i>Flash Burst:</i> Sight Group Flash 5d6; OAF (-1), No Range (-½), 16 Charges (-0)

Total cost: 30 points.

OTHER MAGICONSTRUCTS

You can find other Lemurian magiconstructs in *Conquerors, Killers, And Crooks* — the Lemurian Golem and the *Chala-Lion* — on pages 223 and 224.

CORUSCATOR

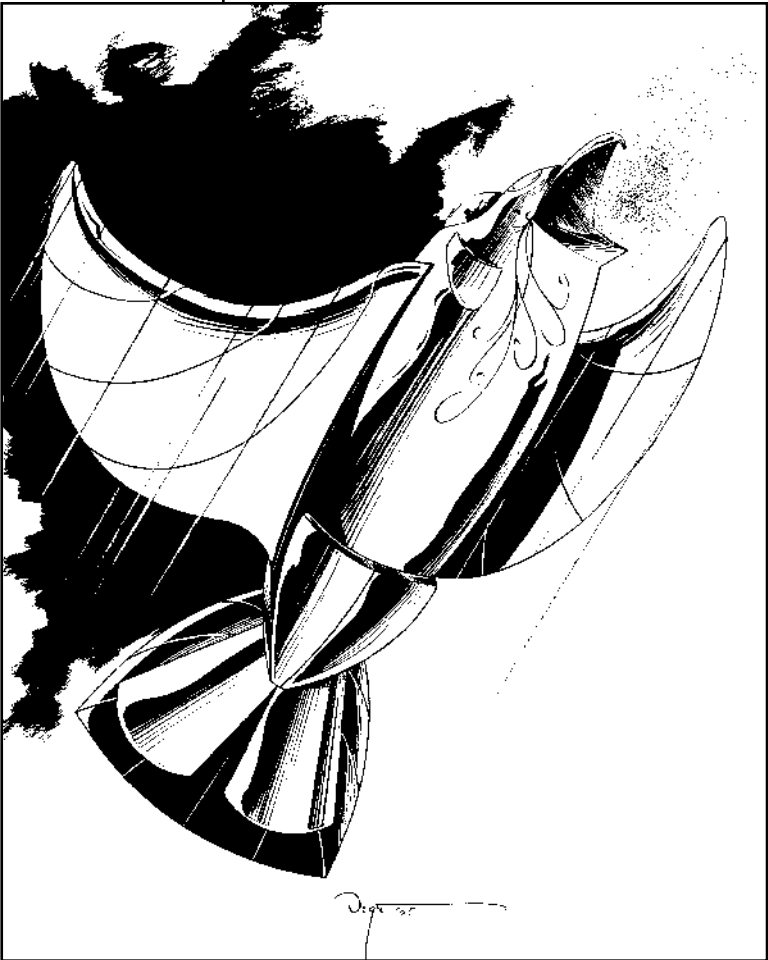
Effect: Energy Blast 8d6; Energy Blast 4d6, NND
Target/Area Affected: One character
Duration: Instant
Range: 15"/Touch
Charges: 32 Charges
Breakability: 10 DEF

Description: A coruscator is the same size as a long-bladed dirk, and worn the same, but the "blade" is made of mystically-strengthened copper and shaped like a rod. It has a bell guard, often decorated with black iron or silver filigree, that covers the whole hand, and a hilt shaped like the pistol grip on a fencing foil. A bulbous part of the weapon just above the guard holds a measure of *corusqua*. A warrior can use the coruscator as a parrying weapon, to fire a blast of lightning, or deliver a stunning strike of electricity.

Game Information:

Cost Power
25 *Coruscator*: Multipower, 40-point reserve, 32 Charges for entire Multipower (+¼); all slots OAF (-1)
2u 1) *Lightning Blast*: Energy Blast 8d6; OAF (-1), Limited Range (15"; -¼)
2u 2) *Electric Strike*: Energy Blast 4d6, NND (defense is ED Force Field or insulated clothing; +1); OAF (-1), No Range (-½)

Total cost: 29 points.



CARAPRIX

Effect: Armor (10 PD/10 ED); Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50%
Target/Area Affected: Self
Duration: Persistent
Range: No Range
END Cost: 0
Breakability: 10 DEF

Description: Caraprix is the armor a warrior wears into battle. It consists of a breastplate, greaves, and helmet made from *crystallos*. Usually silvery black or indigo in color, the *crystallos* is grown around a mesh of mystically-strengthened copper wires, and this mesh leads to three copper fins set vertically on the breastplate's back. In addition to being extraordinarily hard, the copper mesh also absorbs energy attacks. When it does so, the energy is conducted along the wires to the fins on the back and released harmlessly as heat. Smaller fins on the upper arms and calves perform this same function for other areas the armor covers. The helmet of a suit of caraprix incorporates the demonic creature of a wearer's House into its design.

Game Information:

Cost Power
15 *Body Armor*: Armor (10 PD/10 ED); OIF (-½), Activation Roll 14- (-½)
15 *Energy Absorption*: Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50%; OIF (-½), Activation Roll 14- (-½)

Total cost: 30 points.

VEHICLES

ORNITHOPTER

Val	Char	Cost	Notes
6	Size	30	4" x 2"; 6.4 tons; -6 KB; -4 DCV
40	STR	0	Lift 6,400 kg; 8d6 HTH [0]
21	DEX	33	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
20	BODY	4	
12	DEF	30	
5	SPD	19	Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
Total Characteristic Cost: 116			

Movement: Ground: 6"/12"
Swimming: 12"/96"
Flight: 30"/240"

Abilities & Equipment

Cost Power
Propulsion Systems
70 *Propulsion Systems*: Multipower, 70-point reserve; 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (difficult to obtain fuel; 4 Hours; -0) for entire reserve [1cc]
7u 1) *Fulminator And Wings*: Flight 30", x8 Noncombat
2u 2) *Submersible*: Swimming +10" (12" total), x8 Noncombat

Tactical Systems

53 *Giga-Coruscator*: Energy Blast 15d6, Area Of

- Effect (44" Line; +1), 64 Charges (+½);
OIF Bulky (-1), Limited Arc Of Fire
(0 degrees forward; only on same
horizontal level; -1), No Range (-½) [64]
- 35 *Ignatium Bombs*: Energy Blast 12d6,
Explosion (1 DC per 2"; +¾); OIF Bulky
(-1), Dropped (-½), 8 Charges (-½) [8]

Personnel Systems

- 15 *Sealed Environment*: Life Support
(Self-Contained Breathing; Safe Environ-
ments: High Pressure, Intense Cold,
Low Pressure/Vacuum) 0
- 5 *Communication System*: HRRP (Radio
Group); OIF Bulky (-1), Affected As Sight
And Hearing Group As Well As Radio
Group (-½) 0
- 2 *Fulminor Aero-Descender (Pilot)*:
Gliding 6"; OIF Bulky (-1), Limited
Movement (character cannot gain altitude,
and must move 12" downward for every 1"
forward; -½), 1 Continuing Charge (lasts
until character hits the ground; -¾)
- 2 *Fulminor Aero-Descender (Passenger)*:
Another Fulminor Aero-Descender

Skills

- 8 *Highly Maneuverable*: +4 with Flight

Total Abilities & Equipment Cost: 199

Total Vehicle Cost: 315

Value Disadvantages

- 25 Distinctive Features: Lemurian
ornithopter (Not Concealable; Causes
Extreme Reaction [fear])
- 15 Physical Limitation: Constant Malfunctions
(Frequently, Greatly Impairing)

Total Disadvantage Points: 40

Total Cost: 275/5 = 55

Description: Made of bronze and chased with silver, ornithopters look like stylized birds, typically the *tallar*-falcons of ancient times. *Fulminor* holds them aloft — the engine creates more to raise the vehicle, or releases the bluish-black smoke to descend. (Since it emits smoke when it descends, some surface worlders have taken this to mean an ornithopter is crashing — much to their surprise when the ornithopter pulls out of its dive and turns on them.) Just below the tail are two arcane furnaces that provide thrust; two moveable wings help guide the craft. The beak is open as if screeching a warning of impending doom, and the inside of the "mouth" sparks with electricity from the Giga-Coruscator, its main weapon.

The pilot sits in a cockpit shielded with *crystallos* just behind the ornithopter's head. An ornithopter can seat two, but only requires one person to pilot it. In major military operations a sorcerer occupies the second seat and uses his *Sharnel's Mechano-Mystic Enhancer* spell to increase the effectiveness of the ornithopter. In the event of an impending crash, they can use the Fulminor Aero-Descenders — ejection seat-like devices that perform the same function as parachutes. The wearer can control his fall to a limited extent by spreading his arms and legs.

An ornithopter can perform vertical take-offs and landings, and can hover — in short, it's as maneuverable the bird it resembles. When it's not in flight, the wings fold along the ornithopter's fuselage, and the landing gear resembles stylized talons.

PISCIREME

Val	Char	Cost	Notes
20	Size	100	100" x 50"; mass 100 ktons; -20 KB; -13 DCV
110	STR	0	Lift 100 ktons; 22d6 HTH [0]
15	DEX	15	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
35	BODY	5	
16	DEF	54	Hardened (+¼)
4	SPD	15	Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
Total Characteristic Cost: 189			

Movement: Ground: 0"/0"
Swimming: 16"/32"

Abilities & Equipment

Cost	Power	END
Propulsion Systems		
8	<i>Propeller-Driven Underwater Craft</i> : Swimming +14" (16" total); Side Effects (propeller does KA 2d6 to anyone coming in contact with bottom stern of vehicle, occurs automatically, only affects environment around vehicle; -¾)	0
-12	<i>Water Only</i> : Running -6" (0" total)	0

Tactical Systems

95	<i>Giga-Coruscator</i> : Energy Blast 15d6, Area Of Effect (124" Cone; +1½), 125 Charges (+1); OIF Bulky (-1), Limited Arc Of Fire (forward 180 Degrees above ship; -¼), No Range (-½) [125]	
10	<i>Giga-Coruscators</i> : 3 more Giga- Coruscators (forward 180 Degrees below ship, rear 180 Degrees above ship, rear 180 Degrees below ship) [64]	
100	<i>Ignatium Bomb Launcher</i> : Energy Blast 20d6, Explosion (1 DC per 2"; +¾), Indirect (arched fire; +¼), Increased Maximum Range (5,000", or about 6 miles; +¼); OIF Bulky (-1), Limited Arc Of Fire (forward 180 Degrees; -¼), 16 Charges (-0) [16]	
5	<i>Ignatium Bomb Launcher</i> : another Ignatium Bomb Launcher [16]	

Personnel Systems

15	<i>Sealed Environment</i> : Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing; Safe Environments: High Pressure, Intense Cold, Low Pressure/Vacuum) 0	
5	<i>Communication System</i> : HRRP (Radio Group); OIF Bulky (-1), Affected As Sight And Hearing Group As Well As Radio Group (-½) 0	
15	<i>Oraculus</i> : Clairsentience (Sight Group), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OIF Bulky (-1) 0	

Total Abilities & Equipment Cost: 241

Total Vehicle Cost: 430

Value Disadvantages

- 25 Distinctive Features: Lemurian piscireme (Not Concealable; Causes Extreme Reaction [fear])
- 15 Physical Limitation: Constant Malfunctions (Frequently, Greatly Impairing)

Total Disadvantage Points: 40
Total Cost: 390/5 = 78

ADDITIONAL VEHICLES

Cost Vehicle

- 72 Ornithopters: 8 Ornithopters (see above)
- 52 Quattropede: 4 Quattropedes (see below)
- 97 Flyinq-Sharks: 16 Flyinq-sharks (see below)
- 103 Gullop-Steeds: 8 Gullop-steeds (see below)

Description: The piscireme is a submersible, similar in size to a surface world battleship; it resembles a demonic sperm whale made of bronze. A piscireme’s “tail” and “fins” are made from narrow bands of metal that move and serve as a rudders; and two propellers sit on either side of the base of the tail. The piscireme is captained by a Lemurian commander and requires a crew of twenty Mole-Men. It has staterooms for twelve other nobles, and it carries Mole-Men infantry in its bowels. The quarters for Mole-Men are cramped and inhumane — a piscireme can carry a thousand Mole-Men packed in like sardines.

The “eyes” of a piscireme are sheathed in opaque *crystallos*, and roll back to reveal the two Ignaetium Bomb Launchers. The launcher itself

is a large barrel that extends from the eye socket and leads back into a gunnery compartment where Mole-Men load the bombs. An Ignaetium Bomb is a large cratered rock. When fired, it begins to crack and the cracks glow red from the burning *ignaetium* inside. When the bomb impacts with the target, it explodes in a fiery destructive burst. The launchers can fling a bomb for six miles, choosing either to arc their fire over intervening obstacles or shoot in a straight line. Located at the back of the bulbous “head” of the piscireme is a shallowly-arched dome of *crystallos*; this slides open to reveal a flight deck from which ornithopters can launch and land. When the piscireme beaches, the “mouth” creaks open and a ramp extends from within to allow Mole-Men and land vehicles to emerge.

QUATTROPEDE

Val	Char	Cost	Notes
7	Size	35	5" x 2.5"; mass 12.5 tons; -7 KB; -4 DCV
60	STR	15	Lift 100 kg; 12d6 HTH [0]
18	DEX	24	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
30	BODY	14	
15	DEF	39	
4	SPD	12	Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
Total Characteristic Cost: 139			

Movement: Ground: 12"/24"
Swimming: 0"/0"

Abilities & Equipment

Cost	Power	END
Propulsion Systems		
12	Legs: Ground Movement +6" (12" total)	0
-2	Cannot Swim: Swimming -2" (0" total)	
Tactical Systems		
68	Omnidirectional Giga-Coruscator: Energy Blast 15d6, Area Of Effect (44" Line; +1), 64 Charges (+½); OIF Bulky (-1), Limited Arc Of Fire (360 degrees around vehicle, but only at or below the level of the vehicle’s body unless target is at least 40" from vehicle; -¼), No Range (-½)	[64]
Personnel Systems		
15	Sealed Environment: Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing; Safe Environments: High Pressure, Intense Cold, Low Pressure/Vacuum)	0
5	Communication System: HRRP (Radio Group); OIF Bulky (-1), Affected As Sight And Hearing Group As Well As Radio Group (-½)	0

Total Abilities & Equipment Cost: 99
Total Vehicle Cost: 237

Value Disadvantages

- 25 Distinctive Features: Lemurian quattropede (Not Concealable; Causes Extreme Reaction [fear])
- 15 Physical Limitation: Constant Malfunctions (Frequently, Greatly Impairing)

Total Disadvantage Points: 40
Total Cost: 197/5 = 39



Description: Quattropedes are four-legged walkers that serve as command centers for Lemurian infantry and fighting platforms for sorcerers. The body of the Quattropede is a half-sphere: a 2.5" diameter geodesic dome of *crystallos* set atop a disc of mystically-hardened bronze. At the front of the body is an open battlement that gives a sorcerer partial cover from attacks so he can provide magical support to the infantry. From the body extend four legs. Each leg is 5" long, has four joints, and ends in a flexible circular pad. From the bottom of the body extends an articulated arm terminating in a Giga-Coruscator.

MOLE-MAN TUNNELER

Val	Char	Cost	Notes
4	Size	20	2.5" x 1.5"; mass 1.6 tons; -4 KB; -2 DCV
50	STR	20	Lift 25 tons; 10d6 HTH [0]
12	DEX	6	OCV: 4/DCV: 4
30	BODY	16	
10	DEF	16	Does Not Protect Occupant (-½)
3	SPD	8	Phases: 4, 8, 12
Total Characteristic Cost: 86			

Movement:	Ground:	6"/12"
	Swimming:	0"/0"
	Tunneling:	6"/12"

Abilities & Equipment

Cost	Power	END
4	<i>Four Arms And Two Legs:</i> Extra Limbs (6 — two arms with pincers for picking things up, two arms with drills, two legs); Limited Manipulation (-¼)	0
7	<i>Extensors:</i> Clinging (normal STR); OIF (-½)	0
45	<i>Drills:</i> Multipower, 45-point reserve	
3u	1) <i>To Break Rocks:</i> HKA 3d6; No STR Bonus (-½)	0
4u	2) <i>To Tunnel:</i> Tunneling 6" through 11 DEF material	0
-2	<i>Ground Movement Only:</i> Swimming -2"	

Total Abilities & Equipment Cost: 61

Total Vehicle Cost: 147

Value Disadvantages

25	<i>Distinctive Features:</i> Lemurian tunneler (Not Concealable; Causes Extreme Reaction [fear])
15	<i>Physical Limitation:</i> Constant Malfunctions (Frequently, Greatly Impairing)

Total Disadvantage Points: 40

Total Cost: 107/5 = 21



Description: A Mole-Man Tunneler looks like a 13 foot (2") tall crudely-made golem with no head, four arms, and two legs. Mole-Men use tunnelers to break new tunnels and to mine. Two of the arms end in square pincers with which the driver can pick up large rocks and other objects; the other two end in drills. Rungs lead up the tunneler's chest and allow a Mole-Man to climb to the shoulders. Atop the shoulders is a seat surrounded by long levers. A Mole-Man sits in the seat and works the levers to control the tunneler. On the back of the tunneler is an open compartment where the operator can store large chunks of ore. From under the arms extend four sharp-tipped extensors the tunneler uses to climb vertical passages.

Lemurians do not use Mole-Man Tunnelers in their infantry. However, if some hapless superheroes stumbles into a Mole-Man tunnel, the Mole-Men use the tunnelers to attack the "invaders."

MAGICONSTRUCTS

GULLOP-STEED

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
40	STR	30	17-	Lift 6,400 kg; 8d6 [0]
24	DEX	42	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
10	CON	0	11-	
20	BODY	20	13-	
8	INT	-2	11-	PER Roll 11-
0	EGO	0	—	ECV: N/A
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
10	COM	0	11-	
12	PD	27		Total: 12 PD (12 rPD)
12	ED	33		Total: 12 ED (12 rED)
5	SPD	16		Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
10	REC	0		
0	END	-10		
—	STUN	—		Total Characteristics Cost: 166

Movement: Running: 15"/30"
Leaping: 8"/16"

Cost	Powers	END
15	<i>Gullop-Steed's Body:</i> Does Not Bleed	0
10	<i>Gullop-Steed's Body:</i> No Hit Locations	0
45	<i>Gullop-Steed's Body:</i> Takes No STUN	0
20	<i>Corusqua Horseshoes:</i> Energy Blast 4d6, NND (defense is ED Force Field or insulated clothing; +1); OIF (-½), No Range (-½), 16 Charges (-0) [16]	
18	<i>Gullop-Steed's Legs:</i> Running +9" (15" total)	0
15	<i>Tireless:</i> Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) on Running	0
4	<i>Tireless:</i> Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) on Leaping	0
1	<i>Tireless:</i> Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) on Swimming	0
20	<i>Tireless:</i> Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) for STR	0
18	<i>Gullop-Steed's Body:</i> Hardened (+¼) for 12 PD/12 ED	0
45	<i>Gullop-Steed's Body:</i> Damage Resistance (12 PD/12 ED), Hardened (+¼)	0
60	<i>Heavy:</i> Knockback Resistance -10"	0
50	<i>Gullop-Steed Body:</i> Life Support: Total (including Longevity: Immortality)	0

Skills

10	+2 HTH
1	Riding 14-; Complementary To Rider's Skill Only (-1)

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 332

Total Cost: 498

200+ Disadvantages

5	Physical Limitation: Large (4m; -2 DCV, +2 to PER Rolls to perceive) (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)
15	Physical Limitation: Machine Intelligence (Frequently, Greatly Impairing)
15	Physical Limitation: Very Limited Manipulation (Frequently, Greatly Impairing)
25	Psychological Limitation: Must Obey Controller (Very Common, Total)

Total Disadvantage Points: 60

Total Cost: 438/5 = 88

Description: A *Gullop-Steed* is a magiconstruct Lemurian warriors ride in battle. Modeled after a creature long extinct, a *Gullop-Steed* is as large as a warhorse and has two small horns protruding from behind its ears and a long line of horns running down the back of its neck where a horse's mane would be. The saddle's built into the steed's body, and its forehooves are shod with *corusqua*-filled *crystallos* horseshoes that can deliver a paralyzing electrical strike when the steed kicks an opponent (typically this attack with used as multiple-power attack with a normal HTH Strike, but that's not required). Because of its horseshoes, the *Gullop-Steed* kicks up sparks as it runs.

FLYNQ-SHARK

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
30	STR	20	15-	Lift 1,600 kg; 6d6 [0]
24	DEX	42	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
10	CON	0	11-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
8	INT	-2	11-	PER Roll 11-
0	EGO	0	—	ECV: N/A
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
10	COM	0	11-	
10	PD	24		Total: 10 PD (10 rPD)
10	ED	27		Total: 10 ED (10 rED)
5	SPD	16		Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
8	REC	0		
0	END	-10		
—	STUN	—		Total Characteristics Cost: 137

Movement: Swimming: 12"/24"

Cost	Powers	END
15	<i>Flynq-Shark's Body:</i> Does Not Bleed	0
10	<i>Flynq-Shark's Body:</i> No Hit Locations	0
45	<i>Flynq-Shark's Body:</i> Takes No STUN	0
3	<i>Tireless:</i> Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) on Leaping	0
1	<i>Tireless:</i> Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) on Swimming	0
15	<i>Tireless:</i> Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) for STR	0
40	<i>Coruscator:</i> Energy Blast 6d6, NND (defense is ED Force Field or insulated clothing; +1); OIF (-½), 16 Charges (-0) [16]	
15	<i>Flynq-Shark's Body:</i> Hardened (+¼) for 10 PD/10 ED	0
37	<i>Flynq-Shark's Body:</i> Damage Resistance (10 PD/10 ED), Hardened (+¼)	0
60	<i>Heavy:</i> Knockback Resistance -10"	0
50	<i>Flynq-Shark Vitality:</i> Life Support (Total, including Longevity: Immortality)	0
10	<i>Fast Swimmer:</i> Swimming +10" (12" total)	0
-12	<i>Water Only:</i> Running -6" (0' total)	

Skills

10	+2 HTH
1	Riding 14-; Complementary To Rider's Skill Only (-1)

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 300

Total Cost: 437

200+ Disadvantages

- 5 Physical Limitation: Large (4m; -2 DCV, +2 to PER Rolls to perceive) (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)
- 15 Physical Limitation: Machine Intelligence (Frequently, Greatly Impairing)
- 15 Physical Limitation: Very Limited Manipulation (Frequently, Greatly Impairing)
- 25 Psychological Limitation: Must Obey Controller (Very Common, Total)

Total Disadvantage Points: 60**Total Cost: 377/5 = 75**

Description: *Flynq*-Sharks serve personal vehicles in underwater engagements — typically they and their riders act as “skirmishers” in naval engagements or as a piscireme’s lifeboats. Similar in appearance to a Great White Shark but lacking a

fin, it has a depression along the top where the rider lays and operates the magiconstruct’s controls. In the shark’s “mouth” is a large Coruscator.

Though the back of the *Flynq*-shark is shaped to conform to a rider’s body, the rider is totally exposed and must wear an underwater breathing apparatus, which works on the same principles of a dome’s condensers and provides Life Support (Self-Contained Breathing) so long as the wearer is underwater.

Like the *Gullop*-steed, the *Flynq*-shark does not require a rider — it can be dispatched just like a *Chala*-lion or other magiconstruct, and performs as ordered (given its limited intelligence). Typically the Lemurians send riderless *Flynq*-sharks to retrieve Lemurian survivors of a destroyed piscireme or to attack survivors of an enemy vessel.

DENIZENS OF LEMURIA



THE BETRAYER ARVAD King Of Lemuria

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
60	STR	50	21-	Lift 100 tons; 12d6 [6]
21	DEX	33	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
30	CON	40	15-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
35	INT	25	16-	PER Roll 16-
30	EGO	40	15-	ECV: 10
30	PRE	20	15-	PRE Attack: 6d6
30	COM	10	15-	
15	PD	3		Total: 40 PD (25 rPD)
15	ED	9		Total: 40 ED (25 rED)
6	SPD	29		Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12
20	REC	4		
80	END	10		
70	STUN	10		Total Characteristics Cost: 293
Movement:				
	Running:		6"/12"	
	Flight:		20"/160"	
	MegaFlight:		100,000 km/Phase	
Cost Powers				
137	<i>The Vast Powers Of His Empyrean Mind:</i>			
	Multipower, 137-point reserve			
14u	1) <i>Mental Blast:</i>			
	EGO Attack 10d6 (Human and Alien classes of minds),			
	Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)			5
14u	2) <i>Mental Illusions:</i>			
	Mental Illusions 20d6 (Human and Alien classes of minds),			
	Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)			5
14u	3) <i>Mental Control I:</i>			
	Mind Control 20d6 (Human and Alien classes of minds),			
	Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)			5
9u	4) <i>Mental Control II:</i>			
	Mind Control 9d6 (Human and Alien classes of minds), Area			
	Of Effect (8" Radius; +1), Selective Target			

	(+¼), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼);	
	No Range (-½)	5
14u	5) <i>Telepathy:</i> Telepathy 20d6 (Human and Alien classes of minds), Reduced	
	Endurance (½ END; +¼)	5
11u	6) <i>Psionic Surgery:</i> Major Transform 4d6	
	(remove or change target's memories and Psychological Limitations, heals back	
	normally), BOECV (Mental Defense applies;	
	+1), Works Versus EGO, Not BODY (+¼);	
	Limited Target (sentient beings only; -¼)	13
137	<i>Mental Scan:</i> Mind Scan 20d6 (Human and Alien classes of minds), Reduced	
	Endurance (½ END; +¼)	5
15	<i>The Unassailable Will Of An Empyrean:</i>	
	Mental Defense (21 points total)	0
75	<i>Empyrean Skin:</i> Armor (25 PD/25 ED)	0
10	<i>Empyrean Eyes:</i> Sight Group Flash	
	Defense (10 points)	0
10	<i>Empyrean Toughness:</i> Knockback	
	Resistance -5"	0
5	<i>Empyrean Toughness:</i> Lack Of Weakness	
	(-5) for Resistant Defenses	0
50	<i>Empyrean Physiology:</i> Life Support:	
	Total (including Longevity: Immortality)	0
14	<i>Empyrean Regeneration:</i> Healing BODY	
	2d6 (Regeneration; 2 BODY per Turn),	
	Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½),	
	Persistent (+½); Extra Time (2 BODY	
	per Turn; -1¼), Self Only (-½)	0
50	<i>Empyrean Flight:</i> Multipower,	
	50-point reserve	
5u	1) <i>Tireless Flight:</i> Flight 16", Reduced	
	Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
5u	2) <i>Standard Flight:</i> Flight 20",	
	x8 Noncombat	5

ARVAD PLOT SEEDS

Arvad is not the most powerful mentalist on the planet — that honor falls to the villainous Menton. When the two make contact with each other, it's a meeting of minds like the world has never seen. And when they decide to become allies, can even Arcadia stand against their combined power?

After encounters with the Lemurians, the PCs decide to confront the Emphyreans and demand that they do something about the rogue member of their race. How will the Emphyreans take the demands of the PCs? And could this be some sort of mental suggestion made by Arvad? Might this confrontation be playing into the powerful mentalist's hands?

Somehow Arvad has lost track of Zorran and his Philosopher's Stone. This can only mean one thing: Zorran has learned he is Arvad's pawn and uncovered the detection spell on the Philosopher's Stone. Arvad must locate the exiled Lemurian, and he chooses to manipulate the PCs into tracking Zorran down.

5u	3) <i>Interplanetary Flight</i> : Flight 10", MegaScale (1" = 10,000 km, can scale down to 1" = 1 km; +1½)	5
15	<i>Emphyrean Senses</i> : +5 to PER Rolls for all Sense Groups	0
36	<i>Detect Minds</i> : Detect Minds 16- (Mental Sense Group), Discriminatory, Analyze, Improved Arc Of Perception (360 Degrees), Sense, Targeting, Telescopic (+8 versus Range Modifier)	0
Perks		
10	Fringe Benefit: King Of Lemuria	
15	Money: Filthy Rich	
Talents		
5	Eidetic Memory	
3	Lightning Calculator	
6	Speed Reading (x100)	
24	Universal Translator 20-	
Skills		
80	+8 Overall Levels	
3	Acting 15-	
3	Concealment 16-	
3	Conversation 15-	
3	Deduction 16-	
3	Disguise 16-	
10	Gambling (Card Games, Dice Games, Board Games, Roulette, Sports Betting) 16-	
3	High Society 15-	
3	Interrogation 15-	
3	Oratory 15-	
3	Persuasion 15-	
3	Seduction 15-	
7	Sleight Of Hand 15-	
3	Scholar	
4	1) KS: Emphyrean History And Culture 18-	
4	2) KS: Forgotten History Of The World 18-	
4	3) KS: Games And Gambling 18-	
2	4) KS: Human History And Culture 16-	
2	5) KS: Lemurian History And Culture 16-	
4	6) KS: World History 18-	
3	Traveler	
2	1) AK: Africa 15-	
2	2) AK: Antarctica 15-	
4	3) CK: Arcadia 17-	
2	4) AK: Asia 15-	
2	5) AK: Australia 15-	
2	6) AK: Europe 15-	
2	7) CK: Lemuria 15-	
2	8) AK: North America 15-	
2	9) AK: South America 15-	

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 881

Total Cost: 1,174

200+ Disadvantages

10	Hunted: Emphyreans 11- (Mo Pow, Watching)
20	Psychological Limitation: Love Of Contests And Games Of Chance (Common, Total)
20	Psychological Limitation: Gambler's Code (won't cheat at games of chance) (Common, Total)
25	Psychological Limitation: Megalomaniac (Very Common, Total)
15	Reputation: the Betrayer Arvad, 14- (Extreme, small group [Emphyreans and their allies])
10	Rivalry: Professional (with brother, Hazor; Seek to Harm/Kill Rival)
15	Social Limitation: Exiled From Arcadia (Very Frequently, Major, Is Not Limiting In Some Cultures Or Societies)
859	Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 1,174

Background/History: Few Emphyreans understand how the Betrayer Arvad turned out so wicked. His father, Amlin, and his mother, Marya, were two of the wisest Emphyreans; Arvad's brother, Hazor, was a paragon of Emphyrean virtue. Most suspect that either Arvad is not truly the son of Amlin and Marya, or perhaps in his death throes, the monstrous Ogurn (a much more suitable father for Arvad) cursed the line of Amlin. Whatever the case, Arvad is evil through-and-through, but most Emphyreans could only see his malevolence when Arvad's plot to take over Arcadia came to light.

When Arvad was a child, the Emphyreans thought him merely spoiled and ill-tempered. They laughed at his frequent tirades and outbursts and took them in stride, coolly counseling him to have more patience or act more maturely. When he reached his maturity, Arvad departed Arcadia — not unusual among the Emphyreans — and spent tens of thousands of years wandering among the humans, rarely returning to his home. Most Emphyreans believed he'd grow out of his childish ways, but he did not: the unruly child became an evil adult. Sometimes rumors concerning his activities made their way to Arcadia — Arvad was the advisor to some bloodthirsty king or had caused the massacre of such-and-such kingdom — but most Emphyreans couldn't, or wouldn't, believe any child of Amlin and Marya could be so malicious and malevolent. Evil was almost unheard of in utopian Arcadia, and certainly no evil could result from the offspring of the Emphyreans' great leader.

Two hundred years ago, Arvad returned to Arcadia, announcing that his wandering years were over and that he intended to stay and help his brother rule. Shortly thereafter Hazor went insane — the king of the Emphyreans flew into a berserk frenzy and seemed unstoppable until Arvad calmed him. By his own decree, Hazor told his people he must be locked away until a cure for his madness was found. Arvad would rule as his brother's regent.

Hazor's grandson Archon uncovered the truth. Arvad had come into possession of the Eye of Ogurn, an evil artifact that increased his mental powers. Arvad alone was the cause of King Hazor's

madness. Archon stole the Eye and freed Hazor. The Emphyreans captured Arvad, and the king exiled him from Arcadia. Then he came to Lemuria to plot his revenge.

Personality/Motivation: Arvad is the very opposite of everything the Emphyreans value. Vain, conniving, depraved, arrogant, cunning — the list of his flaws is endless. The one quality he shares with his kinsmen is an abiding love for humanity, but he admires humanity for its base nature, its frequent conflicts, its betrayals, its skill at lying. He often claims he didn't really know anything of evil until he journeyed in the world of man. His Emphyrean brethren were poor teachers when it came to malevolence; it was men and women who schooled Arvad in the ways of evil.

Arvad loves games of all sorts, from contests of chance to those of skill — they are the one thing he will not cheat at. He often suggests a game to decide an issue even when he holds the upper hand, and rarely refuses such challenges when others (especially beloved humanity) offers them. It's a flaw some Emphyreans, including his brother Hazor, have exploited in the past to defeat him.

Arvad holds Lemurians in contempt, preferring the company of humans to his subjects. He's prone to outbursts in which he curses the entire Lemurian race. He never lets the Lemurians forget he is an Emphyrean, a member of a race the Lemurians failed to defeat after millennia of trying. He's especially fond of reminding the Lemurians that he's immortal — that he need never worry about his soul being consigned to oblivion. But despite his contempt, he's not an incompetent ruler. He's spent countless years around human rulers, from whom he's learned a great deal — and he listens to the advice of his cabinet, even though he loathes them.

But in truth, Arvad has a single driving goal: to prove himself better than his brother Hazor. Arvad would tear apart the world itself to prove his superiority... and if he's allowed to continue on his current course, he might very well succeed.

Quote: "Your Shakespeare said it best: "What fools these mortals be!""

Powers/Tactics: Although possessing the incredible physical powers typical to the mightiest Emphyreans, Arvad prefers to use his highly-developed mental powers. In combat with superheroes Arvad opens with his Area Of Effect Mind Control. He keeps the command simple and somewhat plausible, something along the lines of "Stop — let's discuss matters instead of fighting." Then he focuses his Mind Control on the team leader, attempting to convince him the whole thing is just a misunderstanding. If this doesn't work, he simply unleashes an Ego Attack — let the foolish mortals try to stop him.

Arvad takes great pleasure in exhibiting his Emphyrean powers around his Lemurian subjects — for example, he tends to hover several inches above the ground instead of walking when around them. Because of his love of games, Arvad does not use his mental powers during a contest of wits or

luck, regardless of how high the stakes are.

Campaign Use: Arvad is a master villain, a deadly enemy for the PCs not just because of his vast mental powers, but also because of his extensive resources.

To increase his power, add a Telekinesis Multi-power with a 80- to 100-point reserve that has slots for Telekinesis, an RKA, a Force Field, and a Force Wall. To decrease his power remove his Mind Scan and decrease his Mental Powers to around 100 Active Points each.

Arvad Hunts characters for one of two reasons: if they know something about the *Mandragalore*, or if he learns they're close to his brother Hazor. He's unlikely to Hunt heroes personally — he dispatches Lemurians to kill or capture them. (In the case of the *Mandragalore*, Arvad first attempts to manipulate Zorran the Artificer into attacking the PCs.)

Appearance: Arvad is inhumanly beautiful. He is well-proportioned and stands 6'6" tall. He has golden curls, blue eyes, and despite over a century away from the Sun, his skin is so tanned it seems as if he were cast from bronze. He often wears a breastplate made of gold and chased with platinum, a white skirt cut in the style of the ancient Romans, and a voluminous blue cloak that he regally drapes over one arm. Those in his presence are reminded of Alexander the Great or Augustus Caesar — just the impression Arvad wants to convey.



KHUSOR PLOT SEEDS

Arvad decides to get revenge on the PCs and orders the Deceiver Korba to infiltrate their ranks. Will they uncover the disguised Emphyrean? And if they do, what happened to the superhero Korba's mimicking?

The Emphyreans have finally discovered how Korba turned evil. They enlist the PCs' aid in drawing him out of Lemuria so they can cure him. One of the Emphyreans is to act as bait, and it falls to the PCs to close the trap. Will they succeed? And might this be a trap intended to capture the PCs instead?

The House of Sron has discovered Khosor's murder. Civil war breaks out in Lemuria! When this war spills out of the city and into the seas, endangering trade routes in the Indian Ocean, the United Nations asks the PCs to step in. Caught between two sides, neither worth supporting, whose will the PCs favor? Or will they wage a heroic war against both sides... and possibly get crushed in the middle?

KHUSOR THE CROOKED

Arvad's Major Domo

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
50	STR	40	19-	Lift 25 tons; 10d6 [5]
27	DEX	51	14-	OCV: 9/DCV: 9
30	CON	40	15-	
20	BODY	20	13-	
25	INT	15	14-	PER Roll 14-
20	EGO	20	13-	ECV: 7
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
20	COM	5	13-	
18	PD	8		Total: 38 PD (20 rPD)
18	ED	12		Total: 38 ED (20 rED)
5	SPD	13		Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
18	REC	4		
80	END	10		
60	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 248

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
Flight: 20"/160"
MegaFlight: 100,000 km/Phase

Cost Powers END

240	<i>Mimicking:</i> Variable Power Pool (Mimic Pool), 150 base + 75 control cost; Cosmic (+2); Requires Successful HTH Attack Roll (-½), VPP Mimics Target's Powers (-½), Powers May Only Be As Powerful As Target's Powers (-½) var.	
81	<i>Shapechanging:</i> Shape Shift (Sight, Hearing, Smell/Taste, and Touch Groups; any humanoid form), Cellular, Imitation, Instant Change, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
60	<i>Emphyrean Skin:</i> Armor (20 PD/20 ED)	0
10	<i>Emphyrean Eyes:</i> Sight Group Flash Defense (10 points)	0
15	<i>Emphyrean Mind:</i> Mental Defense (19 points total)	0
10	<i>Emphyrean Toughness:</i> Knockback Resistance -5"	0
5	<i>Emphyrean Toughness:</i> Lack Of Weakness (-5) for Resistant Defenses	0
50	<i>Emphyrean Physiology:</i> Life Support: Total (including Longevity: Immortality)	0
14	<i>Emphyrean Regeneration:</i> Healing BODY 2d6 (Regeneration; 2 BODY per Turn), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½); Extra Time (2 BODY per Turn; -1¼), Self Only (-½)	0
50	<i>Emphyrean Flight:</i> Multipower, 50-point reserve	
5u	1) <i>Standard Flight:</i> Flight 20", x8 Noncombat	5
5u	2) <i>Interplanetary Flight:</i> Flight 10", MegaScale (1" = 10,000 km, can scale down to 1" = 1 km; +1½)	5
9	<i>Emphyrean Senses:</i> +3 to PER Rolls for all Sense Groups	0

Talents

24	Universal Translator 18-
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Skills

40	+4 Overall Levels
7	Acting 15-
5	Concealment 15-
3	Deduction 14-
7	Disguise 16-
3	High Society 13-
3	Interrogation 13-
3	Persuasion 13-
3	Seduction 13-
5	Sleight Of Hand 15-
3	Scholar
4	1) KS: Emphyrean History And Culture 16-
4	2) KS: Forgotten History Of The World 16-
3	3) KS: Lemurian History And Culture 14-
4	4) KS: World History 16-
3	Traveler
3	1) AK: Africa 15-
3	2) AK: Antarctica 15-
5	3) CK: Arcadia 17-
3	4) AK: Asia 15-
3	5) AK: Australia 15-
3	6) AK: Europe 15-
3	7) CK: Lemuria 15-
3	8) AK: North America 15-
3	9) AK: South America 15-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 707

Total Cost: 955

200+ Disadvantages

10	Hunted: Emphyreans 11- (Mo Pow, Watching)
10	Hunted: Lemurian nobility 14- (As Pow, NCI, Limited Geographical Area, Watching)
10	Psychological Limitation: Depraved (Common, Moderate)
25	Psychological Limitation: Slavishly Devoted To Arvad (Very Common, Total)
25	Social Limitation: Disguised As Khosor The Crooked (Very Frequently, Severe)
15	Social Limitation: Exiled From Arcadia (Very Frequently, Major, Is Not Limiting In Some Cultures Or Societies)
20	Vulnerability: 2 x Effect from all shape-changing or -affecting powers (Group Of Uncommon Attacks)
10	Unluck: 2d6
630	Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 955

Background/History: Khosor the Crooked was born to the House of Sron in 1792. He died in 1854... but none of the Lemurians know that. He was replaced by the Deceiver Korba, Arvad's minion.

Korba, an Emphyrean, was born millennia before that. Once he was a charming and good-natured rogue whose clever pranks and tricks were many and frequent, but never malicious. Then one day Arvad was screaming at his brother, Hazor. Korba snuck up behind Arvad, assumed his shape, and silently imitated Arvad's tantrum — much to the pleasure of the other Emphyreans. Even Hazor, who took his brother's outbursts more seriously than the others, couldn't help but smile at Korba's antics.

At that moment something strange happened to Korba. The Emphyrean's shapechanging ability was far more than simple superficial imitation. His entire being changed to assume the shape... so when Korba took on Arvad's form, something twisted in his soul. Korba became as depraved Arvad himself, and looked on him as a disciple does a teacher. When the two were alone, Korba pledged himself to Arvad's service, and he has served his master ever since.

For millennia Korba hid his loyalty to Arvad to better serve his master as a spy in the halls of Arcadia, but when Arvad engineered his coup, Korba's true loyalties were revealed (although none of the Emphyreans know exactly what happened — they all assume Arvad used his mental powers to subvert poor Korba). Despite the protests of his Emphyrean brethren, Korba joined his master in exile, claiming he would act as Arvad's keeper and attempt to both reform Arvad and redeem himself through his deeds. These were all lies; Korba simply wanted to stay at his master's side.

When Arvad came to Lemuria, Korba snuck away and assumed the shape of the first Lemurian he encountered. Since then he has remained in Khusor's form, acting as a spy for Arvad among the Lemurians. In recent decades his effectiveness has been severely reduced, since all the nobles know he's slavishly loyal to Arvad. Arvad has considered having Korba take on someone else's features, but hasn't decided who yet.

Personality/Motivation: The Deceiver Korba has lost whatever personality he once had. Arvad accepted Korba's apology on the day Korba swore service to him, but Arvad has never forgiven the Deceiver for mocking him. He abuses Korba badly, subjecting him to frequent Psionic Surgery whenever the whim strikes him — Korba's become nothing more than a slave to Arvad's wishes. Arvad even uses his servant as a sort of living mirror, commanding him to assume Arvad's shape because, as Arvad says, "mirrors are only two-dimensional and cannot properly capture my glory."

In his role as Khusor the Crooked, Korba is quiet, forever attentive to Arvad's every word, and only speaks up when someone questions Arvad's plans. He serves as major-domo in Arvad's palace, quietly performing whatever task Arvad commands, and rarely leaving the side of his master. He would willingly sacrifice his own life to protect Arvad's.

Quote: "Yes, m'lord, it shall be as you command."

Powers/Tactics: Korba's main power is his ability to mimic the abilities of his foe. Unless ordered to, Korba rarely stands and fights. He uses his Shapechanging power to flee the fight, assuming forms effortlessly



to hide among a crowd or the like. In combat, Arvad commands Korba to mimic the powers of a superhero with special Movement Powers, like Teleportation, or Powers with unusual effects, like Desolidification, so Korba can match the superhero Power for Power. Korba also possesses the standard powers of an Emphyrean; because of this he rarely mimics a superhero whose main powers are Strength or Flight.

Campaign Use: Korba is Arvad's chief minion, and as such the PCs are almost certain to encounter him if they have dealings with Arvad. If possible, Arvad will use him to spy on them — perhaps even try to kidnap a PC and have Korba take his place!

To increase Korba's power add a Drain to his Mimic Pool, so the target loses his powers when Korba mimics them. To decrease his power, remove the *Cosmic Advantage* from the Pool.

Korba only Hunts heroes at the command of his master. If assigned to Hunt the PCs, Korba murders someone close to them and takes their place; then waits for the best moment to strike.

Appearance: As Khusor the Crooked, Korba looks like a typical Lemurian — tall and well-muscled, with black hair and pale skin. When acting in his role as major-domo, he wears hooded robes (usually drawing the hood up to shadow his face as a sign of humility) and the mask of Sron (an oval full-face mask circled by short horns). Soon after their exile Arvad erased Korba's memories of his original appearance. Arvad tells him he was homely for an Emphyrean, moon-faced with greasy dark hair and a lazy eye, but the truth is Korba was a typically attractive Emphyrean, though slightly shorter than others, with blue eyes and red hair.

BAELRATH THE BLASPHEMER

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15+45	STR	27#	21-	Lift 25 tons; 12d6 [6]
18+6	DEX	33#	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
15+15	CON	25#	15-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
25	INT	15	14-	PER Roll 14-
15	EGO	10	12-	ECV: 5
20+10	PRE	17*	15-	PRE Attack: 6d6
14	COM	2	12-	
6	PD	3		Total: 26 PD (20 rPD)
8	ED	5		Total: 28 ED (20 rED)
4+2	SPD	25*		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12/2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12

8	REC	4		
40	END	5		
40	STUN	12		

Total Characteristics Cost: 187

*: OIF (armor; -½)

#: OIF (armor; -½), No Figured Characteristics (-½)

Movement:	Running:	6"/12"
	Flight:	12"/24"

Cost Powers END

13	<i>Projectile Gauntlets:</i> Stretching 5", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OIF (-½), Always Direct (-¼), No Noncombat Stretching (-¼), Limited Body Parts (hands; -¼), Range Modifier Applies (-¼), Activation Roll 15- (-¼)	0
60	<i>Ignatium Projectile Launcher:</i> Energy Blast 8d6, Explosion (+½), Autofire (3 shots; +1¼), 32 Charges (+¼); OIF (shoulder-mounted cannon; -½), Activation Roll 14- (-½)	[32]
28	<i>Electrified Surface:</i> HKA 1½d6, Continuous (+1), Damage Shield (does damage in HTH Combat; +¾); OIF (-½), No STR Bonus (-½), 4 Continuing Charges lasting 1 Turn each (-½)	[4cc]
20	<i>Servo-Assisted Strength:</i> Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) on 60 STR; OIF (-½)	0
40	<i>Body Armor:</i> Armor (20 PD/20 ED); OIF (-½)	0
20	<i>Caraprix Lining:</i> Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50%; OIF (-½)	0
16	<i>Extensible Bat-Wings:</i> Flight 12", 1 Continuing Fuel Charge (easily-obtained fuel; 1 Hour; -0); OIF (-½)	[1cc]
2	<i>Long Life:</i> Life Support (Longevity: lifespan 400 years)	0

Perks

5	Fringe Benefit: Member Of Lemurian Nobility
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Skills

10	+2 with Intellect Skills
5	High Society 14-
3	Inventor 14-
3	Inventor 14-
3	AK: Lemuria 14-
2	CK: Berlin 11-
3	KS: Lemurian History And Culture 14-
3	KS: Lemurian Magic 14-
3	KS: World History 14-

3	Language: English (completely fluent; Lemurian is Native)
3	Language: German (completely fluent)
3	Mechanics 14-
3	PS: Noble 15-
3	Scientist
2	1) SS: Physics 15-
2	2) SS: Metallurgy 15-
2	3) SS: Chemistry 15-
2	4) SS: Mathematics 15-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 262**Total Cost: 449****200+ Disadvantages**

25	Enraged: when worth of his researches questioned (Very Common), go 11-, recover 11-
15	Hunted: Lemurian nobility 14- (Mo Pow, NCI, Limited Geographical Area, Watching)
15	Psychological Limitation: Noble Arrogance (Common, Strong)
15	Psychological Limitation: Disdain For Tradition (Common, Strong)
10	Reputation: iconoclast, 14- (only known to small group [Lemurians])
20	Social Limitation: other Lemurians loathe him and would gladly kill him if they could get away with it (Frequently, Severe)
5	Vulnerability: 1½ STUN from Magnetic Attacks (Uncommon)
5	Vulnerability: 1½ BODY from Magnetic Attacks (Uncommon)
20	Vulnerability: 2 x Effect from powers specifically intended to affect metals (group of Uncommon attacks)
139	Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 449

Background/History: In 1938 Baelrath the Blasphemer was a young sorcerer-scientist considered talented by his peers. When Arvad asked for volunteers to go to the surface world and study their technology, Baelrath leapt at the chance. He journeyed to Berlin, and unlike other Lemurians (who arrogantly dismissed the task) he made a careful study Nazi technology. He examined everything from their factories and foundries to their studies in rocket propulsion, and more and more he became convinced that surface world technology melded with Lemurian magic would prove a powerful combination. It was during this time he gained the epithet *the Blasphemer*, for young Baelrath never ceased to question — vocally and forcefully — the wisdom of the ancients.

When he returned to Lemuria, having escaped Berlin just before the Soviets reached the city, he spoke at length with Arvad. He discussed his theories and explained his ideas, but most importantly he asked the king to sanction his experiments. Arvad did so eagerly and gave Baelrath's experiments the highest priority. Since then, despite the hatred of his fellow Lemurians, Baelrath has become one of Arvad's favorites. If it weren't for that, the other nobles would have killed him long ago.

Baelrath's experiments have finally born tangible fruits in recent years. Though he had many small successes throughout his studies, none of his inventions proved better than current Lemurian equipment and vehicles — as his sorcerous peers were fond of pointing out, always ending their observations by wondering if Baelrath's inventions would function through centuries of use just like Lemurian ornithopters do. But the invention of the Exo-Caraprix is something entirely new and could prove a worthy addition to the Lemurian army. After a lifetime of alienating his fellow nobles, Baelrath must only prove the armor's worth to a hostile population.

Personality/Motivation: Baelrath is an iconoclast, and because he lives under Arvad's protection, he never hesitates to make his controversial views known. Over the course of a lifetime of argument, he has become belligerent and aggressive; in public he constantly sneers at whatever one of his fellow sorcerers says. When alone, he's entirely consumed with his researches.

Of all Lemurians, surface worlders would best get along with Baelrath. So long as the topic stays on science and technology, he is polite, engaging, and eager to discuss anything and everything. If the conversation diverges from these topics, Baelrath's Lemurian arrogance quickly comes to the fore, and as the conversation progresses (or if the surface worlders question his statements), Baelrath becomes just as aggressive and belligerent as when he argues with his fellow Lemurians about magic and science.

Despite his frequent clashes with his fellow nobles, Baelrath would never consider betraying Lemuria. All of his efforts are directed at returning Lemuria to power, not any selfish ends.

Quote: "Bah! What we need to do is replace those outmoded furnaces with nuclear reactors!"

Powers/Abilities: Baelrath's powers are the result of his invention the Exo-Caraprix — essentially a suit of powered armor whose devices rely on both surface world technology and Lemurian mechano-mysticism. Its main innovation is the neuronet that allows the wearer to activate and control the armor with his thoughts. Lemurian mechano-mysticism provides the "technology" for reading the wearer's thoughts and translating them into electrical impulses. Surface world conductors and circuits provide the technology that delivers those impulses to various parts of the armor and translates their commands into action. This neuronet mesh also serves as the source of the armor's Electrified Field. The Extensible Bat-Wings are based on the technology used for Mole-Men Bat-Wings, and when fully extended they have a five-foot wingspan.

The main power source for the armor is an arcane furnace supplemented by batteries that provide emergency power. The shoulder-mounted Ignaetium Projectile Launcher consists of three tubes, and shoots *ignaetium* bullets — a small charge of ignaetium in a metal casing that fires like a bullet. When battling groups of foes, Baelrath uses these to eliminate as many enemies as he can, spraying the explosive bullets with Autofire. The Projectile Gauntlets are the armor's metal gauntlets attached to the armor via small chains. The chains unwind when Baelrath fires the gauntlets, then retract to bring the gauntlets back. He can use the Gauntlets to grab a foe and bring him near, or simply to punch a foe up to 5' away. In HTH Combat, Baelrath activates the Electrified Surface of his armor and attempts to grab his foe.

Campaign Use: As someone who's interested in the surface world (as opposed to other Lemurians, who usually dismiss it and its inhabitants), Baelrath could easily come into contact with the PCs. Arvad assigns Baelrath to act as an advisor in any Lemurian action on the surface world, and Baelrath might also play host to PCs when they're Arvad's guests (or prisoners) in Lemuria.

To increase Baelrath's power, simply add more abilities to his Exo-Caraprix, and give him levels with its various attacks and abilities. To decrease his power, remove the Autofire from the Ignaetium



BAELRATH PLOT SEEDS

A nearby lab reports an astounding discovery — a new element that burns indefinitely. Baelrath hears of this and decides the element sounds suspiciously like *ignaetium*. Leading a contingent of Lemurian warriors and Mole-Men, he lays siege to the research lab. Will the PCs be able to drive the Lemurians back?

Scientists across the world are disappearing. After some investigation, the PCs realize Baelrath the Blasphemer is abducting these scientists. The only common tie the scientists have is they all sought the Unified Field Theory... what villainy can Baelrath be up to?

Baelrath finally convinces a small group of Lemurian warriors to try out his Exo-Caraprix. They decide the perfect test is to attack a group of superheroes. Will your PCs be able to defeat the group? Or will Baelrath's victory prove once and for all the worth of his new technology?

Projectile Launcher, and lower the Activation Rolls on the weaponry.

Baelrath would only Hunt PCs who possessed some technology he wanted. As a Hunted, he would request a contingent of Mole-Man troops from Arvad, and then make a straightforward attack on his target. If the first attack failed, he would request more troops and do it again. Baelrath trained as a sorcerer-scientist, not a warrior, and he knows little concerning military matters. He's unlikely to attack PCs on his own, unless he wanted to test improvements to the Exo-Caraprix by pitting himself against a superhero who also wears powered armor.

Appearance: Baelrath is a typical Lemurian: tall and pale-skinned with black hair and dark eyes. When outside of his House's palace, Baelrath always wears his armor. Made of rough grey metal, the Exo-Caraprix is bulky and appears crudely constructed — Baelrath built it himself and has little use for the decorations that adorn most Lemurian devices (a dislike he must overcome if he ever expects other Lemurians to wear the armor). On the outside of the armor are the round, flat servos that provide Baelrath with his great strength, and running from the servos along his arms and legs are thick bands of metal. The Ignaetium Projectile Launcher is shoulder-mounted and has three barrels; at the back is the cartridge that holds the projectiles. The chains that attach his Projectile Gauntlets to the suit are narrow and made of mystically-hardened bronze; they retract within the suit's arms. On the back of the suit is a bulky unit with a small bronze hatch at the center. This unit holds the arcane furnace that powers the armor, and the Bat-Wings attach to it. Four pipes rise from the unit, their tops just above the shoulders, and the pipes emit both *fulminor* and smoke from the furnace. The helmet's faceplate is shaped like the demonic creature of Baelrath's House: it has a third eye with a ruby at the center which sits above and between the two eye holes, and on top of the helmet is a ridge of short horns. Baelrath has been experimenting with building a blaster into the third eye, but so far has had limited success.

COMMANDER ZARN Warlord Of Lemuria

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
25	STR	15	14-	Lift 800 kg; 5d6 [2]
27	DEX	51	14-	OCV: 9/DCV: 9
20	CON	20	13-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
25	INT	15	14-	PER Roll 14-
20	EGO	20	13-	ECV: 7
25	PRE	15	14-	PRE Attack: 5d6
16	COM	3	12-	
10	PD	5		Total: 20 PD (10 rPD)
10	ED	6		Total: 20 ED (10 rED)
6	SPD	23		Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12
12	REC	6		
40	END	0		
70	STUN	32		Total Characteristics Cost: 221

Movement: Running: 6"/12"

Cost Powers END

12	<i>Ignaetior Blade:</i> HKA 1½d6; OAF (-1)			
15	<i>Ignaetior Powers:</i> Multipower, 30-point reserve; all slots OAF (-1)			
1u	1) <i>Flaming Blade:</i> RKA 1d6, Armor Piercing (+½), Penetrating (+½); OAF (-1), No Range (-½), Linked (to Blade; -¼), 16 Charges (-0)			[16]
1u	2) <i>Smoke Cloud:</i> Darkness to Sight Group 3" radius; OAF (-1), Limited Range (2"; -¼), 4 Charges lasting 1 Turn each (removed by wind; -½)			[4cc]
1u	3) <i>Flash Burst:</i> Sight Group Flash 5d6; OAF (-1), No Range (-½), 16 Charges (-0)			[16]
25	<i>Coruscator:</i> Multipower, 40-point reserve, 32 Charges for entire Multipower (+¼); all slots OAF (-1)			[32]
2u	1) <i>Lightning Blast:</i> Energy Blast 8d6; OAF (-1), Limited Range (15"; -¼)			
2u	2) <i>Electric Strike:</i> Energy Blast 4d6, NND (defense is ED Force Field or insulated clothing; +1); OAF (-1), No Range (-½)			
15	<i>Body Armor:</i> Armor (10 PD/10 ED); OIF (-½), Activation Roll 14- (-½)			
15	<i>Energy Absorption:</i> Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50%; OIF (-½), Activation Roll 14- (-½)			
	<i>Martial Arts: Bellasca</i> (Usable with Ignaetior)			
	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4	Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
4	Disarm	-1	+1	Disarm, +10 STR to Disarm roll
4	Dodge	—	+5	Dodge, Affects All Attacks, Abort
4	Thrust	+2	+0	4d6 KA Strike
5	Lunge	+1	+0	Weapon +v/5; FMove
5	Slash	-2	+1	5d6 KA Strike
8	+2 DCs (already added in)			
35	<i>Finest Swordsman In Lemuria:</i> Find Weakness 14- with Bellasca			

- 2 *Long Life*: Life Support (Longevity: lifespan 400 years) 0
- 7 *Mystic Face Mask*: Mental Defense (14 points total); OIF (-½) 0

Talents

- 10 *Mystic Face Mask*: Danger Sense (self only, in combat) 14-; OIF (-½)
- 10 *Mystic Face Mask*: Combat Sense 14-; OIF (-½)

Perks

- 5 Fringe Benefit: Member Of Lemurian Nobility

Skills

- 10 +1 Overall
- 10 +2 HTH
- 5 Combat Piloting 15-
- 5 Fast Draw (*Ignatior*) 15-
- 5 High Society 15-
- 3 AK: Lemuria 14-
- 5 KS: *Bellascra* 16-
- 5 KS: Lemurian History 16-
- 4 KS: World History 15-
- 3 Language: English (completely fluent; Lemurian is Native)
- 3 Mechanics 14-
- 2 PS: Noble 11-
- 5 Riding 15-
- 3 Sleight Of Hand 14-
- 5 Tactics 15-
- 10 Two-Weapon Fighting (HTH)
- 2 WF: Lemurian Weapons
- 0 TF: Ornithopter

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 277

Total Cost: 498

200+ Disadvantages

- 25 Enraged: with failure (Very Common), go 11-, recover 11-
- 15 Hunted: Lemurian nobility 14- (Mo Pow, NCI, Limited Geographical Area, Watching)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Noble Arrogance (Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Code Of Honor; Always Keeps His Word (Common, Strong)
- 10 Reputation: hard-nosed commander, 14- (only known to small group [Lemurians])
- 10 Rivalry: Professional (with other Lemurian warriors, Rival is More Powerful [large group], Rival is Aware of Rivalry)
- 15 Social Limitation: Comes From House With Poor Reputation (Very Frequently, Minor)
- 15 Social Limitation: Loyal To Arvad (Frequently, Major)
- 178 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 498

Background/History: Commander Zarn was born to the House of Og, a House famous for its decadence, early in the nineteenth century. As he grew up, he listened to the stories of the adults as they related the visions brought on by the Comforts of the Days Fargone. This wondrous past entranced young Zarn, but as he grew older and learned to

read the histories for himself, he realized the stories the adults told him were false: the past was never as wondrous as they made it seem. Zarn's experience was not unique — it's made many Lemurian children bitter, driving them into the arms of the Comforts. But that's not what happened to Zarn, whom his family called the Grim. He set his hopes on the future.

Zarn trained unceasingly as a warrior, and his serious mien brought him to the attention of Arvad. When the king noticed Zarn didn't sneer at the military histories of the surface world like his fellow warriors did — that he was instead enraptured by the histories and amazed at the surface world's ingenuity at overcoming obstacles in the course of a military campaign, especially in light of their woefully primitive technology — Arvad began to groom Zarn to become Warlord of Lemuria.

It would be several decades before Arvad could appoint Zarn to the position for fear of alienating the nobility of Lemuria, but with the death



COMMANDER ZARN PLOT SEEDS

Commander Zarn leads the Lemurian army against the surface world. The only hope the PCs have of defeating the army is to capture him. Does one of them challenge Zarn to a duel? And if not, can the superheroes defeat the Warlord when he has all the forces of Lemuria at his back?

In their vaults the PCs store a device taken from a defeated supervillain — an enchanted sword with a blade of crystal. When Commander Zarn learns of the sword, he realizes it's the magic blade, Soul Of Fire, wielded by one of his ancestors, the Lemurian hero Bryssany the Unvanquished. Leading a contingent of Lemurians, he lays siege to the PCs' headquarters in an attempt to seize the artifact.

After the PCs defeat the Lemurian army, King Arvad exiles Commander Zarn from Lemuria. Seeking to avenge his honor, he assembles a team of supervillains and attempts to capture the PCs. If he succeeds, what happens when he takes his prisoners back to Lemuria as tribute to Arvad?

of the old Warlord five years ago — a death some Lemurians believe Arvad engineered — the king made Zarn the leader of Lemuria's army. Since then, Commander Zarn has worked hard to make his fellow warriors appreciate the skill and craft of their surface world peers, but with only limited success. He has submitted several plans to increase the effectiveness of the military to Arvad, including drafting the decadents and forcing them into the army, but Arvad has only approved the most minor of these plans — the immortal Empyrean is slow to make decisions, at least relative to the standards of the surface world.

Personality/Motivation: Commander Zarn is unique among his fellow Lemurians. Many nobles think Lemuria will never again reach the heights of its past glory. Some think Lemuria will someday regain its past glory, but be no greater. Zarn believes Lemuria's most glorious days are still to come. Despite his epithet ("the Grim"), Zarn is almost optimistic. Arvad takes comfort from Zarn — the king feels his attitude is a direct result of his unflagging attempts to revitalize Lemurian culture.

Also unlike his peers, Zarn is a man of his word, regardless of whom he gives it to. He considers himself cast in the heroic mold of his House's ancestors, and part of that is making sure his honor remains unblemished. Despite this attitude, Zarn is still a Lemurian, possessed of all the arrogance of his race. He avidly studies the surface world, but never doubts that Lemuria, both its culture and technology, is superior.

Quote: "Ah, yes, Hannibal and his elephants. An impressive feat for one so primitive. Of course my own ancestor, Xarl the Tireless, once transported a million tons of golems over a mountain range reportedly so high its peaks stood in the realms of the gods... he, however, had the advantage of being a Lemurian, so it is unfair of me to compare the two."

Powers/Abilities: Commander Zarn is the finest warrior in Lemuria, and the majority of his abilities represent his mastery of the *ignaetior* and *corusca-tor*. His family mask takes the shape of a demonic *chala*-lion. An ancient magical artifact made from gilt over steel, the mask growls when danger is near and also provides its wearer with Combat Sense and Mental Defense. Commander Zarn leads from the front, often riding a *Gullop*-steed and engaging any worthy opponent in HTH Combat after spending a Phase using Find Weakness.

Campaign Use: Commander Zarn personally leads any large-scale Lemurian assaults on the surface world, and that's where the PCs will typically encounter him.

To increase his power, give him more levels with *bellascra*. To decrease his power, lower the roll for his Find Weakness (or remove it entirely), or remove his Extra DCs.

Commander Zarn is unlikely to Hunt PCs, except at the command of his king. For him to Hunt PCs of his own initiative would require him feeling the need to avenge his or his House's honor — perhaps if the PCs were to defeat him in combat and take his face mask, or the like.

Appearance: Commander Zarn is handsome, even for a Lemurian, but unlike most of his race, he is bald — a feature many Lemurians snicker at because, in their eyes, it makes him resemble a Mole-Man. Zarn has piercing brown eyes and a sharp nose, and rarely smiles. He wears his narrow, black mustache long, the slender ends hanging down below his chin. His caraprix is pitch black and the symbol of his office, a bronze four-armed demon, decorates the breastplate. He usually wears a black cloak and always carries his weapons on his hip. His golden face mask covers his whole head and resembles a demonic *chala*-lion, its mouth open in a roar, with transparent shards of red stone over the narrow eyes and a sculpted wild mane.

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